

Essay

Leave Us Alone for A While Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Whenever I look at headlines, turn to TV channel or listen to the talking heads, I get the following pessimistic messages about race relation in America:

"Most Americans are pessimistic about race relations."

"Race relations are at the lowest point in Obama's presidency."

I heard a commentator say, "By large margins, black adults say that blacks are treated less fairly than whites across key areas of American life." What a genius! That's like some soothsayer telling someone that he would face both misery and ecstasy in life.

Yes, there will always be a chasm and an undercurrent of wariness about race relations, but one doesn't have to purposely spread the pessimism and bury progress.

"Why are we having a national argument on race? By all objective measures -- recent opinion polls, demographic data, and academic studies -- race relations between blacks and whites have never been better. What is more, the majority of African-Americans are content,



even optimistic, about their interactions with European-Americans,

according to a close reading of a recent Gallup Poll, for example, and other surveys. ...While I differ with many of their arguments, particularly with their opposition to affirmative action, their basic premise is correct -- that relation between

the races are getting better, as are the conditions of most African-Americans." – Orlando Patterson in New York Times.

Of course, the media, politicians and talking heads want us to be defeatists and fatalists because objectivity excites neither the proletariat nor the bourgeois.

Suddenly, we enter into August of 2016. August in a leap year is very significant for two reasons. The politicians, traditionally, take a break between the primaries and the start of presidential debates leaving their wounds and laying plans for the final push for the November election.



Secondly, in August of a leap year, the American electorate diverts attention from politics to the Olympics, whites, blacks, Hispanics and all. They all cheer together for 'Team America' – E Pluribus Unum at its best.

The Americans contingent at the Rio Olympics is made up of the most racially and ethnically diverse group one can think of. They have only one goal in mind, 'winning for America.' There are no signs of white privilege or black anger there. They all go there on their own merits. When interviewed, they all say, "We want America to win." They live together, win together laugh, cry and sing the American anthem together.

In my mind, that will be America like, if the politicians, media and the talking heads leave us alone for a while and let us think on our own.