EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

Pres. Bush & Black Press

The Black press and the White House have been in an adversarial relationship for many years. There is ample documentation of meetings with publishers of Black newspapers with various presidents through the years.

But, it has not occurred during the past few administrations. There have been meetings of a general nature at which Black publishers and editors were invited, but not with a solely Black publishers group.

It was at a White House luncheon with President Bush and some newspaper publishers that the thought occurred to AFRO publisher John J. Oliver, Jr., that a meeting with the Black publishers could open the way for a new cooperation between the White House and the Black press.

So, the idea was broached to the White House staff. To the administration's credit, the machinations to get such a project underway surfaced in less than a month. The meeting took place Wednesday, February 21.

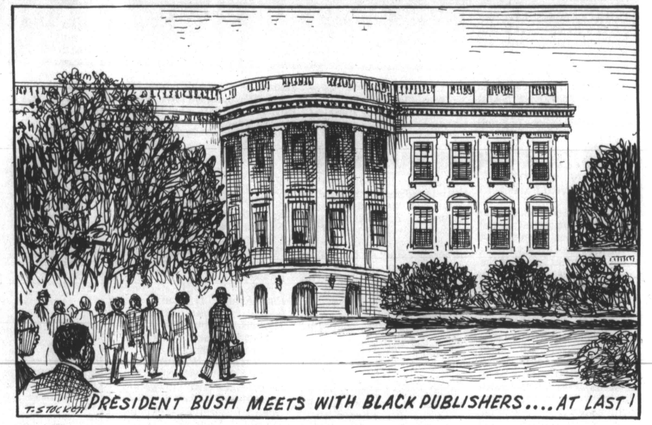
Throughout the Reagan White House years, the dismantling of social programs, and cutbacks of federal assistance, plus a seeming disinterest in the status and well-being of Black America, contributed to the very real split in communications between the Black press and the White House.

True, there were sporadic, isolated instances of appeasement items parcelled out to the Black press, but meaningful dialogue to address the problems head on were not there.

Now, there is hope for a change. As the White House announced previously, the agenda is open so that the publishers can bring up any subject they wish. You can rest assured that they did.

The Bush Administration now has a chance to reach out to the Black community through the Black press. Mere rhetoric will not suffice. Hopefully some positive action will result from this meeting.

It must!



March for Education

"Education Now" is the name adopted by a statewide coalition in support of adequate and equitable education funding. Its sole purpose is to insure that money for education from the state is divided equally among the subdivisions.

The immediate thrust is for support of the Joint Subcommittee on Education quest for an additional $15 million for educational aid to the six jurisdictions whose average wealth per pupil is below 65 percent of the state's average.

In addition, the Coalition supports the formation of a commission or task force to study the issue of equity and funding, and the passage of legislation that achieves equity of resources needed for a quality education for all of Maryland's children.

For weeks now, plans have been discussed for a massive march on Annapolis and a rally, which is scheduled to take place Wednesday, February 28. There is to be a march to the State House from the Naval Academy stadium lot, and a rally from 11 a.m. to noon at Lawyer's Square, State House.

Buses will be leaving from many locations in Baltimore at 8:45 a.m., and it is expected that the community will respond to the need of stress this vital education need for Baltimore City.

The time is now for action. It must be recognized that the educational needs in the state must be the top priority.

LETTER

The silent bunch

The march on the State House Building in Annapolis on last Monday was a March for Principles. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was our hero. To honor his birthday (according to our culture) should be the goal of all Afro-Americans.

When the Speaker of the House, R. Clayton Mitchell, made the statement that to sing a Hymn of Praise in his honor is "hullabaloo" and "creates a circus-like atmosphere," I for one, like most Black Afro-Americans, was incensed.

Being a Pastor in Capitol Heights (where I have been for some 21 years), I considered his statement an insult, not only to Dr. King, but to our Lord and the entire Christian community where I serve.

Delegate Juanita Miller honored Dr. King in a manner that is conducive to our culture. I am sure that all Black Afro - Americans understood that.

I am also aware that the Speaker did not. That he took the action in the manner he did was indeed his prerogative. But I resent the derogatory statements that he made.

However, the disturbing thing to us was the "silence" of the other Black elected officials who represent us. The fact that they were silent at a time like that is unconscionable.

I realize that statements were made by Senator Albert Wynn and Delegate Sylvania Woods, but as far as our congregation is concerned they should have remained silent.

If Dr. King's birthday is to be celebrated as it deserves, the Black Afro-Americans whom we sent to Annapolis will have to pave the way as Delegate Juanita Miller has and stand up for our hero as he stood up for them.

If not, we are prepared, by the power of the ballot, to send a new group to help Delegate Miller continue the fight.

REV. WILLIAM J. SMITH

Samuel Banks
Educator

Nelson Mandela supreme triumph

The wretched, dehumanizing and barbarous treatment of Nelson Mandela by the White minority government for over 27 years in his native and beloved South Africa could not break neither the will nor resolve of Mandela to be free.

Mandela's release by President Frederick de Klerk after over 27 years of ignominious, painful, and execrable imprisonment for daring to stand as a man and to witness for freedom was not due to a sudden respect for Mandela or a humane and magnanimous gesture of goodwill or mercy by de Klerk and the South African White minority government.

Rather, it is a clear and present and inexorable reality that freedom had to come to Mandela or there would be no peace in South Africa.

It is clearly obvious that Mandela is, indeed, a contemporary Titan whose extraordinary and towering example of grace under intense and life-threatening pressure serves a steady and inspirational lodestar for aficionados of freedom and human dignity throughout the world.

The remarkable witness of his devoted and faithful wife, Winnie Mandela, and his family and the overwhelming number of the majority Black South African population provides palpable and unsettling evidence to de Klerk and the minority White government that business cannot and will not be as usual in South Africa.

Mandela in straightforward, eloquent with an unmistakable sense of urgency, states the case: "We have waited too long for freedom."

President de Klerk talks incessantly about the process of negotiations with Mandela and the African National Congress. However, it should be noted that there is not much room available, given the elemental demands of the majority Black South African population for full citizenship rights and land redistribution, for negotiations.

The time-honored principle of majority rule represents an essential element or the **sine qua non** of any substantive or purposeful negotiations. **The long-standing position of privileged and preferred standing of the White minority population will soon be at an end.**

The push of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) in many ways is analogous to the sacrificial efforts of Black Americans in the late 1950's and 1960's for inclusion in the American body politic.

The politics of racial inclusion practiced by Black Americans in spite of pervasive racism and by the majority Black South African population in the face of the dehumanizing and debasing system of apartheid depicts a determined and heroic effort to be included as participating equals in the full cultural, economic, political, and educational life of their respective nations.

It is to the prodigious credit of both Black Americans and Black South Africans, in the face of monumental and grievious human indignities and exclusion, that no effort was made to extirpate or destroy legitimate forms of government or the rule of law.

In South Africa, as is demonstrably clear, the majority Black South African population led by the peerless and intrepid Nelson Mandela, will not acquiesce in or accept any longer a tyranny of rule by the White minority population.

Even though Nelson Mandela and his compatriots have been released from jail, they are still not citizens in their native land with the right to vote and be assured of fundamental human rights (viz., right to buy property, live where they want, use public facilities freely, have equality of educational opportunity, to obtain decent and productive jobs in the market-place, etc.) in the land of their birth.

Moreover, even now, a "state of emergency," exists which circumscribes and severely limits the Black majority population.

It is to the great credit of Mandela that he has made it incontrovertibly clear to de Klerk and the White minority government that any future negotiations must include the basic principle of one person, one vote. He, too, with the solid backing of the majority Black South African population has made it clear to de Klerk and the world that there will be no retreat or backing down on this necessary political imperative. Huzzah!

As I think of the remarkable heady and historic developments in South Africa, I am reminded of the poignant and immortal words of a Black Spiritual. "Members don't get weary, Members don't get weary, Members don't get weary. For the work's almost done.

"Nelson and fellow Brothers and Sisters in the Motherland, please don't get weary." For, as you must know, the work's almost done. Hold fast and push forward and upward.

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

Divestment moving forward

To the amazement of many, the Supreme Court earlier this week let stand the Baltimore City ordinance I authored as a member of the City Council requiring the city's public employee pension plans to withdraw its investments from companies doing business with the Government of or in South Africa.

By an eight to one decision, the court rejected an appeal by four members of the two major pension systems for city employees that suggested the City Council violated the law by passing the 1986 divestment bill.

Similar investment laws are now in effect in 19 states and 51 cities throughout America.

It does not surprise me that this case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

What does surprise me is the fact that the Court did not use this instance to take a swipe at local and state sanction laws, and in effect, delivered its own mandate upon the Nation as to the best way to deal with South Africa.

The court's action says that what we have called for in Baltimore is a proper and measured response by a municipal government to what many people consider a morally repugnant policy.

The court's action further causes no interference with the position that economic sanctions on the Republic of South Africa should not be lifted until all conditions of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1968 are met.

The release of Nelson Mandela does not establish a democratic political process.

The majority of South Africa's people continue to live under the repressive and unforgiving state of emergency, while men and women Mandela's age have never been afforded the opportunity to vote.

Additionally, the South African government maintains a sizable contingent of its Army within the Black townships with no apparent justification.

It is in the best interest of southern Africa and the world community to work for peace in South Africa. The tentative easing of apartheid thus far has been the easy part.

The dismantling of the cornerstones of apartheid is the only thing the world should settle for and pressure South Africa toward and now Baltimore can move forward in participating in that process.

This Supreme Court decision also serves as vindication of the efforts of hundreds of individuals and organizations throughout the Greater Baltimore area who struggled so hard to make a difference.

They realize in no uncertain terms, that the violation of human and civil rights, whether in South Africa or South Baltimore must be confronted with the courage of one's conviction.

Frederick Douglass reminds us that "the limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress." Thank God that through divestment those limits are significantly controlled.

The Afro-American
MEMBER
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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

Tell the story!

Far too many of us believe that the Civil Rights struggle, the struggle for freedom began in the 1950's. We think that the student sit-ins at lunch counters in the southern states initiated the civil rights struggle. Those who believe so are very, very wrong. The struggle for freedom began shortly after we were brought to this land as slaves.

History does not record all the slave revolts that took place, but indeed those revolts happened. Denmark Vesey; Gabriel Prusser; Nat Turner and others led revolts fighting against an entrenched system of evil, fighting against those who had weapons when we did not. No written history, but there is an oral history.

We know revolts took place because we recorded them in our songs, we sang and still sing, "and before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grace and go home to my Lord and be free."

The struggle for freedom and equality intensified in the 1930's and 1940's. Last year, I attended a dinner tribute to Mr. Justice Thurgood Marshall. Attorneys from all across the nation were there. Many Black lawyers who had worked with Thurgood Marshall were there. Some could not.

Charles Hamilton Houston, now deceased, who almost single - handedly made the law school of Howard University a truly professional institution, had mentored Justice Marshall; Robert Ming; Robert Carter, and others.

This intrepid band of Black lawyers went into court again and again, demanding that the 14th Amendment, the Equal Protection clause under the law be enforced. Through the courts, they chipped away at segregation and racial discrimination.

Attorney Z. A. Looby of Tennessee, now deceased, had his home burned to the ground by White Klansmen. He and his client were scheduled to appear in court, but the night before, his client was lynched by a White mob and his body was left hanging in the courthouse square.

The next morning, Attorney Looby walked past the cadaver into the court room. "Why are you here?', the judge asked. "To defend the honor and rights of my client," Attorney Looby answered. What courage!

William "Bill" Hastie, now deceased, wherever he is, must have smiled during the tribute to Thurgood Marshall. He had used the courts to pound away at the theme, "Equal Protection Under the law — the 14th Amendment." A book, "Grace Under Pressure," authored by Dr. Gilbert Ware, has been written about this brilliant lawyer - advocate jurist.

Perhaps Dr. Ware would never have written that book had it not been for Carter G. Woodson, founder of Black History Week (now month). Dr. Woodson was so zealous in his efforts to record and preserve Black History that he devoted his entire life to that cause. A son of slaves, self - educated in his youth, eventually earned a doctorate degree from Harvard University.

He knew, as we should know, that no people can be a whole people unless their history is preserved and handed down from generation to generation.

This prolific writer of Black History co - founded "The Association For the Study of Negro Life and History" and established the "Journal of Negro History." Why this intense fervor about our history?

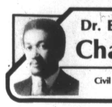
The struggle for freedom reached new heights of intensity during the 1950's and 1960's. But something was different — the media was there to record it. Black people marched and they were beaten cruelly; their bodies were crushed by fire hoses; they were bitten by snarling police dogs. We marched, and we were thrown into filthy jails, denied food and water and safe health conditions. We marched and sometimes we were murdered.

When, at long last, we knew the civil rights movement would triumph, we wanted to know more about our history, our roots; we wanted to know Africa. For the first time, we began to speak about our African origins without a sense of shame. We began asking ourselves, "what is Africa to me?" But the Black poet, Countee Cullen had raised that Question many years before.

I cannot tell you what it was that gripped me when I first went to Africa. I smelled Africa; I saw Africa; I touched Africa. I experienced an overwhelming sense of deja vu. I said again and again, "I have been here before, I have been here before, I know this land. I can only rejoice in that heritage.

I have told you only a part of our story, a story that must be told over and over again to generations yet unborn. I have told you only a part of yet a continuing story. We need that story to sustain us through this second post-reconstruction period in America. You must tell each other a part of that story each and every day at this time when our hard fought for gains are eroded and threatened. We must do this as we see racism once again on the rise in America. We must tell this story to ourselves and to the world.

Tell the story from February, 1990 throughout the year until February, 1991. Tell the story not just during the month of February, but every single day of every single year. Tell the story.



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Civil Rights Journal

Young for Ga. governor

The 1990's will continue to see the national political landscape change both at the national and state level. African Americans and other racial and ethnic candidates will continue to make significant progress in challenging the past racial exclusivity of top state and national elected offices.

Andrew Young is now running to be the Governor of Georgia. The former Mayor of the city of Atlanta, Georgia if elected will be the first African American elected Governor of the state of Georgia.

Young has had an outstanding career as an effective civil rights leader with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960's; a member of the Congress of the United States and a vibrant presence at the United Nations in the 1970's; and as a progressive elected official in Georgia in the 1980's.

We are aware that there are some people who believe that it will be impossible for Young to win the Governor's seat in a state like Georgia that continues to have racial problems. But the truth is, there are racial problems in all 50 states of the United States of America.

If there were more people who would work harder to challenge racism throughout the nation, particularly at the local level, then the 1990's would see profound social changes.

Lest we forget, there were many who did not believe that Douglas Wilder had a chance at being Governor of the state of Virginia. Therefore, no one should conclude that Young does not at least have a chance in being elected as Governor of Georgia.

We believe Andrew Young's chances of winning in Georgia are very good. In a recent interview in New York's *Amsterdam News*, Young stated, "I really do feel a calling to the state of Georgia." During the last several months, there has been a ground swell of expressed support for Young across the state in rural as well as urban areas.

Young is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. The church and the ministry for Young have provided a wealth of experience in leadership development.

Young has noted what he calls "the democratic tradition of the United Church of Christ has served as a framework for dealing with political offices." Young affirmed, "The church has been a good training for politics."

The benefits of the civil rights movement extend to all Americans. Equal justice under the law and the democratic process can only be realized when all of the people of a given society have both an equal access and a sharing of the economic as well as the political power of the society.

In Georgia every rural community and urban center will have to be mobilized if Young is to win the election. Voter mobilization volunteers are now being organized from across the nation to help get out the vote.

Among those who also will be running for Governor in Georgia in opposition to Young is the segregationist, former Georgia Governor Lester "ax handle" Maddoz. Lt. Governor Zell Miller also will be running. Once again, this election will have far reaching implications for the rest of the nation as we face the 21st century.

Andrew Young's candidacy offers Georgia and the nation an opportunity to move forward on the road of participatory democracy.

Like the days of the 1960's, this challenge should be met with the voice and energy of masses of concerned and committed people.

As the "Midnight Freedom Train" now heads to Georgia, "joy will certainly come in the morning!"

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Other voices

George Bush's White House is different from Ronald Reagan's in that it has reached out to the Black leadership. What Bush's policy should be isn't the issue here; instead, let's think a moment about Black leadership.

Ask an average American to name a Black leader. You'll get names like Reverend Jesse Jackson, Benjamin Hooks of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and John Jacobs of the Urban League.

But here's my problem: America's ethnic mosaic consists of many groups, and I can't find their leaders. Can you help me? Who is the Polish leader? What about the Italian leader? Give me the name of the Irish leader.

What about the Japanese, Chinese, Mexican, Armenian, Jewish, Greek, or German leader? Who is the spokesman who tells America how these people think, and what they want? Are they hopelessly wandering around leaderless not knowing what to think or do?

I worry that the answer might be: These people don't have, or need, leadership. They know where they want to go, and how to get there, only Black people need leadership. As a Black person, it's an answer not all that flattering.

Let's pretend that the necessity for Black leadership is a legitimate non - racist concept. Then the question emerges: Who do Black leaders lead or represent?

Several opinion polls report that most Blacks are for the death penalty and prayer in school, against abortion on demand, school busing, and race - based preferential treatment in hiring. But what Black leader shares these positions?

The truth is: Jerry Falwell on the one hand has more in common with Black people than Black leaders do; and, these oft-quoted Black leaders have more in common with White liberals.

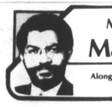
The NAACP received grant money to find out why Black males dont' go to college, whereby they announced plans to check out rumors that many college-age Black males are in jail, and are, therefore, unable to attend college.

An "expert" in adolescent pregnancy prevention conducted a study which reached the conclusion that teen illegitimacy is a result of "institutional hopelessness." I would have guessed low morals and premarital sex.

Issues and Views comments on how networks boost their rating by creating pseudo - investigations and minstrel shows, such as Ted Koppel's "Town Meeting" or ABC's "Black in White America," in order to provide theatre for and to titillate White America.

Black people like Elizabeth Wright, Anne Wortham, and many others featured in *Issues and Views* don't conform to media images of how Black people should think; therefore, all the nation hears is rhyming Jesse - think.

But I get the impression that the race hustlers' days are numbered as increasing numbers of Blacks see they've been sold a bill of goods whereby the "leaders" become more prosperous and those being led lead lives of increasing despair.



Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

The myth of equality

Part Two of a Two Part Series

The American economic and political system promises equality, but has never delivered for the African - American. In fact, the system uses the rhetoric and myth of equality to hide the process of oppression. Both through legal and illegal means, Blacks are being destroyed.

Illegal drugs destroy thousands of African-Americans in many direct and indirect ways. We witness the daily, destructive impact with the proliferation of gangs and fratricidal criminality. But there are other indirect effects as well.

In January, 1990, a comprehensive study by the New York Hospital - Cornell Medical Center, which reviewed traffic fatalities between 1984 through 1987, observed that nearly one in four drivers age 16 to 45 killed in New York City tested positive for cocaine in autopsies.

Researchers suggested that individuals addicted to cocaine experience spatial perception and other physical dysfunctions.

How many thousands of African - Americans are crippled and killed in accidents caused by those whose abilities are impaired by crack or other drugs? How many homes are destroyed, and dreams shattered? How many daughters and sons are lost forever from their families and friends?

The cancer of crack creates many more living victims than those who are killed by the drug. Crack is part of the new urban slavery, a method of disrupting lives and "regulating" the masses of our young people who otherwise would be demanding jobs, adequate health care, better schools and control of their own communities.

It is hardly accidental that this insidious cancer has been unleased within the very poorest urban neighborhoods, and that the police concentrate on petty street dealers rather than those who actually control and profit from the drug traffic.

It is impossible to believe that thousands and thousands of pounds of illegal drugs can be transported throughout the country, in airplanes, trucks and automobiles, to hundreds of central distribution centers with thousands of employees and under the so-called surveillance of thousands of law enforcement officers, unless crack represented at a systemic level a form of "social control."

Most African - Americans do not realize that the most destructive drug problem within our community is tobacco addiction. The tobacco industry makes its highest profits from African - Americans. For two decades, tobacco companies have followed a strategy of "special marketing," targeting younger, poorly educated African - Americans as potential consumers.

In late December, 1989, for example, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco company announced the development of "Uptown" menthol cigarettes, a product specifically designed to "appeal most strongly to Blacks."

One NAACP leader has called the strategy "unethical," and the American Cancer Society declared that the "campaign exploits Blacks, especially the ghetto poor." Under fire, R. J. Reynolds was forced to cancel the scheme for higher profits.

The "Uptown" controversy highlights the fact that African - Americans currently suffer higher death rates for virtually all types of cancer, especially cancer of the lungs, prostate, esophagus and cervix, than White Americans. The statistical life expectancy for Blacks actually declined in the late 1980s, due in part to extremely high mortality rates from cancer.

However, the major means for the social control of the African - American remains the criminal justice system. As of June, 1989, the U.S. prison population reached 673,000, of which Blacks comprise 46 percent.

Prisons have become the method for keeping hundreds of thousands of potentially rebellious, dissatisfied and alienated Black youth off the streets.

There is a direct correlation between the absence of job training programs and social programs designed to elevate Blacks' incomes, and the increased utilization of the criminal justice system to regulate unemployed and unemployable Blacks.

Keep in mind that between 1973 and 1986, the average real earnings for young African - American males under 25 years fell by 50 percent.

In the same years, the percentage of Black males aged 18 to 29 in the labor force who were able to secure fulltime, year-round employment, fell from only 44 percent to a meager 35 percent.

Is it accidental that these young Black men, who are crassly denied meaningful employment opportunities, are also pushed into the prison system, and subsequently into permanent positions of economic marginality and social irrelevancy?

Within America's economic system, a job has never been defined as a human right; but for millions of young, poor Black men and women, they appear to have a "right" to a prison cell or place at the front of the unemployment line.

The struggle against the myth of equality requires a break from the tactics and ideas of the desegregation period of the 1960s. Our challenge is not to become part of the system, but to transform it, not only for ourselves, but for everyone. We must struggle to make economic and racial equality for all.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Colorado, Boulder.