Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Reagan's first 12 months

President Reagan's first year in office has painted a gloomy picture for black American citizens and the forseeable future appears just as dismal if current trends continue.

The economy is in a shambles and a recession is in raging progress that is playing havoc with budgets of those in lower income brackets. Inflation has soared to an all-time high and as a result many black families are being slowly pushed to the wall economically.

The callous slashing of social programs further depresses the black community. David Stockman's "supply side" economic policy essentially is the rejected "trickle down" theory that has long been denounced by non-white persons because it is humiliating and robs them of human dignity.

Recently two Reagan advisors gave the administration high marks for its first year in office. There was no mention of some nine million unemployed individuals who find it difficult to keep mind and body together without resorting to unethical or unlawful methods. Prospects are that this figure will go much higher if the direction of Reaganomics is not changed with the black unemployment rate reaching an unprecedented level.

The Reagan administration recently unleashed a "trial balloon" that would grant tax exemptions to private segregated schools. The administration was forced to back down after a storm of protests from civil rights groups. The President failed to clarify the issue at his news conference and confused it more than ever. In effect, the proposal would subsidize the preference of a minority of racial bigots.

The National Urban League in its annual report noted that the administration's actions on racial matters provides aid and comfort to racists. The administration is adept at double-talk and appears to be impervious to the sensitivities of the black community.

Reagan and his advisors apparently operate on the principle that since very little support was received from the black community this segment of the population should come in for a minimal of government benefits in the process of de-emphasizing the government's role in relation to human needs. This benighted attitude has been adopted before and proved disastrous politically. The black vote can be crucial and decisive as we have seen in recent years. Black voters are more alert and sophisticated than heretofore and will cast their ballot in terms of how an incumbent's record has benefitted them.

The black voter will not be intimidated or bought off with a few meaningless baubles. In addition, new black leaders are emerging and blending their talents and zeal with the veteran and experienced civil rights leaders. Most of this new breed has intense convictions and remember the painstaking struggles of their predecessors who made possible gains thus far.

President Reagan has often referred to a "mandate" given him by the electorate. This so-called mandate carries with it a responsibility to act in behalf of all the people and not write off a segment that it feels can be safely ignored without serious consequences. The Reagan administration should be cognizant of this political truism and come up with more substantial social programs that will reach the needs of all Americans, regardless of their power or influence.

Blount's options

State Senator Clarence Blount won the respect of his peers in the assembly what seems like eons ago. He has mastered the negotiating skills necessary to be continually productive as an elected official.

Because Senator Blount delivers quietly and capably there is always speculation he will take on larger political challenges.

It has been wondered if the Senator will try for the mayoralty of this city or join the upcoming Hughes campaign as candidate for lieutenant governer.

Senator Blount therefore has some options seldom available to a black elected official.

In a recent AFRO profile on him, Blount himself put the rumors to rest at least for now.

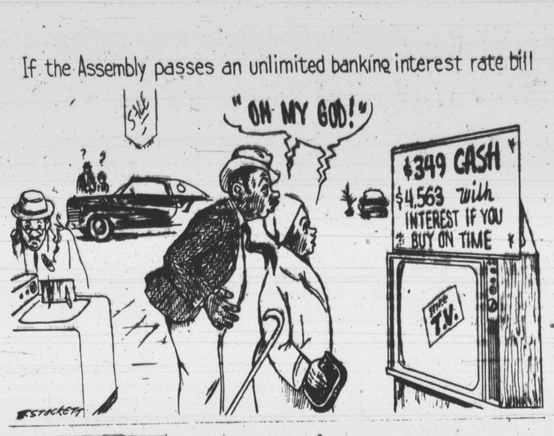
We will repeat his words for emphasis.

"As far as I know, it is not any goal or ambition. (The lieutenant-governship) Even if I thought it would be pulled off, I would have to give it serious consideration.

"I want to be at the place where I can be of best use to my people in the time left to me. I am doing that presently as a powerful state senator.

"I am not interested in any window-dressing, sitting in some high office without the ability to do anything. I want to deliver for my people, to help get them into the mainstream of life. I mean that."

We think this is a clear position



Knives sharpened for Stockman

By Ralph Matthews
Editor, Baltimore AFRO

While many eyes were raised skyward Thursday for President Reagan's helicopter descent on Baltimore's impoverished Park Circle area, I was keeping a weather eye on Washington.

It seems as if some very influential Republicans want to do David Stockman in.

Stockman, we all know, is one who has been perceived as the President's "hatchetman" in his post as chief of the Office of Management and Budget.

But since his first brilliance as the President's budget slasher Stockman's star has been waning.

He had been talking long and often with a Washington Post writer, who later published the real thinking of David Stockman in a magazine article that stirred a recent storm of controversy.

Stockman, as he confided in the writer, came off as a guy who did not really believe in much of what he was doing, he was critical of many key elements of Republican economic policy and in essence was completely cynical about Reagan and company in general.

Many Republicans came away from the Stockman interview with the feeling that hatchetman was as much of a danger to the GOP as he was to all the needy Americans who will be feeling the brunt of his axe.

Other Republicans have decided not to be so kind.

One of them is Rep. Jack Kemp, the former Buffalo Bills quarterback, who has turned in recent years into one of the young "new conservative" Republicans.

Kemp is one of the main reasons why President Reagan decided to visit Baltimore this week. A trip called off and its key players invited to the White House instead because of the weather.

Jack Kemp, a proponent of "supply side" economics, and chief advocate of the private enterprise zone concept to rehabilitate major cities and create jobs in urban poverty pockets, has been encouraging Reagan to get moving on the enterprise zones.

With Reaganomics already a household word meaning tough times for most of us, the President obviously sees any gesture of aid to the cities as a plus since most surveys report most Americans feel low and middle income families are being hurt most by the administration's approach.

Representative Kemp is the third ranking Republican in the House. He has the President's ear. Rep. Trent Lott, of Mississippi, is second top dog in the House.

This week and this is the news we have to watch, Kemp and Lott, as the Sunpapers' Fred Barnes reported, sent a letter to David Stockman accusing him of "seeking to raise taxes and cut programs while keeping secret a confidential list of corporate subsidies totaling as much as $30 billion annually in federal spending."

Kemp and Lott pull no punches. They asked the "hatchetman" — "Dave if you truly face a budgetary Dunkirk why are Food Stamps, Aid to Dependent Families (AFDC), Medicaid and Head Start touchable, but not Exxon, Boeing and Gulf Oil?"

I do not know about you, but I found this dissent with Stockman by high-ranking Republicans fascinating.

Even more fascinating was the fact said Republicans were accusing Stockman of pumping billions of dollars into corporations (the Grand Old Party historically the party of billionaires) while punishing Americans of low-income.

The AFRO resistingly talked with a key aid of Representative Kemp.

Yes, said the aide, we are at war with David Stockman. He was careful to point out the Congressman had no quarrel with the President.

David Stockman thus stands accused of dispensing federal welfare to the rich by key Republicans, who have Reagan's ear and presumably support.

He also stands accused by his co-party members of "hatcheting" the poor so the rich might prosper.

We think Stockman is being prepared to walk the plank. Jack Kemp has sold the President on enterprise zones as a way of helping blighted cities.

We wonder if the former football player also has sold the President on trading Stockman to the Democrats.

Capitalism versus democracy

MADELINE MURPHY

Contradictions face us everywhere.

The many who deal with the human condition emphasize so often the incompatabilities between democracy and capitalism.

Simplistic though it may seem, we believe as citizens this is a government by, for and of the people. We constantly prate about, brag about and challenge the democratic process.

"A government of laws, not men," we say.

But how often are those principles and simple basic tenets challenged and subverted by the greed of corporations.

Corporations spend countless dollars lobbying, making campaign contributions to obtain tax benefits, leasing arrangements, mergers, divestitures, to not only subvert the very principles of democracy, to protect excess profits, to avoid regulations; but also to overburden us, the ordinary taxpayer with escalating taxes to keep the status quo for their benefit.

A blatant case in point is the Baltimore Gas and Electric Co.'s proposal for increased rates so the stockholders might continue to receive equitable dividends.

The hypocrisy of this gathering about democracy and the counter productive demands of capitalism can even further be illustrated when we begin to address the problem of drunken drivers.

Gov. Harry Hughes, and President Ronald Reagan, both feeling the public outcry, gaining fairly easy campaign chips for the re-election of the former and the popularity of the latter, have come forth with proposals to increase surveillance, penalties, long sentences for the victims of greed, the perpetrators of these highway killings.

This is all well and good as far as it goes.

But no one is suggesting tavern keepers, bar owners, bartenders and restaurateurs, first restrict the intake of alcoholic beverages at the source or stop promoting "Happy Hours," where sloshed workers stagger out as dangerous weapons to the rest of the sober drivers, who must be wary of them and who all too often become their victims.

No one suggests either liquor boards restrict the licensing of package goods stores, especially in the inner city neighborhoods, not only for the benefit of public safety; but also to stem the senseless tide of dollars from the indigent.

Why not?

Because the liquor industry is a mammoth business with the money to lobby, to entertain lavishly the law makers who might propose legislation that would cut off the cause of spiralling traffic deaths "at the pass."

Because the profit from liquor in restaurants far outstrips the profit from food.

Because tavern owners would be considered fools for not emptying customers who are either drunk or nearly sober.

Inbred, therefore, into these noble proposals about drunken driving is a hypocrisy of such proportions the cynics among us cannot take their utterances too seriously.

Would not it be more sensible to have plain clothes policemen in league with tavern keepers or restaurateurs monitor them from time to time to prevent drunken patrons from driving?

Call their families? Find more creative and humane ways to stop them at the source.

Panies encourage and glamorize the excess use and abuse of alcohol, but are not given the responsibility to control the output at the factory, the main pushers of a substance, a drug, that becomes a killer on the highway.

Further, when the prime drunken killers on the highway are the kids or young adults, there should be stepped-up monitoring of liquor stores who sell, or are suspicious of those who buy, who are underage.

As a sign of the times, however, when despair, frustration, all manner of traumas relating to the economy surface, the intake of alcohol spirals.

How often does one hear after a trying meeting, work day, or an especially grueling family discussion, "boy, I sure need a drink."

There ought to be a law, nevertheless, that would make the purveyors of this perverted elusive "Shangri-La," the tavern keepers, the liquor store owners, the restaurateurs, the distillers, who are motivated by their crass greed and demand for soaring profits, responsible for this carnage on the highways.

Why must they go Scot free with their public be damned attitude?

Of course, the same restrictions should be made in a democracy, of, by and for the people, toward the manufacturers, the sellers of guns and bullets. But that is a whole new column in itself.

I suppose, however, knowing the way the system works in its tangled web of deceit and hypocrisy, we cannot expect such obvious solutions to this horrendous problem engendered by a greedy corporate structure, unless the voice of the people is heard in our land.

COMMENTARIES by Madeline Murphy can be heard each Tuesday during the 6 p.m newscast on WEAA-FM radio

Fire victim was community worker

Dear AFRO:

In a time when news events are fast-paced and often overwhelming in their implications, the recent tragic events of a Southwest Baltimore rowhouse fire were recorded with only passing notice.

I feel compelled to write of this event not to dwell on the pain and suffering which follow from the loss of three lives, but rather to bear witness to the indomitable spirit of one Betty Drury, who was lost to us in that fire, and to mark for the record, the depth of her courage and achievement.

Betty was a fighter in the best sense of the word. She stood strong against personal tragedy and hardship to raise a large and wonderful family and to fight for the betterment of the community in which she lived.

She was a neighborhood leader who had the respect of all who knew her. She was an organizer who struck fear into the hearts of the slumlords and corporate vultures against whom she stood.

And Betty was a person of great compassion, who had time to offer direct support and comfort to those less fortunate in her midst.

Through her work with Communities Organized to Improve Life, and as a staff worker at Baltimore Blueprint and the Coalition of Peninsula Organizations, Betty touched the lives of literally thousands of her neighbors in ways that will not be forgotten.

While Betty was unique in her courage and in her ability to bridge the economic and racial barriers that too often separate urban communities, she was not alone in her struggle.

There are countless others, in her own neighborhood and throughout the city, who have forsaken personal gain and glory to work for the common good.

These efforts may go unnoticed across neighborhood lines, but it is exactly this kind of dedication that really is newsworthy and that shines so clearly through the grief of her passing.

As Betty always was particularly concerned with the young People around her, it is fitting to point to her life as an example of what young people could well strive for today.

She was a modern heroine:

A woman whose love for people knew no bounds of color or class and whose actions spoke unflinchingly for the cause of justice and decency of her neighbors and her community.

The efforts of those who remain to continue her work are diminished greatly by her loss, but will be inspired greatly by the legacy of her love and service; for she was a true servant of the people.

Let us hope others like Betty Drury will take note, renew and redouble their efforts, and in so doing rededicate the spirit in which she lived.

RICHARD GATTO

CETA by any other name

By Al Sweeney

This is the week that our Congress returns to work in the nation's capital.

As for blacks there is considerable movement over the issue of voting rights. The greatest progress made by blacks in the political arena was under the voting rights measure that is about to expire.

Not only have blacks been in very significant numbers of the state legislatures of the deep South, but also have been elected as mayors of several southern cities such as Birmingham, Atlanta, New Orleans, Richmond and many of the smaller towns in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Arkansas.

If I am to believe the congressional canvassers the voting rights bill will be extended.

While thousands marched on a cold, chilly day for the second annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Holiday Memorial drive, it doesn't appear that peace will fly during this session.

While one-third of the Senate and all of the House are watching the various political polls taken in their political voting centers, certain domestic legislation will be carefully scrutinized.

Look for some increase in the funding for agencies handling the youth unemployment program. It might not be known as CETA, but it will probably be a rose of another name. Expect a special White House concern for that crucial action, while not hurting the total budget.

Of interest to the inner city businessmen and real estate operators is the so-called Enterprise Zone. That is one of the administration's initiatives that will give tax breaks to industries and businesses operating in the inner city.

The structure of the measure and how it works is still in early stages in one of the appropriate committees. It would be wise for our business interests to keep abreast of this bill.

Someone is going to make money out of it. We have seen what has happened to other federal programs that were designed to help the inner city unemployed.

Usually some outside interest exploits the programs, while blacks are in the background lamenting over what they could have done.

So in this Enterprise Zone project there should be an opportunity for some of our wise investors to hide some of the money they have made and protect under the tax shelter.

The real profiters are supposed to be the inner city unemployed.

Reagan's tax-rule actions

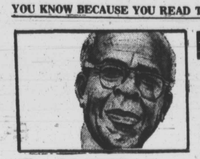
Once again, President Reagan says he will not tolerate racial discrimination, while his actions show the opposite.

On Friday, the Treasury Department reversed a twelve-year policy of denying tax-exempt status to racially segregated schools. The president claims that the "sole basis of the decision was his opposition to government by "administrative fiat."

But the president has sworn to uphold the Constitution, and the Constitution prohibits public assistance to segregated schools. Moreover, a federal court has held, in a decision affirmed by the Supreme Court, that a Congressional statute requires the Internal Revenue Service to deny tax exemption to segregated institutions.

And the Justice Department itself argued the same in a brief filed in the Supreme Court a mere four months ago.

The president's announcement that he is submitting legislation to Congress to make tax exemptions for segregated schools illegal is an attempt to divert attention from what is really a retreat from this country's commitment to combat discrimination. The timing of his announcement suggests that he is simply trying to compensate for a bad political blunder. If the president is serious about his professed opposition to racial discrimination, he will not send legislation up to Congress just to be buried; he will put his well-known political muscle behind it.



G. JAMES FLEMING

Pendulum swinging backwards

Writing or reading in January 1982, almost fools one into thinking he still is living in the 1960s, or the 1940s or even the 1920s.

A kibitzer nearby says "even 1902." For much of the same hurts, the same problems, the same bigotries are here today. Much of the same signs of man's inhumanity to man or, if you will, the inhumanity of men and women to each other.

In the White House, despite official explanations and defenses, is a president, Ronald Reagan, who most black citizens believe is not on their side and who is allied with the forces who always have oppressed them and other mostly poor people.

Examples are so current and numerous they need not be listed here.

This presidency recalls the reign of Woodrow Wilson, 1913-1921, during which thousands of blacks in the federal civil service lost their jobs and when, for the first time, restrooms in government buildings were segregated along racial lines — for "white ladies" and "colored women" and with only slight change for men.

This year, despite the gains of civil rights laws and Supreme Court decisions, and the elimination of segregational signs, also brings to mind the presidency of Herbert Hoover, 1929 - 1933.

During that period, blacks generally were forgotten, although voting blacks still were following the advice of the revered Frederick Douglass that "the Republican Party is the ship, all else the sea."

Oldsters will remember how one black Republican stalwart, Roscoe Conkling Simmons, monocled orator, as a last resort, went to the White House to cry on the president's shoulders.

When he could not see Mr. Hoover, he retreated to the White House lawn and looking up to a window, pleaded:

"Speak, Mr. President, speak; tell us that Lincoln still lives ...."

There was no response. Instead, throughout the land, the Ku Klux Klan was gaining power anew and wresting from blacks what little political plums they still enjoyed; to be more exact, what few crumbs still came their way.

More than that, the KKK — north and south, east and west — was electing governors, representatives and senators and was "taking over" state legislatures, just as the Moral Majority conglomorate today is electing or defeating men and women, based on whether or not they meet the ultra-conservative demands of the Moral Majority.

Again in 1982, the Klan is on the rise everywhere and recent attempts to bomb the home of the Maryland president of the NAACP is only an echo of Klan extremities which already have taken place in other parts of the country.

The recent marches to Washington and to state capitols are reminders the "dream" of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. uttered so stirringly and worldwide at the famed March-on-Washington, in 1963, still largely is a dream.

Some notable racial barriers are down, in law, and some racial practices have been aborted but, now as in the 1930s and the 1940s, there still is widespread unemployment, especially among black young people.

Which forces the question, "what real value lowering legal barriers, if those legally favored, or freed, cannot earn the money with which to buy food or homes, or pay for an education, or enjoy the now available facilities?"

The days ahead may or may not call for the outbursts of the 1950s and the 1960s on the part of blacks. They do call for removing the blinders from our eyes, for seeing conditions as they are, and for organizing, both through self-help and other means to overcome this new backward swing of the pendulum.

This pendulum's swing is the same kind of backward action marked by the Hayes-Tilden Compromise, which put to an end Congressional Reconstruction and which has surfaced every time blacks have felt the Promised Land was just around the curve.

ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

THE WINTER OF 1982 will long be remembered as "the worst" weatherwise as temperatures plunged below any degree in history and the snow fell and fell. Predictions so far in this first month, January, are for "more of the same in February and March."

MANY EVENTS mark the first 1982 month as life goes on regardless.

50TH ANNIVERSARY

A WONDERFUL OCCASION was the Jan. 10 Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Waverly H. Wiggins of Summit Ave.

Formerly of South Baltimore, the lovely couple exchanged happy 50th year vows at their Leadenhall Baptist Church with the pastor, Rev. Eddie R. Wilson, officiating.

The reception that followed was at Martins West with over 100 guests, beautiful!

THE ALMANAC

AT A CERTAIN DATE IN February, the plans are expected to come into one line in the sky, the first time in 500 years . . . and bring some events we shall never forget.

WE'LL HAVE TO FIND more about this.

WINTER BEGAN Dec. 21. SPRING begins March 20, when the Sun enters Aries. SUMMER begins June 21 when the Sun enters Cancer. We are now in Capricorn.

THE YEAR of 1982 is the year 6695 of the Julian Period, year 2642 of the Japanese. The Chinese Year of the Dog begins Jan. 25.

PLANETS

THE PLANETS are Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

HOLIDAY are Feb. 2, Groundhog Day.

Feb. 12, Lincoln's birthday.

Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.

Feb. 15, Washington's birthday.

Feb. 24, Ash Wednesday (first day of Lent.

March 17, St. Patrick's Day.

April 8, Passover. April 11, Easter.

ECLIPSES

Jan. 25 - partial Sun. June 21, partial Sun: July 6, total, Moon July 20, partial Sun. Dec. 15, partial Sun. Dec. 30, total, Moon.

SEED CATALOGUE TIME

Now is the time to enjoy the Seed Catalogue and plan for summer flowers.

FEBRUARY according to the Almanac, will see 20 degrees BELOW Zero. The air is usually perfectly still and when you go out you catch your breath and it sears your lungs. Nights seem longer but they are shorter and the days are longer, going toward Spring.

FEBRUARY will see a thaw because the earth keeps getting warmer as it always has and always will.

ON THE EAST coast, some crucus blooms come up inspite of everything.

AS SOON as the snow recedes from the edges of woodlots, the Almanac says, you can THINK ABOUT planting BUT wait until after March 17, St. Patrick's Day to be sure. March has 31 days.

OLD SAYING, in March stick to your winter flannels.

PREDICTION — The snow will not be "all gone" before early April, the Almanac says. Easter is late (April 11) and governs the actual arrival of Spring.

EASTER is always the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the 21st of March. That's how you determine this highest holiday of the Christian faith.

NO BURIALS

P.S. — During the January deep freeze and up until the date of this writing, burial of the dead has been delayed in most Baltimore cemeteries. The ground is so hard and frozen so deep, it would take a sledge hammer to dig a grave.

For all we know
This Winter of 1982

Tony Brown's Comments

White House blacks stop bias

There is something fundamentally wrong in the Reagan administration.

More and more we hear cries from the Justice Department about being "technically" correct in its rulings on civil rights and now that preoccupation has been joined by the Treasury's reprehensible reversal of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code allowing tax subsidized racism for private schools and colleges.

The result is a string of unfortunate and ill-advised civil rights rulings which systematically exclude the interests of a group the government is supposed to represent. And the president is paying the bill.

The latest incident was an unnecessary, callous, abysmal ignorance allowing tax exempt status to two schools that discriminate against blacks.

While the Reaganites were calling such discrimination "abhorrent," Justice and Treasury were rewarding such discrimination with a government subsidy.

It showed "contempt for the attempts of minorities to participate fully and freely in American society," said the president's favorite and hometown newspaper, the Los Angeles Times.

Another California newspaper, the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, called the reversal of a 12-year-old federal policy of denying tax-exempt status to private schools practicing racial discrimination "morally wrong and politically stupid."

A black friend took a more worldly view of it all:

"I don't care about white racists going to school together. I don't want to be with them anyway. But as a taxpayer, I don't want to subsidize their bigotry."

But the bright side to all of this is the unified front put forth by ordinarily opposing forces in the black community. This crisis put political ideology on the back burner and blackness up front — where it belongs.

It culminated in the president doing a turnaround and adopting a hardline approach against taxpayer subsidized racism.

"I believe the right thing to do on this issue is to enact legislation which will prohibit tax exemptions for organizations that discriminate on the basis of race.

"Therefore, I will submit legislation and will work with the Congress to accomplish this purpose," President Reagan promised, in a clean-up spot.

This strong reversal of Justice and Treasury misconduct had its origin in a 7:30 a.m. breakfast with the White House blacks, as I like to call them, and Vice President George Bush.

Mel Bradley, Thad Garrett, Thelma Duggin, Dan Smith and Steve Rhodes laid it on the line. In a prophetic warning, they explained the problem had received a one-sided, biased assessment of this action and the political uproar and ethical reaction would be both adverse and intense.

At 8:45 a.m., Bradley and Garrett transmitted this sentiment to Donald Regan, Secretary of the Treasury; William French Smith, Attorney General; Edwin Meese, counselor to the president; and Michael K. Deaver, Deputy Chief of Staff.

Deaver and Meese then arranged a meeting between Bradley, Garrett and the only black cabinet member, Sam Pierce, with the president. It was decided the president should make clear he was not an advocate of segregation.

San Diego based Clarence Pendleton, Reagan's appointee to head the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, sent a testy-wire warning he could not join an administration with this kind of cloud hanging over its head.

Later, the president phoned Pendleton to assure him the situation would be corrected.

That is the bright side of this unnecessary faux pas. But there is a growing impression - with a culmulative effect - among racial minorities and many whites that President Reagan does not heartedly oppose racial discrimination.

The president is running out of political capital with black people. Someone on his team is going out of his or her way to ask for trouble by picturing the president as a racist with consistently anti-Afro-American administrative rulings.

They fail to understand the difference between political philosophy and reality.

President Reagan is the head of our government and the government has a moral and legal obligation to oppose discrimination. Period.

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL, the television series, will air on public television, Monday, Feb. 8, on Channel 22, at 10:30 p.m. It also will be seen on Channel 67 on Mondays at 10:30 p.m. Consult listings

Fads and us

By Yahya B. A. Muhammad

Webster's Dictionary gives the meaning of "fad" as a passing whim, hobby style or fancy, pursued for a time with undue zeal."

When we look up the meaning of the word "whim," we see it means "a sudden turn of mind." whim, hobby, style or fancy, however, we want to deal with the one we have just given.

Looking at the miserable plight of the African-American, we can easily see we are the last ones who should be influenced by fads, yet, the undiscerning eye can see we are affected by them more than anyone else.

The sad facts are one would be led to believe we are the world's best models of fads or anything else that is created for consumption of the foolish.

Fads not only affect our youth, they even affect our middle-aged and senior citizens. We seem to have an insatiable appetite for them, but to who's benefit and to who's loss?

We must begin to take stock of ourselves if we want to pull ourselves up from the misery and the torment we have been suffering every since African-Americans hit the shores of America.

It is not enough for us to blame our former slave masters for our present condition. It is not enough for us to sing slogans of "I'm black and I'm proud." "I am somebody," "Black is beautiful," "free at last, free at last, great God almighty, I'm free at last" and not be willing to make some real human sacrifices to bring those beautiful words to reality.

It is not enough to ask the government to legislate those beautiful words into reality for us, it will not work.

The government can legislate for the next 10 generations and things will not get any better for us until we become willing to make some changes in our lives, ourselves.

Each one of us, as an individual, is a government within himself.

Each of us, as individuals, has the power within us to control the things we will allow to be an influence in our lives.

We constantly complain we are deprived of one thing or the other, when the reality is the great majority of us always can find the money to get things we want, but we seldom are willing to make the sacrifices to get the things we need.

This fact is proven when we look at how easy it seems to be for us to always have several of the latest fads, but never enough money to pay for the mortgage or the rent, never enough money for food or for notebook paper for the children.

To succeed as a people, each one of us will have to begin to govern our individual lives first.

We will have to control our material appetites. It is time to put emphasis on our needs and to wait for a better day to satisfy our wants.

No longer can we afford to operate as a privileged baby class.

The world now is waiting to see if we are going to stand up and be the men and women we know we are capable of being or are we going to continue to lay in the cradle and cry for "Mama" (white folks) to continue to feed us pablum.

It is necessary for us to begin to put emphasis on quality instead of quantity. We have lost our dollar value in the past by playing to the greedy materialists' tune of lots of junk for our money, which was not healthy for us and did not last any appreciable length of time.

An example of this is the shoes called "jellys" we bought during the summer. They have proven to be bad for the feet and they do not even last a good two weeks.

Yet, we bought them by the truck loads, simply because they are the latest fad.

We, adults, need to cure ourselves of these weaknesses and then have the courage to tirelessly work with our children to cure them of the same illness.

Why should we blame the manufacturer for our weakness? I have never seen a manufacturer force a consumer to buy his goods by use of physical force, however, the manufacturer plays a major role in controlling the consumer through mind manipulation.

We are quick to say "nobody tells me what to do, I'm free, I do my own thing." If we were really free, we would not be prisoners to fads of any nature.

As the meaning of the word says, fads are a passing whim and a whim is a sudden turn of mind.

Any people who is going to build firm roots for itself in a society, cannot have sudden turns of mind. They build on a firm foundation. They make plans and carry them out.

You never find them making excuses for their failures, if they fail, they go back to the drawing board and correct their failures and then proceed with a cautious eye.

We should stop looking at the world as a stage and at ourselves as only the players, we have an equal share in this world and we only have ourselves to blame if we do not begin to immediatley get our share of it.

I do not mean get our share in a negative, immoral manner, I mean go after it through the best means human society has to offer. Through lifting each other up by our own efforts, with knowledge and understanding of human development.

Each one of us should teach one of us until we all are out of the pit. It is beneath our dignity to work to lift ourselves up through immoral, low-based methods.

The sooner we get control of our own minds, the sooner we will put down such ignorant vices as narcotics, gambling, prostitution to make it in the world.

We were created to be than that.

More Letters

Hurrah for Larry Young

Dear AFRO:

The largest health event in Maryland was convened Oct. 15 - 16, 1981, at the Hunt Valley Inn. The event - the Maryland Health Convocation '81 - was not just another conference but a labor of love of Del. Larry Young, who organized and implemented the event.

Included were a diversity of groups such as the Baltimore City Medical Society, Center for Urban Environmental Studies, Constant Care Health Corp., Health Roundtable of Maryland, Maryland Public Health Association, Druid Health Care Center, and South Baltimore Family Health Care Center.

These groups came together, not to push their own special interest, but to examine the impact of the Reagan administration's health budget cuts in Maryland and look to the future of health care inMaryland.

Before I say more, I want to publicly commend Del. Young for his outstanding effort. Not a showhorse, Del. Young is a workhorse, who is not afraid to stand up for his constituents and their rights.

Del. Young's advocacy on health issues did not start at the Maryland Health Convocation '81: he has been, in my opinion, the No. 1 expert on health issues in the entire Maryland General Assembly.

Just look at these points:

1. Del. Young successfully organized the Maryland Health Roundtable, which will celebrate its 5th anniversary January 1982.

2. When HMO closings were predicted, Del. Young successfully sponsored legislation to keep their doors open.

3. When five nursing homes in Baltimore City were undergoing severe financial problems, Del. Young stepped in to help them maintain their fiscal solvency.

4. When the Legislature attempted to cut Baltimore City's Tuberculosis program, Del. Young fought and had the funding restored to 85 percent of the proposed level.

Obviously, I and many other Marylanders believe Del. Young deserves acknowledgement for his efforts because he truly cares.

I am sure if Del. Young had a paternity suit filed against him or showed a questionable voting trend, his name would be splashed across the front page.

Or if, in short, Del. Young, was less than a very good legislator, someone in the press would lift his name to the public.

Some months ago, June 11, 1981, to be exact, a group of 100 distinguished citizens convened a special testimonial dinner to honor Del. Young that brought 700 people - 75 percent black and 25 percent white.

It was stated by many Del. Young was one of the few legislators who could gain such broad support. And yet, not a word in the papers, on radio or television.

Del. Young's outstanding work does not stop in Maryland either. He is a national energy spokesman for the concerns of minorities and the poor.

Del. Larry Young is an outstanding health advocate, who has gained national, state and local recognition. He has brought Maryland health care budget realities to our attention through Maryland Health Convocation '81 and he deserves the credit for its success.

RUTH KIRK