EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

March on Washington

It has been almost 25 years since the historic March on Washington in which a massive outpouring of dedicated people staged demonstrated to the world that the civil rights movement was a live thing, demanding to be addressed.

The Assemblage gathered at the Lincoln Monument, and during the course of events, listened to the historic "I Have A Dream," speech by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

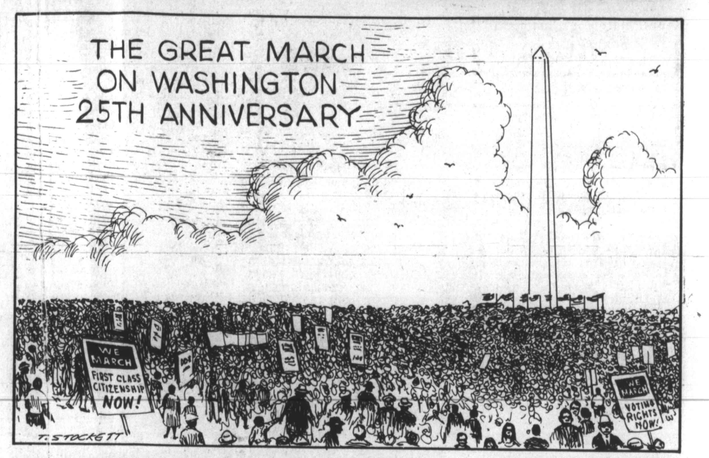
Dr. King was founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, thus it is fitting that the 25th anniversary celebration should be spearheaded by the SCLC.

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, current president of SCLC, along with Mrs. Coretta Scott King, president of the MLK, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change, are heading the August 27 celebration.

A major goal of the rally is to focus national attention on three issues: poverty and joblessness, world peace, and responding to worsening conditions in South Africa.

A plea has been issued for support in this undertaking, and the response has been tremendous. Dr. Lowery says: "We urge all American citizens to join us on Saturday, August 27, on the eve of what could be one of this country's most important presidential elections and at a time when we can have some impact upon the future direction of our country at home and abroad."

A national mobilization office has been established in Washington, DC. For further information (202) 484-2660.



Congressman Gus Hawkins:

Ethics in government

By examining the landscape of Reagan Administration officials who have been involved in some degree of conduct impropriety, we can understand why there is an ethical crisis in our nation's government.

The House Subcommittee on Civil Service, chaired by Congresswoman Pat Schroeder (D-Col.), has compiled an index which is regularly updated with clippings of alleged ethics violations by the Reagan Administration appointees.

As of March of this year, there are 242 different individuals who have been the subject of charges of unethical conduct.

A sampling of this index include the following:

- RICHARD V. ALLEN, National Security Advisor, who accepted $1,000 and three watches from a Japanese magazine that had been granted an interview with Nancy Reagan.

- Twenty-one non career ambassadors endorsed Senator Jesse Helms for reelection in violation of established tradition followed by administrations of both parties which barred ambassadors from participating in partisan politics while on active duty as official representatives of their country.

- MICHAEL CARDENAS, Administrator, Small Business Administration, was allegedly involved in conflict of interest and favoritism in the award of a contract to a Fresno firm.

- WILLIAM CASEY, Director of the CIA, failed to list on his financial disclosure forms more than $250,000 in investments, $500,000 in liabilities, the names of 70 legal clients, and four civil suits against a number of corporations and foundations on whose boards he served.

- MICHAEL DEAVER, Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant to the President, allegedly used his White House celebrity to promote his diet book and negotiate a lucrative contract on its sale.

- REV. SAM HART, Civil Rights Commissioner nominee, failed to pay local taxes, defaulted on U.S. loans, and made offensive statements to groups whose interests are protected by the Commission.

- RITA LAVELLE, Head of Toxic Waste Cleanup, Environmental Protection Agency, took expensive lunches from firms involved in regulatory matters before EPA. She showed favoritism to certain companies and privately discussed pending EPA enforcement cases with company officials.

Undoubtedly the biggest name of the 242 listed in the report is Ed Meese, the U.S. Attorney General. His ethical conduct is particuarly embarrassing because he is the nation's highest ranking law enforcement official - the so-called "top cop."

The former "top cop" under the Reagan Administration was William French Smith, who took an impermissible tax write-off after he was nominated for office.

There were other high ranking officials such as Lt. Col. Oliver North and Admiral John Poindexter, who directly violated congressional prohibitions on aid to the contras and other laws.

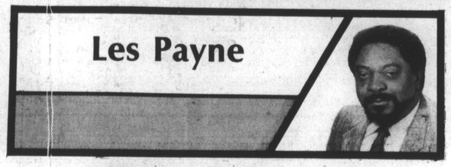
We can not tolerate a double standard in our society. We can not publicly denounce violent crimes, while allegedly committing white collar crimes. This duplicity contributes to an erosion of public confidence in our legal system.

Such violations create cynicism and an attitude of "if others are doing it, I will too."

We must insist that our public servants abide by higher ethical standards. Instead of making men like Oliver North heroes, or continually rationalizing the actions of Ed Meese, we should admit mistakes were made and clean up after them.

The Administration has given public service a black eye. It is time to reverse this dubious conduct and restore the image of public service to an honorable and respected profession.

Our elected officials should be positive role models for our young people in the community.



Les Payne

No black DAs in N.Y.

In this year of our Lord, there are 62 district attorneys in New York State and not a single one of them is black.

This is but a cold statistic, yet, here and elsewhere, it generates rising street heat against the criminal justice system nationwide. Charges of "lily-white" justice, dispensed by all-white juries, court officers, robed judges and prosecutors, has for decades been a dry rot of the Old South.

The North continues to hear these charges reverberating these days. At the core of the protest surrounding the Tawana Brawley case, for instance, is black New Yorkers' perception that justice is beyond their reach.

They have not been told what happened to the teen-ager and they are not likely to believe any version this long delayed.

Details aside, the sketchy Brawley case is but a ghost car on a much longer freight train, clacking with names like Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpurs, Clifford Glover, Yvonne Smallwood, Nicholas Barlett and others ad nauseam. There exists for blacks in New York State and other northern areas a crisis of confidence over the judicial system.

This is, of course, nothing new.

It was the perception of police brutality that ignited almost all of the big-city riots in the 1960's, according to the Kerner commission report.

The Miami riots were sparked in 1980 when an all-white jury freed police officers who had cracked a black insurance executive with their batons and flashlights.

In his book "Black Robes, White Justice," State Supreme Court Justice Bruce Wright offers an insider's view of how the New York criminal justice system ill serves African-Americans. Wright might faint at being called an insider, for his great courage and forthrightness have gotten him barred from the establishment's inner circle.

Meanwhile, there is one on-going New York case in which a district attorney was brought up on charges of incompetence by the U.S. attorney who recommended him in the first place.

In Bronx County, the recent death of the DA offered state officials an excellent opportunity to appoint a black from among several excellent choices. Instead, the governor, keeping the roster lily-white, appointed one Paul Gentile. He is, perhaps, a nice guy.

However, while acting district attorney, he reportedly leaked to the media an FBI document damaging his opponent. Rudolph Giuliani, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, in an unusual public display, called Gentile "an admitted liar" and an "absolute and pathological jerk."

"He is a man of no character," said the highly regarded Giuliani, "who sneaks out of the room, who has lied to reporters and in his background check, who has lied about his meeting with FBI agents and with me." For good measure Giuliani called Gentile "a coward," "A pathetic character" and an "incompetent."

Gov. Mario Cuomo, who appointed him, and Giuliani, who recommended him, teamed up with the white Bronx machine to call for Gentile's hide. "If the Bronx machine can have this pathetic creature hang on, they will control the distict attorney's office," said Giuliani.

A special prosecutor cleared Gentile of five charges, but he dropped out of the November race for the district attorney's office. This is all, of course, an intramural fight among the boys in the clubs. It seems to me, though, that Gentile is no more an incompetent now than before.

Robert Johnson, a black judge and former assistant district attorney, is favored by some to win the seat in November. Johnson is as qualified now as when the governor passed over him and appointed the "incompetent" Gentile.

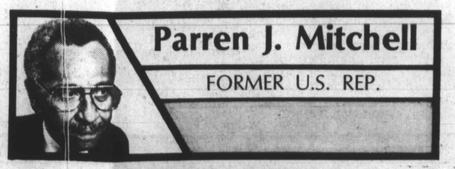
I put this question to Cuomo last week. Ever the dancer, the governor came as close as his facile mind would allow him to admitting that he had passed up a clear opportunity to break the white stranglehold on district attorney positions in New York State.

"I did not appoint Judge Johnson" Cuomo said, "because I did not believe Judge Johnson was as good as Mr. Gentile. Well, Judge Johnson is now the candidate for the Democratic Party and Gentile has been asked to step aside and did step aside as a candidate.

Obviously, if we had known when we appointed him all the trouble that later develped we wouldn't have appointed him, perhaps."

Stay tuned.

1988, Los Angeles Times Syndicate



Parren J. Mitchell

FORMER U.S. REP.

A nasty campaign

The followers of Lyndon LaRouche have pressed the rumor that Michael Dukakis underwent psychological counseling twice in his life when he had two traumatic experiences.

Ronald Reagan stooped very low when responding to a question from the press by saying, "I don't want to beat up on an invalid." Reagan later claimed it was a joke. If it was, it was a very sick joke.

Apparently, that rumor had no basis, in fact.

When a LaRouche candidate ran against me for the Congressional seat, I was subjected to all kinds of vicious rumors, to the effect that I was deeply involved in drug trafficking: that I had a criminal record: etc. ad nauseam.

I know that campaigns are to be hard fought, but I am always dismayed when they become riddled with vicious rumors.

When Milton Allen won the primary election for State's Attorney of Baltimore City, and I won the primary for the Congressional seat in 1970, before the general election, the public was bombarded with charges of voting irregularities.

The fact that we were both black, seeking public office previously denied to blacks, added strong racist overtones to the slanderous rumors.

During Jesse Jackson's superb campaign for the Presidency, I opened the newspaper with dread every day. I expected Rev. Jackson would be the target of a vicious, mudslinging rumor campaign.

Strangely enough, this never really developed, and I wonder why. Perhaps, the cretins who are political rumor-mongers felt it was not necessary because they knew Jesse Jackson could not win the nomination.

Black Americans have an enormous amount at stake in the upcoming Presidential election. We face the possibility of eight more years of Reagan policies or the possibility of once again being significantly included in policy making if Dukakis wins.

Many are predicting a nasty cam-

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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. Write

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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ethel Payne

BEHIND THE SCENES

A way to power: self tax

WASHINGTON — The mood in Atlanta following the nomination of Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate was that of descending from high euphoria to somber meditation.

Two nights before, Jesse Jackson had evangelized the convention with his passionate plea for unity. Some say that it was greater than his 1984 San Francisco tear-jerker. Add to this year's star performance, the drama of having his five children giving a lead-in to his appearance in a breath-taking production.

But with the dawn's early light on Friday came the cold reality that once again the prize had eluded the dream. Showing a little weariness, the once and daring black hopeful comforted his band of loyalist, mostly volunteer campaign workers. "Keep hope alive," he repeated. "Don't give up. This is the start of a new beginning."

Now, there is a lingering air of post-convention depression. Affection for Jesse Jackson and what he has done to move the political process for minorities closer to inclusion remains high.

The disappointment remains and with it a sense of betrayal on the part of the Democratic leadership that is being felt at the grass roots level.

The Dukakis failure to notify Jackson of his vice presidential selection before it made the news was a serious tactical error. There is resentment on the streets, in barber shops and beauty parlors, with taxi drivers and in the grocery stores.

It is a topic of conversation everywhere. On the Metro bus in Washington, four women on their way home from work audibly voiced their anger. Said one as the other three echoed her feelings, "I'm not voting this time. I'm tired of being taken for granted.

"It's plain that they don't care nothing about us. All they want is our votes, but they're not giving up anything. I think Jesse should not have given in. He should have been picked for Vice President. He earned at least that."

The pragmatic answer to this thinking is that Jesse got as much as could be expected. He won a few concessions on the platform. Michael Dukakis has made it plain that he needs Jackson and that he wants him as a vital part of the campaign team.

The fear factor has been brought to bear. It's "Can we stand another four years of the Reagan style under George Bush?"

The fear element cuts two ways - the Democratic high command is nervous to the point of palsy over Jesse Jackson. It is salivating at the prospect of taking back 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and the polls are tantalizing. This is August and the current 17-point lead over George Bush has visions of sugar plums dancing in party heads.

But can the party waltz with the rainbow coalition at the same time that it tries to win back the Democrats who deserted to the Reagan fold in 1980?

The bait is the party rejection of the liberal label for the more reasonable position of "common concerns" that avoids the term "special interests."

To be frank, Jackson scares the power clique. He is considered too volatile, unpredictable wily, egocentric and a comet out of control that veers off course. For example, his penchant for meddling in foreign policy is annoying to the Reagan Administration, and it is driving the Dukakis forces crazy.

Just recently, he offered to negotiate in the Iran-Iraq cease fire.

Even some of his loyalists wish that he would concentrate on shoring up the flagging spirits of the seven million who followed him to the mountain top in the primaries and who now feel themselves sliding down to the valley of disillusionment.

In Washington this week, a two-page unsigned memorandum was circulating under the heading, "Jackson Democrats for Bush Committee."

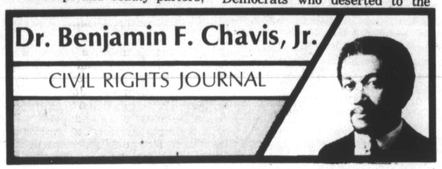
It asks, "When will the Democratic Party respect the Jackson constituency? NEVER!!., as long as the Jackson constituency blindly continues to vote for Democratic presidential candidates. Even prostitutes know you don't give it away without asking a price." Which brings me now to the purpose of this writing.

Atlanta was the ninth political convention which I have covered. I am convinced more than ever that the missing link to black political power is money, lots of it to finance candidates, voter registration and to educate on the issues.

Power and money go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other. The combination can be used for good or for evil. Let's consider the good.

There's a chance for blacks to finance some vital programs on their own - no help needed from government or corporations. Sounds crazy? Yes. But crazy ideas sometimes work.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Jesse Jackson: where do we go from here?

I listened intently to the great oratory of the Rev. Jesse Jackson as he made his speech to the Democratic National Convention recently in Atlanta, Georgia.

Inside of the hall of the Omni Convention Center the atmosphere was electrified with Jackson's speech and passion. Millions of people around the world sat on the edge of their chairs listening carefully to every phrase.

This was the speech of the decade and it provided a challenge to the Democratic Party, to all African Americans, and to millions of others who will be effected by the outcome of the upcoming presidential election.

Presidential politics in the United States is more than a question of primary elections and a national convention. It is in addition, a question of clarifying the political vision and future of the nation.

This is important to the entire global community because of the role the United States continues to play in world affairs, particularly in the affairs of the Third World.

Will there be a greater degree of justice and peace in the world as a result of the November elections in the United States? Or will the poor and oppressed masses of the world's population continue to have their destinies determined by a conservative, right-wing Republican administration?

Jackson's challenge to the Democratic Party set the stage for these and other questions to be answered.

Jesse Jackson's call for the Democratic Party to find a "common ground" and a new political commitment to transform the United States into a nation that stands for justice and freedom for all of the people of the world, was a laudible challenge.

The problem is whether or not Michael Dukakis and the leadership of the Democratic Party will be responsibe to Jackson's invitation.

Jackson stated "Tonight there is a sense of celebration because we have moved, fundamentally, from racial battlegrounds by law, to economic common ground with the challenge to move to moral higher ground."

After witnessing the audience burst into applause in response to Jackson's plea, I wondered if the euphoria of that moment will later translate into a real new direction by the Democratic Party.

Now that the dust has settled in the aftermath of the Democratic National Convention, millions of African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and progressive white Americans are looking for specific marching orders.

Among the Rainbow Coalition, it is given that there is very little if any sentiment of support for George Bush to be the next president. Yet, it will be a gross over-statement for anyone to conclude that millions of African Americans and others will automatically support Michael Dukakis.

—A nasty campaign

Continued from Page 4A

paign, not necessarily because neither of the candidates wants a dirty campaign, but rather because their supporters want victory so badly that they will try all kinds of tactics, including putting out scurrilous rumors about the personal lives of the candidates they oppose.

The supporters of both candidates realize that the black vote is crucial. Bush supporters realize that they cannot win the majority of the black vote but they hope to woo enough black votes to tip the scales in favor of George Bush.

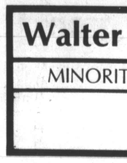
Dukakis supporters know that their candidate cannot possibly win without a strong black vote and will pull out all the stops to try to get the black vote.

Those conservatives who are racists and support Bush will probably try two strategies to affect the race. First, they will try to appeal to racist whites by putting out the rumors, "Dukakis is soft on Blacks"; "Dukakis will pander to blacks"; and "Dukakis is really ... lover", a phrase used in past campaigns by low elements in the deep south.

Second, they will try, through rumors, to persuade Black voters that Dukakis is really a closet racist, that his secret conversations about blacks are derogatory and that his past governmental policies really hurt Black citizens. Such scurrilous rumors will be initiated and perpetuated by their "black" satraps who will do almost anything if the price is right.

Black voters must examine critically the person who becomes publicly identified with the canard. What is that person's reputation, character and integrity? If the head of the Klan publicly stated that a candidate had a black offspring, we would not believe him.

Black voters, beware of the rumor mill, we have too much at stake in the November Presidential election.



Walter E. Williams

MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Blacks have done OK

America has experienced its longest period of post-World War II sustained economic growth. By listening to the civil rights establishment rhetoric, you would believe it's been a whites-only prosperity.

That perception being wrong, it's an insult to major proportions of black Americans as a group. It says that black people can't make it, even under the best of economic conditions.

Joseph Perkins, editorial writer for The Wall Street Journal, challenges this nonsense in "Boom Time for Black America" which appeared in the Summer issue of "Policy Review," a quarterly publication of The Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. Let's look at the news.

In 1987, black business receipts increased to $18.1 billion, up from $12.4 billion in 1982.

Looking at receipts obscures the remarkable performance of individual men, men like Reginald Lewis who orchestrated and leveraged a $985 million buyout of Beatrice International and a year later bought McCall Pattern Co.

What's more, Lewis' firm, Johnson Publishing Company, Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling, H. J. Russell Company, and Motown, the five largest black companies, were not built on minority setasides and racial preferences.

More important than the success of black entrepreneurs has been the growth of the black middle class which has increased by a third since 1980 (3.6 million to 4.8 million).

All told, 40 percent of all black households are in middle-class America. Andrew Brimmer, former governor of the Federal Reserve Board, estimates total black income in 1988 to be $238 billion.

Put another way, black income in the United States is higher than in all but 15 or so of the nations of the world, and to think just a century ago we were slaves.

The rise in black income is attributable to explosive job growth over the last five years where total black employment has gone from 9.2 million to 11.5 million.

Since Jimmy Carter left office, black adult unemployment has dropped by nearly half, and black teenage unemployment has been cut 20 percent. During this period, the earnings of both black and white teens has risen 30 percent.

The great progress that blacks have made over this decade must not detract us from the massive problems that still face the black underclass.

But while we think of progress for some blacks and retrogression for others, we might ask some questions like: Was the progress due to the Reagan administration's rigorous pursuit of racial employment quotas or business setasides?

Was it due to increased school busing? Was it due to massive new spending programs? Was it due to good relations between Reagan and the civil rights establishment?

Anyone who'd answer "yes" to any of these questions has been asleep for the last eight years.

What explains that progress is a statements by Robert Smalls, a proud black congressman from Beaufort, S.C., during the reconstruction era, "My race needs no special defense, for the past history of them in this country proves them to be the equal of any people anywhere. All they need is an equal chance in the battle of life."

John Jacob

TO BE EQUAL

Investing in the future

When New York City had to close down the heavily travelled Williamsburg Bridge last spring, it attracted national attention. And it should — because it's one more indication that our persistent disinvestment in the nation's infrastructure carries high costs.

All over the country, we're seeing the progressive deterioration of bridges and roadways. Many areas have outgrown sewage, transportation, and water facilities.

Governments have cut back on plans for new projects and maintenance for old ones because of the inflation of the late 1970s and the high interest rates since then.

But that neglect will be paid for by bridge collapses, bottlenecked transportation systems, and the economic drag caused by a deteriorating infrastructure.

Many people forget that much of America's postwar prosperity derived from the existence of the strong foundation laid in the 1930s through Depression-era works projects and expanded in the 1950s and 1960s by federal road and bridge programs.

Since then too, we've become more aware of the dangers of pollution and insist on quality-of-life programs that cut environmental deterioration and clean our air and water.

Those are government functions, and they support the private economy by creating conditions in which it can flourish. The better the infrastructure, the cheaper the costs to business and consumers.

So a strong infrastructure is necessary to American competitiveness, and a long-term federal commitment to investment in infrastructure projects is a must for continued growth.

It's estimated that the gap between public investment needs and 300,000 new jobs — more, if you count the ripple effect of dollars spent by workers employed on those projects.

The last time there was a federal public works program, almost 200,000 jobs were created. This was in the mid-seventies. The program helped us out of a deep recession then, but was quickly abandoned.

It shouldn't have been. Public works has to be an ongoing governmental responsibility and tying it to programs for the jobless makes economic and social sense.

It provides previously unproductive people with new skills and jobs, as well as providing the public with essential goods. Today, it's hard to find a city that hasn't been touched for the better by past federal public works projects, ranging from WPA-built bridges to county courthouses.

Over the past decade we've pretended that there's no infrastructure problem and no unemployment problem. Meanwhile, we've experienced physical and human deterioration, as public facilities have declined and willing labor has been left idle.

It's estimated that the gap between public investment needs and current outlays is over $7 billion annually. That's a lot of money, but when you consider how much more expensive it will be to replace current facilities, it's cheap by comparison.