EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

Is there a conspiracy?

It is vehemently denied in the upper reaches of the political spectrum that any sort of conspiracy exists to persecute and discredit Black legislators.

Nevertheless, a recitation of charges against Black legislators continues to mount, and are being knocked down as foundationless time after time after time.

The latest case is that of Rep. Harold Ford (D-Tenn.) who was charged with bank fraud, mail fraud and conspiracy to defraud the government. He was indicted in 1987. The trial, which ended in being declared a mistrial by U.S. District Judge Odell Horton, lasted 10 weeks.

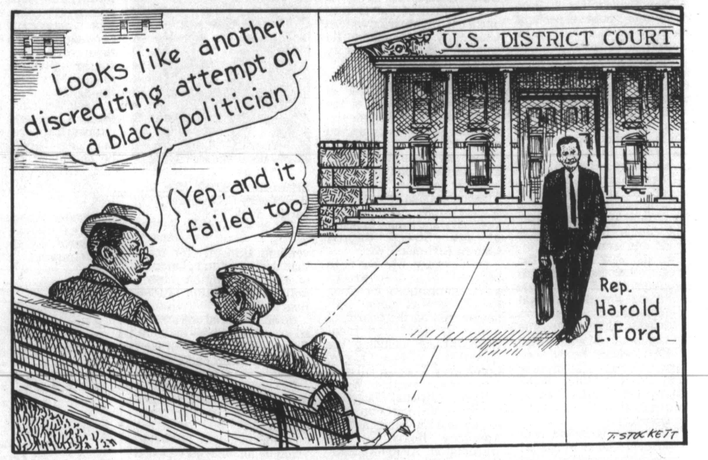
The prosecution alleged that loans to Rep. Ford of over a million dollars were actually bribes, and the money was used to live extravagantly, buying a Mercedes, two homes and a $10,000 Oriental rug.

Rep. Ford presented no witnesses in his defense. His lawyer maintained the loans were for Ford's legitimate business interests. Despite the protestations that Black legislators are not singled out, almost all of the Congressional Black Caucus members have had to face up to some sort of charges of illegal activities.

U.S. Attorney John Gill in Knoxville, TN, who brought the charges against Rep. Ford, called the turn of events "very bizarre" and said the government would retry the case.

Obviously public officials in high office, especially elected officials, are subject to minute scrutiny by the press and interested factions. But it seems that the Black Caucus members are targeted in a higher proportion than the rest of the legislative members for attempts at discreditation.

Note that in every case, they have been found innocent. It is impossible to state unequivocably that there is a conspiracy against Black public officials — but it certainly seems so.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Job well done

Thank you for the article about my discrimination cases in the AFRO's April 21, 1990 edition. As I compared my press release to Ms. Tyler's report, I could not help but marvel at her skill in sorting through my information and writing such a well organized, cohesive story. Additionally, she so accurately captured the mood of the situation!

I'd like to share some of the positive responses the article generated! I heard it led WBGR's news broadcast as I drove home from work Friday! Joanne Evans-Anderson, the friend whose legal representation I requested, praised the article for how well it was written!

Use stun guns

I noted with interest in a news report that policein Camp Hill, Pa. had quelled a major prison disturbance by suing electronic stun guns.

According to reports, only two guards and two inmates were injured in the melee and there was a loss of life."

"I believe it is true that Baltimore Police do not use stun guns, and if the situation had been duplicated here, it is quite possible that someone — either an officer or an inmate — would have been critically injured or killed.

President Edwin J. Boston of the Fraternal Order of Police says he would have no problem with the department being equipped with stun guns, as a matter of fact, many police officers have said in certain situations, such as persons on drugs or those with mental problems, stun guns are better than the alternative.

Stun guns are sold to government agencies at about $200 each and 18 guns would arm a department such as Baltimore's

FRANK W. CONAWAY
Candidate for Sheriff

My 24 - year - old son, Saint Charles White Saint, was enthusiastic about my comments and told his dad about the article!

Two friends with whom I had not had contact in sometime called me. One, Ray Collecton, told me how proud he was of me and gave me his moral support! The other, Kenneth L. Webster, of Blacks in Government, commended my courage and offered his organization's support!

May I interject a couple of corrections. My last name is Saint, which was not used. also it was not the attorney general's office, but rather Dennis Robin, an attorney on contract to the governor's office, who wrote the brilliant probable cause finding on my behalf! The attorney general's office attempted to settle the case.

It is rewarding to be recognized for laboring in the vineyard, as you of the AFRO, who labor usually without thanks no doubt certainly understand.

SAINT KAMMEFA ANN WHITE SAINT

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:

**Baltimore Afro-American
628 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

Parren J. **Mitchell**
Former U.S. Rep.

Immigration dangers

In a prior column, I wrote about the potential dangers to Black Americans if, as is being proposed in the Congress, the immigration laws are relaxed to admit large numbers of skilled workers into America.

Since that time, I have reviewed a paper: "Impact of Current U. S. Immigration Policy Trends on the Low Income African-American Community."

The paper was done by Frank L. Morris, Ph.D., of the School of Graduate Studies at Morgan State University. He has done a scholarly analysis and as a result, some of the myths about the future of Blacks in American are exploded.

One popularly held belief is that by the year 2000, 85 percent of all new workers entering the workforce will be minorities and women.

It is bruited about that the business community will be forced to rely on these new workers, therefore, new recruitment and training methods will be required to meet the challenges of this change in the labor market.

This is not necessarily true, according to Dr. Morris.

He holds that under the Kennedy - Simpson Immigration bill, already passed by the Senate, and pending in the U.S. House of Representatives, would increase more than six-fold the number of skilled workers in Categories III and VI and would increase twelve-fold the number of immigrants in preference Category III (for workers who are members of the professions of exceptional ability).

Morris points out that under proposed law, 150,000 highly skilled and highly educated immigrants would be admitted to the country each year. This cannot help but have a devastating impact on the 75,000 Black college graduates each year.

Dr. Morris also points out that public education for Black children would be negatively impacted by relaxing immigration laws.

He writes, "Many of the children of migrants attended public schools in the cities where there are also many Black children with unmet educational needs." (Without benefit of the new legislation, about 250,000 of all immigrants will enter the United States labor market in which Blacks are disproportionately unemployed and underemployed.

These children of immigrants entering public urban schools where children have unmet needs because of tight municipal budgets will make the situation worse for Black children.

I think the most insightful comments of Dr. Morris are those he made with respect to trends in the world economy. He writes:

"Since these trends spell bad news for all American workers, the case for African-American workers is exacerbated. The situation is even worse than I have spelled out to this point.

Many who extensively cite the Workforce 2000 imply that it says that employers will have very little other choice than to turn to minorities in the U.S. workforce assuming a labor shortage. I have pointed out above that because of current and pending immigration policies and the state of the American economy, a labor surplus is a greater probability.

Yet it is important to point out that not even the Workforce 2000 report made a convincing case that major American employers would turn to the long neglected and abused (save in time of war) African-American workforce."

After reading this paper on immigration policies, I found it hard to disabuse my mind of the fact that diabolical forces conspire to keep the status quo for most Black Americans.

New relaxed immigration laws, a potential for a hugh undercount of Blacks and minorities in the 1990 Census; dilution of Black voting strength, and a host of other factors cause me great concern. Perhaps if we are made aware of these developments, we can blunt them if not prevent them from taking their toll.

Kweisi **Mfume**
U.S. Congressman

Money launderers

Over the past five years, America's war on drugs has perhaps been one of the most visible and prolonged assaults our nation has sustained since the Vietnam War.

The war against drugs has been the subject of intense discussion in grass roots community meetings, city and state legislatures and Congress.

The latest debate, at least in Congress, centers around the ability of international drug barons to "launder" their money in American banks.

"Money laundering" is the process of channeling the cash derived from the illicit drug industry into the world financial system. Thereby, drug dealers are able to convert their narco-dollars into conventional financial assets.

On April 25, 1990, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3848 the Depository Institution Money Laundering Amendments of 1990.

H.R. 3848 is an amalgamation of several drug laundering bills and essentially does the following: creates new penalties to discourage financial institutions from participating in money laundering practices:

Permits federal banking and regulatory and deposit insurance organizations to appoint a conservator; revoke the charter, or cancel the deposit insurance of any federally chartered, federally insured financial depository institution that is tried and convicted of laundering drug money.

Additionally, The Department of Treasury is authorized to share with individual states, information that they possess on cash transactions that may help the appropriate state agencies investigate money laundering practices and to develop across the board regulation of unregulated cash transactions that could be used to launder drug money.

The Department of Treasury is further required to issue regulations regarding recordkeeping of international wire transfer of funds.

As a member of the House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee, I was an original co - sponsor of this legislation, and came to understand the less visible, highly complex art of laundering narco - dollars within our nation's banks.

Nonetheless, there was an amendment defeated to this bill which would have required the Department of Treasury to implement a stiffer one year pilot recordkeeping program for international wire transactions.

The amendment would have required banks to obtain basic specified information about their wire transactions. Notably, a person's name, address, account number, and any third parties that might be involved.

Law enforcement officials nationwide desperately needed to have this amendment to help them trace the flow of drug money and to further expose this intricate network.

Banks already keep this information on hand as part of their normal business practice, so this amendment was not as burdensome as its opponents contend.

The international bank wire transfer system is so efficient that billions of dollars can be transferred within a matter of seconds.

After the invasion of Panama, the Justice Department obtained records that enabled them to freeze accounts at over 170 banks in the U.S. and order these banks to relinquish their records on specific accounts.

What the Justice Department found was that over 90 percent of the money traced to these accounts were transferred by the bank wire system.

The Justice Department concurs with my position on this issue. Before the Banking Committee Justice testified that it is in our enforcement interests that banks keep appropriate records of information essential to tracing the "ownership, origin, and disposition of a wire transfer."

Justice further stated that this should include names, origin, address, bank account numbers, beneficiaries and etc.

It was indeed my hope prior to the vote on this amendment that banks would come out and embrace this initiative.

I voted to go on record in support of more stringent recórdkeeping regulations for bankers and firmly believe that we do not need to invade Panama in order to collect valuable records and data on drug laundering activity.

It is time to start targeting the big guys in the drug industry. To those who want to concentrate on the nickel and dime street dealers you continue to miss the forest for the trees.

Our nation must begin to target the drug financiers who move the mega bucks across international boundaries over the wire.

It is past time for these criminals to come clean!

The Afro-American
MEMBER The Audit Bureau MDDC NNPA UPI

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ron **Daniels**
Vantage Point

Reparations

The Soviet Union recently admitted that its troops were responsible for the slaughter of 15,000 Polish citizens during World War II. The Soviet Union officially apologized to the Polish people and pledged to pay reparations for this heinous crime.

That same week the newly formed East German Government apologized to world Jewry for the murder of 6 million Jews. The East German government offered to make compensation to the survivors of the Jewish Holocaust.

Reparations for genocide or crimes committed against a nation or people is a well established principle and practice in international law. Indeed, after four decades of evading the issue, the United States Congress finally agreed to pay reparations to Japanese - Americans who were unjustly interned in American concentration camps during World War II.

All of this leads to the obvious question, when will Africans in America be compensated for the enormous crimes committed against Africans in America during the trans - Atlantic Slave Trade and imposition of the American Chattel Slave system?

Or as the Staples Singers used to put it "when will we get paid for the work we have already done?"

The African holocaust was the greatest holocaust in human history. According to W.E.B. Dubois, as many as 100 million Africans may have lost their lives in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Even more conservative estimates place the loss of life at 30-50 million.

In addition to the staggering loss of life, Africa and African people suffered crippling "underdevelopment" because of the enormous social economic and political disruptions and dislocations caused by the slave trade.

As Walter Rodney so brilliantly articulated it, Europe and America grew wealthy and developed while Africa and African people were underdeveloped.

In America it was the free labor of captive Africans which provided the surplus capital for this nation's accelerated agricultural, commercial and industrial development.

American prosperity was built on the backs of the African Slaves. And when Africans in America were "emancipated" we were subjected to decades of racial oppression, violence, lynching, segregation and ruthless, economic, subjection and exploitation.

We were freed and hurled into a hostile, racist, capitalist society without land, capital or compensation, not even "40 acres and a mule." The outcome was/is predictable.

Africans in America have never overcome the physical, spiritual and cultural destruction of slavery and its aftermath. Hence as we approach the 21st century, massive numbers of African Americans are still locked in poverty, victimized by racism, unemployment and undevelopment.

For a number of years nationalist leaders from Marcus Garvey to Malcolm X to Queen Mother Moore have argued that Africans in America are entitled to reparations because of the centuries of free labor which America extracted from our forebears, and because of the crimes of genocide which were conducted against Africans in America.

Queen Mother Moore most notably has waged an uncompromising crusade to make America pay for the physical, cultural and spiritual destruction (genocide) of African Americans.

Unfortunately the call for reparations has fallen on deaf ears, even within the African American community. Until recently the aculturation, americanization, and de-africanization of Africans in America rendered the idea of reparations virtually unimaginable.

But of late, the reality of the continued racial and economic exploitation of African Americans, particularly, the Black poor is shattering the "illusion of progress' and the myth of the "American Dream."

A Bill introduced in the Massachusetts Legislature by Senator Bill Owens of Boston demanding reparations provoked an avalanche of new interest in the reparations issue.

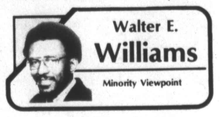
Now even mainstream political leaders like Jesse Jackson, and Cong. John Conyers have embraced the traditional nationalist call for reparations. Conyers has introduced H.R. 3745 which would create a Presidential Commission to study the validity of the African American claim to reparations.

African Americans are entitled to reparations. The issue should not even be debatable. If every other group can receive reparations for crimes committed against them, then African Americans, having been afflicted by the greatest holocaust in human history, are morally entitled to just compensation.

Regrettably the United States will not move simply based on the righteousness and morality of our claim. The United States paid reparations to Japanese Americans because of the growing economic and political power of Japan.

In the final analysis, African Americans will receive reparations when we decide to make reparations a non - negotiable demand as a part of the African American agenda. Reparations will be granted when we amass the power to force America to heed our legitimate claim.

Reparations must become a cutting edge issue for African Americans in the 1990s. We must be paid for the work we have already done.



Walter E. **Williams**
Minority Viewpoint

Assorted insanities

How about a succulent orange? Too expensive? What about some milk? Same thing. Why is this? Here're some answers: Since 1985, Congress has enforced regulations requiring the destruction (or use as cattle feed) of three-billion oranges, two-billion lemons, and hundreds of million pounds of other crops.

They've paid dairy farmers to slaughter 1.6-million dairy cows. For this insanity, consumers are hit with $280 billion in taxes and higher food costs.

Congress achieves this through marketing orders which drive up good prices and win farm votes. In the early '80s, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) planned to conduct a study to bring anti-trust charges against these monopolistic practices.

The farm lobby caught wind of it and descended on Washington. Congress ordered the FTC to desist from any inquiry into marketing orders and agricultural collusion. Any FTC commissioner who disobeyed would be charged with a crime.

Rep. Dick Armey, R-Texas, one of the few decent congressmen, has called for an end to these wasteful and disgraceful practices.

Guided by Armey's Axion, "The market is rational; the government is dumb," Armey wants to see an end to government involvement in farming. But he's whistling "Dixie." The farm lobby gives a lot of money to congressmen.

Let's look at the next insanity. Ask yourself: Under what conditions would people build or plant crops in the path of recurrent natural disasters like hurricanes and floods?

Go to the front of the class if you said, "If it didn't cost much whenever disaster struck." The next question is: What makes disasters cost less?

The answer is federal disaster relief programs and subsidized insurance. These programs encourage people to plant crops in flood - prone areas and build houses in the path of recurrent hurricanes.

We witnessed some effects of subsidies in the recent Charleston hurricane. Property destruction was higher because insurance encouraged construction of homes in disaster prone areas.

I don't have anything against people taking any risk they wish. But let them go to Lloyd's of London for the insurance. Lloyd's will insure anything for the right premium.

Yet another insanity from our grab bag; watch out for this one. President Bush plans to save the environment by having more trees planted? We might call his program a "Thousand Points of Shade."

If enacted, you simply go down to your local Agriculture Department extension, pick up a government tree, and plant it in your yard.

Whether a Thousand Points of Shade is going to do anything for the environment is the trivial question. The big question is whether putting a government tree on your property makes you a recipient of government funding.

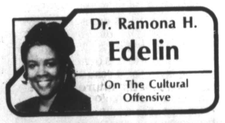
The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in the Grove City College case that a recipient of federal funding is obliged to have an affirmative action program.

Here's the plot. The White House and Congress give us a government tree making us a recipient of federal assistance. When the tree roots have taken hold, they are going to demand that tree recipients file timetables and goals for achieving affirmative action.

We'll have to file the race and sex of our newspapr boy and baby sitter. Dishwashing and cleaning chores around your house might have to be distributed equally by sex.

If you resist, by chopping the tree down and telling the government they can have their damn tree back, they'll get you for destroying government property.

You say, "That's preposterous, Williams; this time you've gone too far!" Maybe I have but prudence demands that you pick up a court opinion before you pick up the tree.



Dr. Ramona H. **Edelin**
On The Cultural Offensive

To love learning

Students across America are now preparing for final examinations, major papers, and graduation exercises. It is a time of completion — of a grade level, a semester, or a phase of academic life.

As our students work to accomplish the completion of their formal studies this year, we profoundly hope that they are developing a deep and passionate love of learning which will blossom and grow, and ramify out to our entire community, every day for the rest of their lives.

A fundamental love of learning is basic and essential to personal development and it is also absolutely necessary to the success of the African American cultural offensive.

The mind is like a garden. If it is not to be an overgrown, unsightly abandoned lot, we must cultivate it with love and care. What we plant there is what will grow there; and therefore we must choose carefully, protect and nurture only the most productive seeds.

We must plant the conceptual framework of our belief system and values, including such great and guiding ideals as the equality of each person, peace with justice, and the ability of the human race to improve and evolve itself through mastery in learning.

We must plant the cultural infrastructure which defines and monitors our behaviors as members of a particular family and group, because human beings never learn alone — even how to walk upright and speak a language — but always in social groups.

And we must plant the more specific formal and informal knowledge bases which we need in order to understand the universe and our place in it, to form positive relationships with each other, and to do meaningful, sustaining work which the world needs to have done.

From the moment of birth, the children of successful cultural groups are imbued with a love of learning, and productive seeds are systematically planted.

Children learn, and learn to love learning, when we as families and teachers and communities share with them the joy of understanding the relationship of letters to words; numbers to the mathematical patterns they represent;

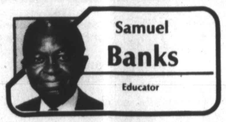
The laws of nature as we understand them through science; our role in the development of language, social science, history, music, dance, drama and physical education; methods of research; one's own style of writing; critical thinking; and — most important of all — problem solving.

Through the years of their development, and throughout life itself, the love of learning motivates and compels students to further explorations of knowledge, more and more specialized applications of what has been learned, and then a seeking after wisdom which is a lifelong passion.

The African American cultural offensive seeks to renew in our people an ancient love of learning, and mastery in learning, which will dramatically change our perceptions of ourselves, enlarge our ability to perform in the highly technological international market place, and reconstruct for us the cultural and historical context which connects us intimately to our learning.

We do this first of all by helping families to be excellent first teachers for their children and each other, by forming study groups and training sessions in our communities and churches.

And we do this by helping our students in every way we can, not only to complete their studies successfully, but also to love learning.



Samuel **Banks**
Educator

The legacy of Ralph D. Abernathy

History, I believe, will provide incontrovertible, palpable, and concrete evidence that in the contemporary struggle for human and civil rights that the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy played a vital, courageous, steadying, and inspirational role.

No amount of pettifoggery, personal animosity or envy toward him or denial of him because he was not a replica of his dear and highly esteemed friend and mentor, the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., can deny Ralph David Abernathy his rightful and just role and place in the struggle for human rights.

It is highly significant, from an historical perspective, that Abernathy was with King, in reality, from the time of the widely heralded and acclaimed Montgomery Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Alabama on December 1, 1955 to the time of the shattering and tragic death of King on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel on April 4, 1968.

In point of fact, it was Abernathy, at a time of immense pathos and suffering, who cradled King in his arms as he lay dying after being fatally shot.

The lives of Dr. King and Reverend Abernathy were inextricable connected and wedded to the power and efficacy of non - violent resistance. To the very end, Abernathy witnessed with King in times of joy and adversity in the immortal belief that "unmerited suffering is redemptive."

Abernathy is richly deserving of praise and commendation for being faithful to the ideals of King and for daring, as King wanted him, to assume the mantle of leadership of the Southern Leadership Christian Conference (I.E., SCLC) during a fitful and troubling period.

He had the great misfortune of following an extraordinary, redoubtable and unusually eloquent and potent philosopher - preacher as personified by King.

Nonetheness, Abernathy a conscientious, thoughtful and knowledgeable preacher served as SCLC's president for five years in the face of dwindling monetary resources, internecine warfare and a shifting of the nation's focus from the human rights struggle to the scourge, immorality and prodigality of the Vietnam War.

One does not have to theorize about the significance of Abernathy's involvement in the struggle for civil and human rights and social justice.

He was not as cerebral or philosophically disposed as was King as an intellectual, but he was grounded in the Scriptures and the moral - ethical imperatives of love and service.

The historical record abounds in terms of his close and faithful identification with King. To this end, it was Abernathy who recommended King to head the Montgomery Improvement Association in 1955 and who endured the ignominy, pain and stress of 17 jailings in the cause of human and civil rights.

At one point did he seek to upstage, circumvent, obscure or subvert King as the unquestioned spokesperson and leader of SCLC? Abernathy was King's persistent and unwavering confidant and friend in bad times and felicitous times.

I believe, too, amidst all of the controversy, that Abernathy performed a valuable and highly pertinent public service in writing his voluminous and poignant "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down."

While there are those who were incensed by Abernathy references to King's alleged sexual propensities and activities, the book in no way detracts from the majesty, power, and remarkable record of King in the struggle for civil rights and social justice.

Abernathy's 623 page work, in fact, provides a vital and human dimension to King and himself throughout their long association, spanning over 35 years, in the struggle for human rights and social justice for all.

The larger public, I believe, would benefit enormously from reading Abernathy's "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down."

Our nation and world are richer and stronger because Ralph David Abernathy, a native of Morengo County, Alabama, came our way. He leaves an instructive, imperishable and vibrant legacy for all who support human rights and social justice and human possibilities for all.