EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

Living Together

At a recent rally in a troubled New York City neighborhood, activist Al Sharpton declared, "We don't have to love each other, but we have to live with each other." Thus he and others declared a cease fire in a war of words and protests which has wracked that city for some months.

Some say New York has a "racial" problem. This problem, however, is not unique to New York. It being the media capital it is, finds itself under the glare of the spotlight more often than other equally troubled cities. New York in the recent past has seen Black and White and Black and Asian violence and misunderstandings.

In Baltimore, a few weeks ago, a group of White supremists called "Skinheads," applied for a permit to march in what they perceived as one of the last few White neighborhoods in the city. The Skinheads apparently are upset about large numbers of Russian Jewish immigrants settling in the Baltimore area.

There is a lot of fear, misunderstanding and ignorance in the streets of our cities. No, we do not have to love each other, but finding the wherewithal to leave peacefully is paramount. Efforts such as those who met in New York to try to put a lid on the misunderstandings which led to Bensonhurst and clashes with Korean merchants are to be applauded and encouraged.

In Baltimore, groups of African-Americans and Jews, sometimes referred to as the "Blews" meet for discussion. The Skinheads still want to march and they may. But the polarization and ill feelings such actions as this can incur will be minimized by letting the cooler heads pervail especially as we slide into the hot summer months.

The South Will Rise

Somewhere in the South, sometime after the bloody and divisive Civil War, a southerner uttered the words, ..."the South will rise again."

Said southerner would probably roll over in his grave if he were aware of just how his beloved region is transforming itself and rising from the ashes of rampant segregationalism, Jim Crow laws and political impotency for African-Americans.

It pleases us to note the latest example of African-Americans, with the aid of small but growing numbers of White voters, flexing their political muscle by casting their votes for qualified Black candidates. Most recently it was for Harvey Gantt of North Carolina, who captured the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Gantt's achievement is a first in North Carolina history. Of course, this fall he faces a formidable opponent in veteran Sen. Jesse Helms. But his getting as far as the statewide candidate for the North Carolina Senate is a major feat in itself, especially when seen that Mr. Gantt captured 57.8 percent of the vote in that election.

That the South is rising politically for African-Americans should be of little surprise. A scan of Black Enterprise Magazine's list of the nation's 100 top Black businesses will reveal the majority of those firms are located in the South. When asked for an explanation of that fact, it was learned the majority of African-Americans still work and live in the South and this is where our wealth is as a whole.

It also stands to reason the South is where we will and can make serious forays into the political area.

Take for instance the number of Black mayors who have headed or still head major Southern cities with populations greater than 50,000. The list includes Richmond, Portsmouth, Newport News and Roanoke in Virginia; Tallahassee, West Palm Beach and Pompano Beach in Florida. New Orleans, Atlanta, Baltimore, Charlotte, Birmingham and Little Rock are a few other cities scattered about the region.

These are thriving, vital cities which will remain so and are attracting a growing number of African-Americans, who tired of the unrealized dreams of the promised land in the north are returning "home."

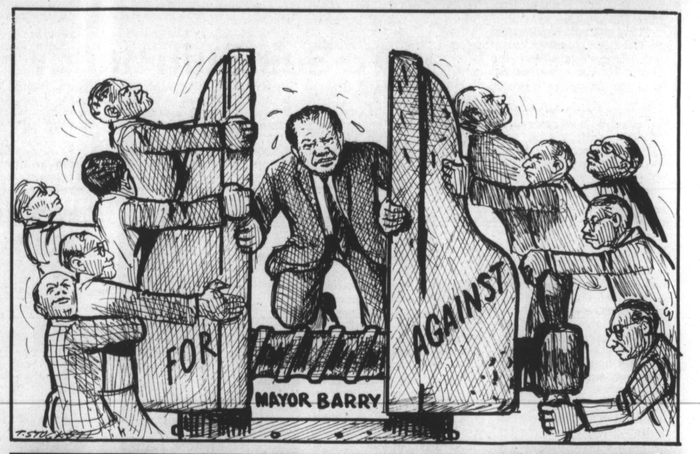
Douglas Wilder's victory in Virginia thrust him squarely in the forefront of his state and the nation's attention. How he will fare during his tenure remains to be seen. But not only is Wilder steering his state but he is assuming a role on the national scene as well.

This is not to belittle the strides made by other capable African-American leaders in the rest of the country. The number of representatives in Congress grows, albeit slowly, and now New York City's David Dinkins joins the mayoral ranks of major league cities guided by African Americans.

Leadership by Blacks on the statewide and national level falls far behind the strides we are making on the local level. Still, an effort is being made which was not attempted in years past. Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley comes to mind in his unsuccessful bid for governor of California.

This is why it pleases us to note Mr. Gantt's achievement. We wish him well in his endeavors to become North Carolina's first Black senator. The civil war ended 125 years ago; it has been such a long time for African-Americans to still be accomplishing these "firsts."

We do look forward to the day when an African-American can ascend to the most glorious of positions without a lot of fanfare and talk of "firsts" because it will be so commonplace and their competency and ability to serve well will be an accepted given.



DO THE WRITE THING

Who Leads U.S. Muslims?

Dear AFRO:
It is essential that it becomes understood that the Lost - Found Nation of Islam, Inc. is the true Nation of Islam as found, not founded, in 1930 by Master Fard Muhammad and led for some 44 years by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

Today and since he stood on August 21, 1977, the Leader and Spiritual Guide of the Nation of Islam is and has been Silis Muhammad. The National Representative of the Nation of Islam is Kubu Abu Kuss.

We want to clear up any misconceptions that our people may have about the Nation of Islam. Islam is a way of life, but because of the "Rebellious Leadership — independent leadership that is for self - exaltation" there are others that hold themselves up to be representatives of the Nation of Islam, as evident in numerous published articles. Many of those articles credit Louis Farrakhan as being the leader of the Nation of Islam.

Maia Hadi (the first person to stand for the Nation of Islam in Washington, D.C.) recently sent to Dorothy Gilliam at the *Washington Post*. This letter addresses the confusion Ms. Gilliam experienced in understanding "what is motivating the Muslims' entry into Washington area politics." This masquerade of Louis Farrakhan's has gone on long enough!

MINISTER ADIB SIRAJ NABAWI

ANC Needs Your One Dollar

This month ANC Leader Nelson Mandela will make an unprecedented trip to the United States. He will meet with President Bush, address Congress and speak to thousands of people in New York, Atlanta, Miami and Los Angeles.

Everywhere he speaks he will be welcomed by millions of supporters of the anti-apartheid struggle and many well- wishers. He will anger some and inspire many..

People who will hear Mr. Mandela will walk away with a little bit of history. Maybe it will be a pin, a T-shirt, a poster or a flag to wave the colors of the ANC.

The date Mr. Mandela graced these cities will be imprinted on a memento that many will tuck away in a drawer, only to be brought out 10 years after Mr. Mandela's visit to show a neighbor or visitor as proof that they saw this great man.

But as African Americans we have a greater responsibility than showing up in record numbers to show our support for Nelson Mandela, the ANC and the anti-apartheid movement.

The anti-apartheid struggle takes more than raised fists and the singing of the Black South African national anthem. The anti-apartheid struggle takes money. The ANC needs money to be successful in dismantling the White South African racist regime.

When Lech Walesa came to this country he acknowledged and applauded the support the United States offered Poland in its long struggle for liberation.

But, Mr. Walesa never lost sight of the bigger issue- money. He made a plea to Congress for money to keep the struggle in Poland for justice and equality moving forward. Not only did the United States answer his plea, but Polish-American rallied to support his struggle with money.

We as African Americans cannot wait for the government to dole out money to support the struggle of Black South Africans for freedom, justice and equality.

I therefore offer a challenge to every African-American who deplores the injustices against Black South Africans, who abhors apartheid and who salutes Nelson Mandela and the efforts of the ANC. If each African American sent one dollar the ANC would be $32 million stronger. Send your contributions to:

African National Congress
705 8th St. SE
Washington,DC 20003
Julie E. Haywood
Philadelphia,Pa.

Women Urged To Run

Dear AFRO:
I am awe-struck and amazed at the revelation that we have no Black women representation in the Maryland State Senate. In 1982 that august body had two Black women members - the late Senator Verda F. Welcome and Senator Louise Murphy. There has not been a single Black woman member of the Maryland Senate since that time.

Baltimore City and Prince George's County have the largest Black population of all sub-divisions of Maryland and realistically are the sub-divisions most able to elect Blacks.

Delegate Gloria Lawlah of Prince George's has announced her candidacy for the State Senate. Baltimore City has elected Black women for Circuit Court Judge, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Register of Wills, House of Delegates and City Council, while leaving a void in the Maryland Senate.

Black sororities, churches, B.U.I.L.D., and social organization should encourage Black women to file for the Senate before the July deadline.

FRANK M. CONAWAY

Mayor and Father — Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke with his father, Murray Schmoke.

Happy Father's Day

Parents know every day is children's day. But Father's Day comes only once a year. So I want to extend a very warm congratulations to all the fathers in Baltimore. You have earned this day of special recognition because of all you do for your children. As role models for our children, you help give Baltimore its reputation as a great place to raise a family.

Thank you for helping mold this generation of children into the next generation of leaders. The love, caring and wisdom you impart to them not only secures your children's future, it secures the future of The City That Reads. By Kurt Schmoke

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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Youth Jobs

A First Step To Self Sufficiency

In my continuing examination of cost - effective and worthwhile federal programs, this week I will turn attention to a critical linchpin of a young person's development and self-esteem . . . their first job.

Young Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities have been, and in many instances continue to be, discriminated against in the work place. Poor quality education and lack of job training compound the barriers many minorities encounter in their job searches.

A federal program to address youth joblessness, sometimes referred to as "structural unemployment" is the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Title II-A and II-B provide various forms of training and remedial assistance to needy youth.

Title II-A provides aid to both youth and adults. At least 40 percent of funds at the local level must be spent for youth, ages 16-21. Some of the activities incorporated in this program include job search assistance, job counseling, remedial education and basic skills training, classroom training, on-the-job training, school - to - work transition assistance, literacy and bilingual training, and work experience.

Title II-B of JPTA is the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program and provides employment and related opportunities for disadvantaged kids in the summer months.

I have introduced legislation (H.R. 2039) to insure that the Job Training Partnership Act is better targeted to improve employment and training services fr economically disadvantaged youth and adults. Among the goals of the legislation is a year - round youth intervention programwith special emphasis on school dropouts and at-risk youth.

These targeted structural programs not only assist the equal employment prospects of young people, but also help other sectors and groups in the labor force. Investment in training and education pays dividends over the long term. Taxpaying citizens contribute to reducing the deficit.

Businesses benefit from trained personnel and save the added costs of employee literacy remediation.

The time is past for issuing scholarly reports about the needs of the year 2000. Only a decade away, we must begin investing more ambitiously today to meet the rapidly changing demography of the future. Investment in federal employment and training programs is essential.

This endeavor must also be complimented by a "Marshall Plan" investment in education and child supportive services. Investment in the potential of our fellow Americans is consistent with our national appreciation of a strong work ethic. As we debate the merit of funding these worthwhile programs we must realize that these investments will eventually strengthen the fabric of our society.

Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

Race And The Media

In recent weeks, the media has reported on what apparently is an epidemic of racial violence and confrontation. On college campuses, White students have initiated "White student unions," designed to undercut their universities' commitments to minority student recruitment and affirmative action.

Politicians like Arthur J. Katzman, Democratic City Councilman in New York City, and chair of the Council's education committee, assert openly that in contrast to "children of European - born parents, there appears to be no liking of learning" among Black and Hispanic children. In Brooklyn, a jury convicts a 19 year old White man for the brutal murder of a Black youth, Yusef K. Hawkins, but another jury acquits the accused ringleader of the murder.

Newspaper editorials and television commentators across the country have deplored the renaissance of racial bigotry, but have done little to nothing to explain to the American people three fundamental facts:

(1) what is "racism," and how is it distinguished from the ethnicity or other forms of prejudice such as anti - Semitism?

(2) what is the difference between the institutional racism of the Jim Crow era of Southern segregation three decades ago and the type of racial oppression which exists in the U.S. today *

(3) what is the role of the media in perpetuating the illusion of equality for people of color and the reality of their exploitation?

Let's begin by defining our terms carefully. All Americans belong to one type of ethnic group or another. Ethnicity comprises our language, religion, tastes in music and culture, family patterns, and our heritage to Africa, Europe or Asia. Ethnicity has been around for a long time, and feelings of ethnic pride should not be confused with bigotry.

"Racism," however, is the systematic exploitation of people of color in the workplace, and the subordination of their culture and political rights. Racism is not explained by references to biological or genetic differences between Blacks and Whites. It's a system which was deliberately imposed on people of color to facilitate their exploitation and domination.

Unlike anti - Semitism, the antisocial discrimination against Jews, African - Americans and other people of color experiences the extreme subordination of the culture, denial of political rights, and lack any institutional means to redress their lack of power.

The media applauds the demise of legal segregation, the signs reading White and Colored on schoolhouse doors and at public lunchcounters. But it fails to point out that racial exploitation still occurs in the 1990s, but under a more covert and sophisticated manner.

A few token Blacks and Hispanics are projected in films, in professional athletics and in the political system, and the media pundits proclaim "Equality has been achieved." But the harsh reality is that the percentage of African - American high school students going on to college is lower today than 10 years ago.

The reality is the median annual incomes of Black families compared to White families is further apart today than back in 1973. The number of Black homeless families has doubled in the past decade, and single parent households are at all - time highs.

To this reality of continuing misery and oppression, the White media declares that "Blacks must assume responsibility for their own poverty and backwardness." This ignores the fact that absence of decent housing, accessible public health care, and jobs in minority communities directly contributes to crime and violence.

The media has a vested interest in promoting two types of Black "leaders:" political demagogues to manipulate local audiences against legitimate grievances, but for their own petty promotion, and elected officials and celebrities whose racial identity is secondary to their popularity.

In both instances, the media is able to either dismiss Black activism in the first case, or use non Black celebrities as examples of how Whites have overcome their racism. The only effective strategy to counteract media is support for Black publications and media analysis which will effectively articulate the truth about our conditions and our people.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado.

Dr. Ramona H. Edelin
On The Cultural Offensive

Business Development

One thing African Americans of all walks of life seem to be able to agree about, is our historic and continuing segregation from capital, in a capitalist nation — and increasingly, world. We may not agree on philosophy or ideology, on methodology or process, but we all seem to agree that our families and communities have less in the way of resources than we need, and than others have.

Therefore, the African American cultural offensive must examine the development of an economic and business foundation for our group, and the relationships of this foundation to the eradication of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, and to the growth of African American - owned job - producing businesses in our cities and neighborhoods.

Statistical information about "minority" owned business enterprises is compiled every five years through an economic census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Survey of Minority - owned Business Enterprises was first conducted as a special project in 1969 and was incorporated into the economic census in 1972.

The most recent data available is from 1982; the 1987 data will be published and released to the public at the end of June 1990.

In 1982, there were 339,239 African American - owned firms with $12.4 billion in receipts; these firms are concentrated in the selected services and retail trade industry groups, comprising 68.2 percent of all firms and 59.2 percent of gross receipts. Of these, 38,631 firms (11.4 percent) were employers, accounting for 68.6 percent of gross receipts.

There were 136 firms with 100 employees or more, realizing $1.4 billion in gross receipts African - owned firms with gross receipts of $1 million or more had 35.6 percent of the total gross receipts but were only .3 percent of the total number of firms. Forty - seven percent of the firms had gross receipts of less than $5 thousand.

While the data about "minority" hiring are not definitive with respect to the number of African Americans hired by African American firms, they suggest approximately 60 percent of African American owners of firms reported their work force, for all industries, consisting of at least three-quarters "minority" workers.

The data also indicates in finance, insurance, and real estate, about half as many "minority" employees are hired by Asian or Hispanic firms than by African American owners. An important question for further study is precisely how many African Americans are employed by African American business owners, by industry.

For example, do the high technology firms hire large percentages of African American technicians and specialists; and how can we work with them, our colleges and schools, to ensure that there is a strong and growing pipeline of skilled workers seeking employment with them?

The research suggests a primary reason for the under - representation of people of color in business ownership is a relatively low business formation rate, rather than a high business closure rate. How does one acquire the capital to start a business?

According to a report published by the U.S. Small Business Administration, "Small Business in the American Economy," (1988), "minority" groups and subgroups have access to and use social and financial capital with varying levels of intensity. Asians rely more than other groups on relatives or friends for business formation loans. This has a positive effect on the business formation rate in Asian communities.

African Americans rely more on selling to African American consumers — a practice that could have a negative effect on business formation, given the more limited income size of the African American consumer market. Moreover, the underlying causes of the lower formation rates are complex: recent research points to inadequacies in three types of capital — human, social and financial.

President Bush has appointed a Commission on Minority Business Development, which is chaired by African American entrepreneur and chairman and CEO of the Maxima Corporation, Joshua Smith. As we study this vitally important issue and strategize with each other about how our economic interests can be better served, let us also communicate with Mr. Smith and the other Commissioners, and make this effort as real as it can be at this important time.

Do the WRITE thing

Don't cuss us — write us. We are interested in knowing exactly what you think about the AFRO. In 200 words or less, tell us your likes, dislikes and personal opinion. Send your comments to:

Do The Write Thing
P.O. Box 13402
Baltimore, MD, 21203-3402

COMMENTARY

Democracy And The Black Union Trade Movement

By Norman Hill

Finally, South Africa may be joining the many other countries in the world that are moving toward democracy. Earlier this year, the release from prison of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of political organizations, and the willingness of the authorities to talk with the ANC showed that the apartheid government at last understands the need to change the oppressive status quo.

But although the American media have given exensive coverage to these developments, we at the A. Philip Randolph Institute believe that one major aspect of the South African situation has been essentially ignored — the need to reform South Africa's labor legislation, which drastically curbs the rights of Black trade unions.

The Labor Relations Act of 1979 established the collective bargaining rights of Black trade unions. But in 1988 a series of amendments severely restricted these rights. They established a maze of paperwork and technical procedures that the unions must follow before they can call a legal strike.

Under the amendments, employers can obtain court injunctions even against legal strikes if the court regards them as "unfair" (with unfairness being very vaguely defined in the amendments). Management also can sue unions for losses incurred as a result of illegal strikes.

These and other restrictions make it extremely difficult for the Black trade union movement to effectively represent its members. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) — South Africa's Black trade union federations — have long been campaigning against the amendments.

Now, even the major employers' association is calling for a significant loosening of restrictions. Employers are coming to realize that excessive controls on union activities have the effect of destabilizing labor relations by forcing rank - and - file workers to struggle outside of the collective bargaining process through such actions as wildcat strikes.

As a result of pressure from both labor and management, the apartheid government has promised prompt action to alter the amendments.

But it is doubtful that such reform will completely eliminate the unfair restrictions. Besides, both COSATU and NACTU also want to alter the original Labor Relations Act to bring additional categories of workers under its protection and to extend the Act of the so-called homelands.

Therefore, it is essential that the world's democratic governments and free trade unions use all available tools of persuasion and pressure to ensure that the democratization of South Africa includes the granting of full trade union rights to the Black labor movement.

Free trade unions are an essential component of democracy. Workers who are subjected to dictatorial controls in the workplace are not fully free. This principle is widely understood and applied in the West. We have an obligation to make it clear to the apartheid regime that the principle must become a reality in South Africa, too.

Norman Hill is President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute in New York.