Baltimore Afro-American

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Crime statistics

The crime statistics released for Baltimore City recently are mixed. Serious crime declined overall but the crimes that frighten people the most murder, rape and aggravated assault were up while property crimes were down in 1984.

The police department claims that its war on drug trafficing has caused this decline because junkies must commit a large number of crimes daily in order to support their habits.

The drug traffic also promotes violent crime as drug merchants fight over profits and territory often while innocent bystanders get caught in the crossfire.

Another interesting statistic was the fact that the juvenile crime rate has dropped 28 percent of the number of serious crimes committed compared with over 50 percent ten years ago.

Property crimes have probably declined because of citizen alertness and education in cooperation with police efforts. The decline of youth crime can perhaps be attributed to a decline in the youth population as a proportion of the total population and the effort of parents and others to combat the problem.

Although crime is declining in the city, people still do not feel safe. If there is a perception of danger then the city is still under siege by the criminal element. That is also a large part of the anti-crime effort, making the streets safer and creating the perception that the streets are safer.

Minority shipping firm

With the arrival Monday of the Eagle Faith a black-owned merchant ship, the dream that had been deferred since the liquidation of Marcus Garvey's Black Star Shipping line, has become a reality.

The Eagle faith, the first ship purchased by the company is making its maiden voyage to several East Coast ports. The ship will also call at the European ports of Rotterdam, Felix Felixtowe, LeHavre and Bremerhaven.

The ship will make weekly trips between Europe and America as the ocean cargo ship resurrects the dream that Marcus Garvey had in the 1920s when his organization purchased ships for his ill-fated Black Star Line.

Garvey contended that black Americans should enter into the field of international commerce especially in trading with other black nations.

If black Americans are going to be more competitive in the marketplace, international trade is one area that must be ventured into. Double Eagle Lines is a historic step in the right direction and the AFRO salutes the revival of a black merchant marine entity.

Letters

Concerns over columnists

I have been an avid reader of the AFRO-AMERICAN since grade school. I have listened to Baltimore's African-American community criticize the newspaper for years and I have with great pride defended the newspaper.

Today I have very mixed emotions and concerns over two articles in the December 25 issue. "Changing Times Always Come At The Turn Of The Century" by Elizabeth Oliver & "Are The Sanctioners Sincere?" by Walter E. Williams.

For me, they are both utterly disgusting and do not reflect a healthy newspaper. Not for African-Americans or any humane people today.

Elizabeth M. Oliver's article seems to suggest that we, should not be concerned with famine in Ethiopia. Ms. Oliver is comparing famine to the seasonal changes around the world.

True enough, many of these occurrences appear to be the work of nature and are out of the control of man. Yet the most powerful nation on earth today is able to send aircraft to the moon, create nuclear weapons that destroy life and literally make snow for ski slopes.

Can not these same scientist now devise means to bring rain to that land? Can not our great CIA now intervene to end conflicts of that land? To even suggest that famine in Ethiopia be ignored as an act of nature is truly disgusting.

Walter E. Williams tells us we should not boycott South African Embassies, nor ask that U.S. firms discontinue investments in that racist white ruled government of Apartheid.

Williams has quoted many of the black so-called leaders of South Africa who ask that U.S. firms remain there to keep the economy stable.

Williams and the puppets of the South African government have over looked that U.S. dollars from investments have helped build the military force there that keeps it's black population under the worse form of oppression since slavery in America.

I am saddened at your allowing these two staff writers to print such undermining and insensitive pro-Reagan propaganda to us who keep their salaries as they are.

Yet it is understandable as they sit from a much more lucrative position than that of those they wish us to forget; like the positions of the puppets of South Africa, Williams has quoted.

I wonder if Williams has paid a visit to the detention camps of South Africa? If he knows what it feels like to need a pass to visit your brother across town, be placed in prison simply because men want to decide their own destiny?

Would Williams be able to spend his dollars at Harbor Place had not Rosa Parks and many others like myself held sit-ins, lay-ins and protests against racism in America? The work strikes in South Africa prove that the people are willing to sacrifice higher pays so that their grandchildren would not be so oppressed.

Ms. Oliver suggests in her article that, "What cannot be understood, "Forget it". Also, Ms. Oliver refers us to the mental stresses of concerns over things such as famine as is the consequences to our health here in America.

Such a sad comparison in light of mass starvation. I wonder at what elements in our society allow us to become so selfish in our natures.

I would think that we all need to view oppression and starvation to be our concern be it in Ethiopia, India, Nicaragua, Europe or in America. This should be the concern of all civilized people for people everywhere.

JAMES SILER

The budget cutting process

Soon our communities will again be under an assault from a Reagan budget cutting process that can only promise lowered services, benefits and employment along with higher taxes.

While cities like Baltimore will suffer from the loss of developmental money, the tremendous arms buildup will increase intact.

The Administration's plans to develop space-based weapons and further install first strike missiles will only heighten tensions between the superpowers and speed up the amount we will spend on such weapons of destruction.

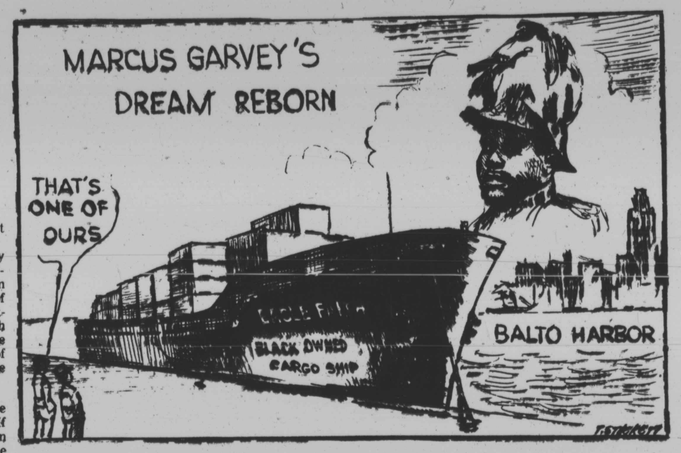
These weapons programs will soon be taking more and more of our taxes, while less will go to education and health care.

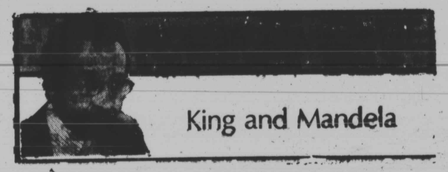
We should call for money to be eliminated from such masterful military programs and instead be spent to create jobs which will benefit our communities.

Bob Baer

AFRO welcomes letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication.





King and Mandela

While the week's ceremonies honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are still fresh in our minds, we must stop to reflect on one basic principle Dr. King fought for; racial equality. Unfortunately, as we all know, blacks in South Africa cannot enjoy the fruits of equality of freedom.

It has been said by Dr. King, Malcolm X, and previous black leaders that "Blacks in America will not be free until blacks in Africa (and the world) are free."

Because policies of the apartheid system were written to perpetuate the status quo, attempts to organize the masses against apartheid in the past have been smothered.

By law such actions against apartheid are considered as treasonous and carry stiff penalties.

During his recent visit to South Africa, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) made a political pilgrimage to the small town of Brandfort.

There he met with Winnie Mandela, wife of Nelson Mandela, a black leader imprisoned for what was deemed by the white controlled government as treason.

After 22 years in prison, Nelson Mandela, like Dr. King, is still regarded as the true leader of South Africa's black majority. Unlike Dr. King, Mandela is almost powerless in the struggle for freedom in his own country.

Nelson Mandela, the top official in the African National Congress until his imprisonment in 1964, is known by many black South Africans as one of the most respected symbols of resistance against the racial discrimination and segregation laws of apartheid.

A former champion boxer and long distance runner, he led demonstrations against the required carrying of I.D. passbooks, or personalized doesters—documents Blacks were required to wear. He went underground in 1960 but was detained in 1962 and finally received a sentence of life imprisonment in 1964.

His wife Winnie Mandela, a black activist, has faced countless efforts to send her into political oblivion like her husband.

She has the unhappy distinction of probably being the victim of more detentions without trial, beatings and prosecutions than any other single South African although no serious criminal charges have ever been brought against her.

She has been banished into eternal exile in Brandfort since 1976. She cannot be photographed or quoted for South African publications, talk to more than one person at a time, or travel without a special police permit.

Senator Kennedy needed permission to see Winnie Mandela and was refused permission by the government to see Nelson Mandela.

The struggles that the Mandelas have encountered can clearly be identified with the hardships that black Americans suffered over the past 300 years.

It is unfortunate that a political system can be so oppressive to the point that one race can dictate the lives of another. So as we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., keep in mind that he would have rejoiced in seeing the liberation of South Africa.

There is still time to give Dr. King a birthday present.

Frantz Fanon — again

In the mid-sixties and early seventies a black psychiatrist name Frantz Fanon (the name Omar was added to the name in later years, as a show of affection by his Arab compatriots) was being widely read by black students, at predominantly black institutions all over America.

Frantz Fanon had been born on the Caribbean island of Martinique in the year 1925 (no one knows the day or date).

Since the island had been a French possession for most of its history (the island had been "discovered" in 1493 by Columbus and has been French territory, off and on, since 1635), most of the native population who attended school beyond the formative grades travelled to France to do so.

So it was with the recognizably brilliant Fanon.

Frantz Fanon was an extraordinarily sensitive person and, this sensitivity coupled with his unusual intellect gave rise to a marked ability to see and analyze complicated human situations.

This young island-reared and French influenced personality was admitted to the University of Lyon to study psychiatry, at a time when the French were attempting to hold on to "their" most prized colonial possession—the North African and Arab country of Algeria.

Fanon had fought in the French army during World War II and, like most of the people that France had colonized, i.e.; Senegal, French Canada, and New Caledonia; he had been taught to view himself, in fact, as a Frenchman.

Because of the cultural parity that living on islands far from the lands to foster and, because of the contrast of cultures between his native African roots (the native culture of Martinique is still very much African, reflecting the origins of its original settlers) and the French colonial overlay; Fanon was uniquely prepared to investigate the nature of racism, ala French style.

This racism and the French colonial posture of "people living in French lands are French" raised all kinds of conflicting questions for Fanon, who knew he was not being allowed to be proud of his African origins and, at the same time, not being allowed to be truly French either.

When Fanon went to Algeria, what he saw was an entire nation of people who had been colonized by the French, not just politically but, most importantly, in terms of their own attitudes about themselves and their native Arab culture.

The sight of an entire nation of people trying to forget who they had been for centuries and the re-collection of his own experiences, both in Martinique and in France, enraged this, by then, well trained psychiatrist.

He was determined to understand, from the point of view of an objective scientist, the nature of this ugly thing called racism. He could readily understand the techniques of the French: for those methods were the outgrowth of a scared ruler who saw the intrinsic superiority of a culture he had to relegate to an inferior position.

What confounded Fanon so, however, was the level of acceptance of the position of inferiority, that was so prevalent among the native Algerians—particularly the middle class Algerians.

The Algerian middle class, Fanon thought, should be the group most out front in the struggle for independence, political and cultural, from the French.

In the book Black Skin White Mask, Fanon explored and thoroughly analyzed the reasons why a people would consistently deny their own worth, in favor of that of their colonizers.

He spoke of the horrible emptiness of being a person who simply does not like what he is and yet is powerless to do anything about it. He spoke of the kind of crazy things such an attitude leads one to do, to one's self and to those who look like him.

Before his death (a death some still hold to be the work of the CIA) in 1961, in Washington, D.C., Fanon had thought he had seen the greatest depths of self denial he could ever see anywhere—in the Algerian people.

Yet, in America, Fanon would be faced with a phenomenon so huge in its self destruction, that the Algerian experience would seem like childs' play. The American black man and almost totally given-up his identity in favor of that of the white "colonizers" in America.

More significant, in the American context, the white rulers were not even trying to sell concept of blacks being either Americans or anything else. Fanon concluded that the only way such a system could continue was and is because blacks, themselves, let it happen. Think about it.

Child Watch

Children need safe shots

Have your children received all the shots they need? The past few years have seen a drop-off in immunization in the Black community that could result in needless sickness.

A child with whooping cough suffers from a severe fluid buildup in the lungs. He or she will cough so hard that breathing is difficult. The younger the child, the smaller the air passages and the higher the risk of further infection and death.

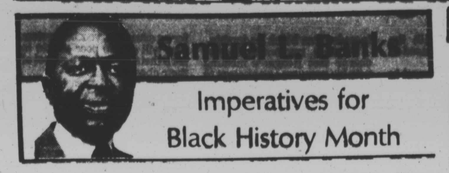
The Centers for Disease Control's recent warnings that we may be running short of the vaccine that protects children against whooping cough (the "DPT" vaccine, which also prevents tetanus and diptheria), have set off a national furor. Many parents are up in arms, worried that their children might miss some of their shots.

Arguments are raging back and forth about the benefits of vaccines versus their side effects, which have prompted several lawsuits.

For from the headlines, among Black children, a quiet crisis has been developing for years. Immunization rates for Black infants have been plummeting. In 1982, less than half of Black children 1-4 years old got inoculated with the DPT vaccine. In contrast, 70 percent of white children got their shots that year.

This downward immunization trend among Black children is much broader than DPT alone. In 1982, only 39 percent were vaccinated for polio and roughly half got shots for measles, rubella and mumps—in all cases at a much lower rate than white children.

Why is this happening? One reason is the Reagan Administration's neglect of the Childhood Immunization Program. In 1981, the Reagan Administration actually proposed deep cuts in this program, but was stopped by Congress. Still, for the past four years, the program's funding has consistently fallen short of the public need. Another is that many poor parents may not be aware of the importance of immunization or know where to take their children.



Imperatives for Black History Month

The 59th national observance of the Black History Emphasis offers a splendid opportunity for black Americans to engage in serious soul-searching and action. The idea of a month-long observance of black history, as opposed to what was formerly a one-week observance, was ratified by the National Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History in 1976.

The month-long black history observance, provides an opportunity for all Americans, to engage in serious and concentrated study of the problems, accomplishments and contributions of black citizens to our nation and the world.

The national recognition of Black History Month should serve as a catalyst and sustainer of ongoing and substantive study and research concerning black life and history in our nation's elementary and secondary schools, institutions of higher education, churches, fraternal groups and sororities and the broader community.

Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, the prescient, thorough and scholarly founder of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (i.e., ASALH) in Chicago on September 9, 1915, clearly understood that we as black Americans, as indicative of other groups, could not develop a collective sense of pride and self-worth unless we had accurate and reliable knowledge of our remarkable history.

He, almost singlehandedly, devoted his life to researching, writing and disseminating the history of black Americans from Africa to the Western hemisphere.

Dr. Woodson's extraordinary, painstaking and sacrificial efforts paved the way for other towering black historians and educators such as Drs. Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, Benjamin E. Mays, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, Mary McCleod Bethune, Rayford Whittingham Logan, Nannie Burroughs, John Hope, E. Franklin Frazier, John Hope Franklin, Charles Spurgeon Johnson, Benjamin Quarles, Merze Tate and other academic luminaries.

It was Dr. Woodson's firm and unswerving credo that a people without a knowledge of its history would become a "negligible factor" in world affairs.

The Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH), as the world's largest and best known organization committed to serious historical study and research concerning the history and life of black people, remains committed to the three fundamental objectives that were propounded by Dr. Woodson in 1915:

(1) serious study and research about black life and history; (2) collection of data; (3) dissemination of materials.

I am privileged and honored, as the 14th national president of ASALH, to be in a position to strengthen and expand the role of ASALH at a critical juncture in the life of 25 million Americans.

In this conjunction, a major effort is underway to expand ASALH's membership through greater grassroots participation, and the establishment of a national educational task force to recommend strategies and educational initiatives to save black children and youths in our nation's public schools.

The edutional task force, chaired by Dr. Herman Brown of the University of the District of Columbia, is hard at work and will release its monumental and historic report at a national press conference on May 17, 1985.

In each instance, the expansion of ASALH's membership thrust and the work of the educational task force, "Excellence in Education: A Black Perspective," the primary motivating force is that there are certain things that we as black people must do for ourselves for our survival and human dignity.

In line with this thought, I should like to suggest some elemental and necessary matters that we need to address locally and nationally:

1. Register to vote for the 1986 elections now. you cannot make a difference in the body politic if you are not a registered voter. The registration process will take you less than 10 minutes. Step forward now and cease being a voiceless and invisible person.

2. Take pride in your heritage. I urged you to go to your local library and secure a book on black life and history during Black History Month. The libraries will have special displays available pertaining to Black Life and History. If you have not been to the main library or your local library, this is a marvelous time to rediscover your library.

In this conjunction, I have received numerous inquiries from many of you in regard to books which have been very influential in my secondary and college years. I recommend the following, as a truncated listing, for Black History Week:

1. William E. B. DuBois. Souls of Black Folk.
2. Booker T. Washington. Up From Slavery.
3. Frederick Douglass. Narrative of My Life.
4. Richard Wright. Black Boy. Native Son.
5. James Weldon Johnson. Biography of An Ex-Colored Man.
6. Lilliam Smith. Killers of the Dream. Strange Fruit.
7. Gunnar Myrdal. An American Dilemma.
8. Charles S. Johnson. Shadow of the Plantation.
9. John Hope Franklin. From Slavery to Freedom.
10. Carter G. Woodson. The Mis-Education of the Negro.
11. E. Franklin Frazier. The Negro Family in the United States./
12. Alain Locke. The New Negro.
13. Walter White. Rope and Faggot.
14. Wilbur Cash. The Mind of the South.
15. Arna Bontemps, Arthur P. Davis et. al. Black Caravan. (anthology of Black poems)
16. Spencer Logan. A Negro's Faith in America
17. St. Clair Drake. Black Metropolis.

The aforesaid partial listing, I believe will provide significant perspectives and stimulation for you. Why not give some of the books a try now. They, too, are excellent pieces for discussion.

3. Work, locally, in concert with others to end the worsening situation at Provident Hospital. The internecine warfare, conflicts and pontificating at Provident Hospital have gone on much too long. The Board of Trustees must set in place firm, unambiguous and fair policies that all staff members must comply with in order to save the hospital.

The interest of the hospital must be the central and overriding consideration. Any effort directed toward a cult of personality must be rejected forthrightly and soundly as a matter of sound and effective governance.

4. Visit local organizations that accentuate black life and history. The Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum, the Eubie Blake Museum and the Afro-American collections at Morgan State University and the Enoch Pratt Library are superior sources.

5. Become a member of the Association for the study of Black Life and History. There are two very active and effective branches of ASALH in Baltimore.

In the final analysis, Black History Month, with its national theme, "The Black Family: Historical Strengths for the New Century", will be what You make it through your Active Participation. If you desire specific help and suggestions for the observance of Black History Month, there is a national Black History Kit that can be ordered from the national ASALH office for $42.50. The address is as follows:

Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Inc.
1401-14th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

—AFRO SURVEY—

Your opinion of the search and seizure ruling

Rhonda Burris

Philson Walters

Darcell Crawley

Frank Green

This week the question to the man and woman in the street was, "What do you think about the Supreme Court giving permission for high school students to be searched without probable cause?"

Rhonda Burris, 19, student, "It is needed. Teachers and administrators ought to be able to search their students anytime they suspect something suspicious, especially since we have had so much crime in the schools lately. Almost daily, you hear reports of someone getting shot."

Philson Walters, 68, retired, "I do not think such a policy should be enforced. It is an invasion of student privacy. If they are trying to solve crime problems in school, I suggest some other method, like hiring more security people."

Darcell Crawley, 24, stock clerk, "Students should be able to be searched in school. After all, if some of the weapons are taken before an incident happens, it would cut down on crime. Right now, you just hear a lot about kids being shot. I think it's the best thing."

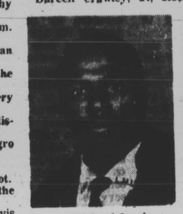
Frank Green, 53, truck driver, "It's unconstitutional. It is definitely a violation of anybody's rights whether it is a child or an adult. If someone tried to search me without probable cause, I am going to fight him. However, if I'm alerted of the reason, I might give in."

Michael Lewis, 24, security guard, "I do not think it should be allowed. I wouldn't want anyone searching me. Don't go in my pockets. Maybe, they should come up with another way of handling school problems."

Betty Mathis, 33, hot packer, "Yes! It should certainly be allowed — for the protection of my children. Schools are becoming very dangerous. Why, you can't even wear jackets without the fear of it being taken. I get scared whenever my little girl wears leather looking pants."

Kelly Mathis, 16, student, "They should not be able to search me if they do not have any real suspicion of anything. A lot of people look mean. You just can't search someone because he looks mean. Everybody needs some sort of privacy."

Valerie Brooks, 19, clerical worker, "I believe they should be able to search any school property they want like lockers, but personal possessions should be off limits like pocketbooks.

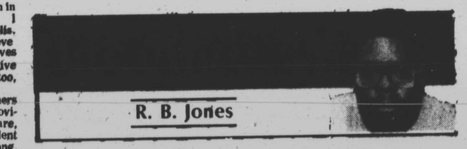


Michael Lewis

Betty Mathis

Kelly Mathis

Valerie Brooks



R. B. Jones

Solicitation

A former classmate of mine at Douglass High School is now a policeman and in a summer evening conversation over some beer and wine, he told the host and me some of his experiences as a vice cop. They were disturbing, not for the so called depravity of the prostitutes and their clients, but for the misguided morality of the police.

A policeman drives up Pennsylvania Ave. or some other street where prostitutes ply their trade and the policeman stops and tries to get the prostitute to suggest that she would trade sexual favors for money.

Once the woman falls into the trap, the officer arrests her and takes her to the stationhouse. After some inconsequential court action the woman is often back on the street in a short period of time.

When I asked him why did they waste their time arresting streetwalkers when there were more dangerous criminals in need of attention, he replied forthrightly, "because they're breaking the law." His reply to the question of who polices the police, was a very vague "We police ourselves."

Self-policing even with the most noble intentions is a precarious thing, but when the police set out to induce someone to commit an illegal act, moral ambiguity intensifies. The recent incident involving Edwin Moses is only the latest in a long line of celebrities who have been entrapped in this manner.

The police use the entrapment technique to clear prestitutes and their clients from a particular rendezvous area. When a police officer stops and talks in a way that causes a prostitute to incriminate herself, he is chalking up a cheap arrest.

Streetwalkers are generally the most vulnerable and poorest members of the prostitution business. Clearing them from certain neighborhoods raises arrest statistics and makes neighborhood groups and politicians happy, but it does nothing to eliminate prostitution.

Policewomen posing as prostitutes who give mere implications that they are available raises the morality question gain. A woman on the corner for prostitution usually acts as an aggressor. She either says something suggestive to a man or she flashes some part of her anatomy that is most interesting. She must give him the impression that her body is for sale.

It is very easy for her to go over the line of proper police conduct. If only the policewoman and the potential customer know what was said then my previous question, "who polices the police?" becomes even more relevant.

Another question that I raise is what is the purpose of these sporadic, class and race-influenced arrests for prostitution? They make no significant dent in the trade in flesh and the police hardly ever raid the showbars which are dens of prostitution, more costly than streetwalkers, but prostitution none-the-less.

Instead of being hypocritical about prostitution, this society should celebrate it. Prostitution is the second purest form of capitalism that exists. Chattel slavery was the purest because it reduced a human being to a commodity, a thing to be bought, sold or destroyed at the whim of the owner. That is extinct, so prostitution is the next best thing because it temporarily reduces a human to a commodity to be rented and used at the discretion of the renter, colloquially known as the trick or John.

Prostitution provides goods (a human body) and services (sexual acts) at a price that consumers of all economic levels can afford. It psychologically damages the prostitutes eventually, but in a capitalist society that is a small price to pay.

Politicians parade the government for the inspection of potential buyers just like pimps, lawyers peddle lady justice like a new whore on the corner and some of our TV clergy peddle healing and salvation with a slimy enthusiasm that would do a Times Square pimp proudly.

I do not know if Edwin Moses really did solicit a policewoman the other day, but the facts indicate that she approached him first. She was as much, if not more of a solicitor than he.

In a society rampant with prostitution from campaign contribution solicitations that promise favorable government action to advertising for products that imply through the utilization sexy young female models that buying the product will get one a willing sexy woman like the one pictured in the ad, prostitutes who honestly trade cash for sex should be commended not arrested for solicitation.

Reagan's second term

When President Reagan delivers his "state of the union" message to Congress early next month it is hoped that the generalities in his inaugural address will be more detailed so that a better view of his second term agenda will be spelled out.

His first term has been a near disaster for the black community and other minority groups. The disavowed and powerless were all but left out in an economic "supply side" policy which of course is the antiquated "hand-me-down" method.

As the president spoke in the capital rotunda, not far from those imposing surroundings of warmth and splendor, were the homeless adrift in an unprecedented cold drift that forced cancellation of many supportive events.

The president spoke of Americans "walking arm in arm" toward the traditional values we have always stood for. This is in sharp contrast to a drastic reduction in school lunch programs and food stamps. Both programs touch the very heart of hard-pressed groups. School children depend on food to get them through a day and food stamps supplement family budgets. Under the Reagan banner unemployment has soared to an all-time high, especially in the black community with a particular emphasis among black youths who want to earn an honest and productive living.

The president spoke of compassion and caring which also was in sharp contrast to his unfortunate criticism of "unnamed" black leaders while meeting with another black group. He said some black leaders has misled their constituency in order to maintain their positions.

This arrogant nonsense followed a report by the National Urban League whose president said Reagan's remarks further polarized the nation. The Urban League has had a credible reputation throughout the years and don't forget this is the same president that said "You ain't seen nothing yet" following his election last year.

Mr. Reagan usually remains aloof from directly criticizing black leaders. This chore is usually left to several lackeys who act as "point men." These particular puppets usually dance in trying to explain what the president calls his achievements.

Apparently morals and ethics slip in the president's memory when he refers to our leaders. We can recall the mass resignations of administration officials who have had to leave office either because of moral turpitude or incompetence. Currently his labor secretary is under indictment and his nominee for attorney general has a great moral and ethical question in his closet Edwin Meese has been cleared but a question as to his principles are still in doubt and it leaves a sour taste as to what kind of individuals are selected for leadership in this administration.

Indeed the Justice Department is considered a sleazy foe of civil rights and affirmative action because of several of its recent court actions. Some observers contend that Reagan's Justice Department has race relations at a fever pitch because it has been in the forefront of attempting to wipe out many social gains made by the black community over the last twenty-five years.

The Reagan inaugural address staunchly opposed abortion in no uncertain terms which of course appeased hate groups and rabid fundamentalist religious leaders, their pious proclaims against violence notwithstanding. The cowards who bomb abortion clinics or other legitimate institutions are encouraged when their perceived leaders waffle on this emotional issue by double-talking. This frenetic climate can be directly traced to these leaders.

One onimous cloud looming in the future is that the president will be able to appoint at least three or maybe four Supreme Court justices. This means that his social philosophy will prevail well into the next century. His lone appointee swings with the court's right-wing cabal which is considered far more conservative that it has been in decades.

Justice Thurgood Marshall, our lone black judge, cannot endure forever. Prospects for his replacement with another member from his ethnic group at this time appear dim, although there are many highly outstanding black jurists available.

The previous four Reagan years have also seen the country's highest deficit, an outrageous unemployment rate and a turn to a more conservative atmosphere generally. The next four years will be crucial to minority groups. The "state of the union" message should reveal whether the president really has genuine compassion and understanding or whether his rhetoric is designed to sound like an authentic statesman.