

Tekst 8

1 **F**or some time now, I have been
making comments on the black
middle classes. They are becoming
more and more vociferous and demanding,
5 but are not as influential as they would
like to be.

2 They distinguish themselves from the
rest of the black and Asian community by
education, and from the white middle
10 classes by colour of skin only. They have
attended schools (usually the better ones)
alongside whites, qualified at universities
with them, and become engaged in the
same social and artistic pursuits. Yet they
15 hold that, despite these similarities, they
are discriminated against when they try to
break the glass ceiling. They point to
whole areas of power in society from
which they are absent. The closer their
20 social relationships with whites, the more
explosive the issue becomes. After all,
they can see no fundamental differences
between themselves and white people.
They have made huge efforts to reach this
25 far. Burning with ambition, they are
resentful that they have got so tantalisingly
close, without hitting the target. One of
their white allies suggested that Prince
Charles should marry one of them. A
30 ridiculous suggestion. Joining the royal
family destroyed Diana and Fergie. I see
no need for a black sacrifice.

3 In any case, race is not the only im-
pediment to upward mobility. There are
35 large numbers of whites who are equally
well qualified and who do quite ordinary,
nondescript jobs. Competition is fierce at
the top, and black people are finding that
they do not have the social connections to
40 give them that extra push. Inevitably, they
scream race and quote the Macpherson
report with its catch-all phrase, insti-
tutional racism.

4 These people are very few in number,
45 but they make a huge noise and write
lengthy reports about the plight of blacks in
general when, in reality, they are referring
only to themselves.

5 Yes, they are entitled to the equality
50 they crave; yes, they can do the jobs they
identify as well as whites can. But they do
not carry the political weight to influence
major decisions. Their liberal counterparts
55 in the white community may well be
sympathetic, may even join them in a
running social commentary on their plight,
but nowhere is this a major issue among
whites. Meanwhile, other blacks and
60 Asians shrug their shoulders. Their
attitude is that the black middle classes
haven't paid their dues. In the countries
we came from, the educated middle class

Middle class blacks no longer hang on the block



were expected to use their education to
assist in the betterment of the less for-
65 tunate. Here, the first generation of
successful blacks spent most of their time
campaigning, mobilising and bringing to
the attention of the rest of society the
injustices we suffered. Supplementary
70 schools in abundance, staffed voluntarily
by blacks, took up the slack where the
mainstream schools had failed.

6 These first examples of black success
lived in the same communities, went to the
75 same parties, ate the same grub, dressed in
the same way and, in short, socialised
with those black people who worked in
ordinary jobs. They would hang with the
brothers and sisters on the block, so to
80 speak. Not any more; they have succumbed
to the allure of greener pastures in a
huge migration from the black commu-
nities. Thatcherite individualism seeped
deep into the consciousness of those who
85 claimed to oppose her.

7 And who can deny them their newfound
freedom from what they see as the burden
of community? But now they blame the
black community they have left behind for
90 its own difficulties: black boys are blamed
for failing at school; crime and poverty
are now separable; and we are called upon
to comply with those who stop and search
us, willy nilly.

8 95 It is their smugness that irritates: when
they turn up to assist, it is always about
charity, not about support and solidarity.
The divisions in the black community are
increasing by the day. The black middle
100 classes cannot, in the political arena,
depend on the votes of their fellow black
men and women, or on their support in
their own struggle for equality. It could
have been otherwise.

New Statesman

■ Tekst 8 Middle class blacks no longer hang on the block

- 1p **29** ■ What is meant by “the target” (line 27)?
Black middle classes
A being considered first for candidates for government posts.
B being listened to by the black community.
C entering the ranks of the powerful.
D getting recognition as a politically powerful group.
- 1p **30** ■ How does the second sentence of paragraph 3 relate to the first sentence?
A It describes the consequence of what has been stated in the first sentence.
B It gives an explanation for what has been stated in the first sentence.
C It provides a contrast with the state of affairs described in the first sentence.
- 1p **31** ■ What, according to the writer, accounts for the present social position of the black middle classes?
The fact that
A institutional racism has grown.
B they are too small in number.
C they lack effective networks.
D they tend to keep their ranks closed.
- 1p **32** ■ With which of the following could paragraph 6 also begin?
A Even so, these...
B In reality, these...
C Moreover, these...
- 1p **33** ■ What is Darcus Howe’s main message?
If the black middle classes
A had not abandoned the black cause, the black community might have backed up their aspiration to get to the top.
B had not placed themselves outside it, the black community as a whole would have prospered economically.
C were less self-satisfied, they would understand the problematic situation of the black community.
- 1p **34** ■ Which of the following quotations is meant as an ironical aside?
A “I see ... black sacrifice.” (lines 31-32)
B “Inevitably, they ... institutional racism.” (lines 40-43)
C “Thatcherite individualism ... oppose her.” (lines 83-85)
D “It could have been otherwise.” (lines 103-104)