EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Blacks making history

Two major events took place in America last week and already even black folks are shaking their heads trying to figure out how all this happened.

Ronald H. Brown, the newly elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee and the Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris, the new Episcopal bishop of the Massachusetts diocese have only one major thing in common . . . they are both black.

A look at their backgrounds reveals two separate personalities.

Brown, 47, suave and college trained, is a lawyer by profession who worked for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. He has worked in various capacities at the National Urban League. He is expected to be comfortable in the board rooms of major corporations where he must raise funds and prepare the Democrats for the next election.

On the other hand, Barbara Harris earned her crown amid out and out protests from the more conservative wing of her church. The fact that she is a divorcee, has liberal views on AIDS, never attended college and was denied ordination in 1976, is expected to create problems for the Episcopal church which is not known for taking a wait-and-see attitude.

Harris, 58, joined the church at a young age, became a deacon in 1979 and a priest in 1980. She has been a prison chaplain and was priest-in-charge of St. Augustine of Hippo Episcopal Church in Norristown, Pa. from 1980-1984.

From there she became executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Co., the company which publishes The Witness, the church's leading journal which advocates peace and justice ministries. This, many Episcopalians admit, is not the usual route to becoming a bishop for men, much less a woman.

Harris, like Brown, has pledged to work for unity. Whether they are successful or not will depend on how much support they can muster from the doubters and how much their own people will support them. It is not just up to them, for as Bishop Harris said, if schisms occur, "there is sin and fault on both sides."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Northwood covenants

The problem is with the Greater Northwood Covenant Association. This covenant was organized in 1931 against certain races of people, especially the black people living in this area.

Many homeowners have bought homes in this area not knowing anything about the covenant until such time the Greater Northwood Covenant Association started threatening homeowners to pay maintenance fees for services not rendered to them. The association went as far as to take the homeowners to court to collect the fees.

This covenant has gone to real estate agencies to get cooperation. When a person wants to purchase a home in this area, they would have to sign a contract stating that they would abide by the laws of the covenant and restrictions that they carry. If the person fails to sign such contract, then he or she can not buy property in this area.

An article was placed in the real estate section of a local daily paper January 8, 1989, to intimidate homeowners from protesting against the covenants. The covenants are pretending they are interested in keeping up the area in order to get the support from the court.

This is 1989. There is no need for such organizations due to the fact that we pay taxes for the city to provide the services the citizens, taxpayers, and voters need.

The Greater Northwood Covenant Association has done a lot of damage to homeowners here in the Northwood area causing stress, confusion, mental anguish, and embarrassment when taken to court to pay fees for services they've never received.

The homeowners have had many meetings concerning this covenant. We want to do whatever we can to do away with the Greater Northwood Covenant Association or to have freedom of choice whether or not to join.

MARGARET P. DOCKINS
Northwood Section

McCulloh Homes statue

This being Black History Month, I have become interested in a certain little statue in the McCulloh homes. I believe it is in the 1000 block of McCulloh Street.

It is not a famous black person, just a little girl who used to scrub marble steps for people on Bolton St., Eutaw Place and other places around what is known as Bolton Hill.

I was about 10 years old in about 1940 or so when I used to scrub marble steps on Bolton St. I met this lady she was a sculptor. I didn't know what it meant then. She asked me if she could use my face on the statue she was making.

She needed a little colored girl's profile, the statue was to be placed at the new McCulloh Homes. So I let her do my face. She paid me $5. I was very happy. I believe the statue is still there.

There was a little boy, too, but I think it was destroyed by vandals. My daughters and grandchildren have seen it. I had intended to take pictures of it.

Since I moved from West Baltimore where I was born, to East Baltimore more than 30 years ago, I haven't been over to see if it is still there.

Maybe your readers know something about the statue.

MS. MILDRED C. SMITH
E. North Avenue

G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

Never negotiate won't hold water

Presently, the United States and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) are talking to each other, despite all the sloganizing in the past, that the USA would have nothing to do with any group suspected of harboring terrorists. Less than a year ago, the USA even tried to oust the PLO from representation at the United Nations.

This sitting at the same table, by mutual agreement, is a mighty good sign that the USA is revising its "Never negotiate" policy.

This is also following the historic pattern. Sooner or later, enemies speak to each other. Sooner or later, warring nations agree to sit around the table and make peace. Sooner or later, mother countries and rebels (terrorists if you will) bury their hatchets. In all these instances, and others, the opposing groups, sooner or later, decide to negotiate.

"We'll never negotiate with terrorists" sounds macho, but is nothing more than political hogwash. This is true whether in reference to those terrorists holding Americans in Lebanon or those other terrorists who hit and run, in Israel and elsewhere.

These terrorists, for the most part are more than two-bit criminals. To themselves they are "the enemy" opposed by, and opposing, other enemies.

As in international warfare, therefore, the day comes when enemies must negotiate, if there is to be a return to a cessation of hostilities, leading to freedom from terrorism and, in the Lebanon situation, freedom for the American hostages.

• • •

If such a day never will come, historically, the American Revolutionary War with Great Britain woul still be going on; no peace would ever have been reached with Germany after World Wars I and II; and the Japanese would still be "those yellow-bellied bastards" instead of the friendly rivals and allies which they have become.

If such a day of talking and negotiating would never come, black Africa would be totally ablaze against the colonial powers, especially England, but, sooner or later, in one form or another, negotiation took the place of military might, on the one hand, and Mau Mau guerrilla warfare on the other (principally in Kenya).

Sooner or later, South Africa will find itself negotiating with representatives of the ANC (African National Congress), if not with a more demanding organization.

Sooner or later, too, the day will come when the Israeli government and the now-opposing Arab peoples, including the PLO, will be talking to each other—will be negotiating.

Believe it or not, too, sooner or later, the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and Britain will have to lay down their arms and negotiate for co-existence in peace. Thus, it has always been.

• • •

Returning to the American hostages, instead of "Never negotiate," the real issue is one of the timing of the negotiations and the content of the negotiation package. It also means negotiating from a position of strength, as difficult as it is to determine what is strength and what is weakness.

Can the United States wean away the terrorist leadership one from another and, thereby, scuttle the terrorist network?

Can the United States reward terrorist-supporting countries and, thus, bring about changed terrorist tactics?

Unless our hostages are to rot in the hands of their captors, sooner or later Americans and terrorists—directly or indirectly—must sit down together, to talk, to argue, and to negotiate.

Ex-President Reagan, who popularized the "Never Negotiate" slogan, more recently in his farewell address to the American people, stressed "Negotiate, but Verify" (referring to the Soviets). The two appeals go together, but first and foremost, "negotiate."

What's in a name?

By Chester A. Higgins, Sr.
NNPA News Editor

Washington, D.C.—African American. Colored. Negro. Black. We have come almost full cycle. So if you are a black American, are you ready to close the circle and call yourself African American, once more?

Black Americans have been called a lot of things during the long course of their history here. Many of these things were very uncomplimentary and some people, weary of it all, insist if you must refer to them, call them American or, absent that, just get their name right.

James Baldwin wrote a famous book entitled "Nobody Knows My Name," and Ralph Ellison penned another titled, "The Invisible Man". Both went to the crucial and bewildering question of "Who am I?"— - a troubled quest for black American lost, stolen, distorted and/or misplaced identity and cultural heritage.

A few weeks ago in Chicago the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson along with several other black leaders, including Dr. Ramona Edelin, president of the National Urban Coalition, declared black Americans had now matured to the point where they should begin to call themselves African Americans. He cities two reasons why the need for change is urgent now. They are historical/cultural and political.

In Africa, recently to attend African-American Institute, at Lusaka, Zambia, Jackson asserted: "There is no cultural integrity in skin color." He said the African roots of American culture are substantial "If we are going to teach history, Western civilization, we must tell the truth.

"In our history books, there is a tremendous denial of the tragic truth of the slave trade. People tend not to know, to wipe it off. We are living descendants of this massive dislocation of people. There is a grand deletion in our history as Americans, a gaping hole in our culture. Others came to drop their chains; we were issued chains on arrival.

"There is such despair in our children, so much dope, crime, selfdestruction, aimlessness. They feel unimportant to themselves. We must attempt to lift our children by power of their culture."

Politically, he became more acutely aware of this need during the past election campaign when he conducted a strong drive for Democratic presidential nomination. TV profiles of the candidates traced them back to the villages of their forebears— Ronald Reagan's in Ireland, George Bush's in England, and Michael Dukakis' in Greece. Said Jackson, ironically: "With me, it was just to South Carolina, as though we started there."

Politically, he also sees the link to Africa as key to America's relations with the Third World, which is comprised of "seven eighths of the human race." If blacks had this strong cultural identity with Africa, they would have exerted a much stronger influence on America's foreign policy in which, for example, more than $700 per citizen is given each year to Israel in foreign aid and, by contrast, about $2 per year for every African in the Mother Country.

Also, President-elect George Bush would never have made his first foreign policy move by declaring continued U.S. support to Jonas Savimbi, the black knife terrorist South Africa continues to hold to the jugular of Angola despite the so-called Cuban/South African/Angolan agreement that ostensibly ends the war in Angola, removes Cuban troops and sets Namibia free.

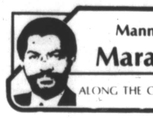
When Reagan and Gorbachev meet, they represent only one-eighth of humanity. "Jackson says. He pointed out that it was Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, a founder of the NAACP, who helped give vision to the founding 70 years ago of the African National Congress." It is the main moral dilemma of our society's existence, the number one threat—this inability of ours to come to grips with the question of race," Jackson says.

Jackson might have added that in early years (slaves and beyond to the Reconstruction era) Blacks called many of their institutions: African Methodist Episcopal Church; African Methodist Church, and had African American societies for almost every social religious and cultural endeavor.

Many African leaders heartily agree with Jackson. A poll in Chicago shows more than half the blacks favor calling themselves African Americans.

Commentary

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS



Manning Marable
ALONG THE COLOR LINE

Ron Brown's victory: defeat in disguise?

The apparent victory of Ronald H. Brown as the first Black national chairperson of the Democratic Party has been taken by some observers as a "victory" for Jesse Jackson and the liberal-left wing of the party.

But upon closer examination, this individual victory in the short term may present a defeat in disguise for the Rainbow Coalition.

Ron Brown has a long track record in liberal Democratic circles. In the 1970s, he worked for the National Urban League. For a time, he was an aide to Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

His major break occurred in the 1988 presidential election, as the pivotal broker and coordinator in Jesse Jackson's campaign.

Brown was "credited" by the press and party hierarchs for acting as a moderating influence upon the charismatic candidate. He succeeded in getting Jackson to come to terms with Dukakis.

Mainstream liberals and centrists were impressed, as Brown created a moderate political image for himself not unlike that of Philadelphia Congressperson Bill Gray, who remains the leading Black contender for the vice presidency in 1992.

One by one, Brown's white opponents for the Democratic Party's chair dropped out.

Former Representative James Jones of Oklahoma, a conservative Democrat who continued his challenge, warned that Brown, "if he wins, will have to make some moves to the center and disassociate himself from (liberal) perceptions."

The first real test for Brown will come in Chicago, where black mayor Eugene Sawyer is running behind Richard Daley for the Democratic mayoral nomination.

If Daley wins, as seems probable at this point, he'll be challenged by independent candidate Tim Evans, who represents the reform, progressive tradition of Harold Washington.

It was Washington's historic victory as Chicago's first black mayor in 1983 which catapulted the movement for a progressive, insurgent challenge by a black presidential candidate within the Democratic primaries.

Conversely, Daley is the product of a corrupt and racist political machine.

The Democratic Party bosses will demand that Brown back Daley, if he emerges as the official candidate. But the political interests of the African-American community, many Hispanics and progressives call for an Evans victory. Brown might be called upon to provide the cover of black and liberal legitimacy for Daley.

Complicating matters even further is the ambiguous role of Jesse Jackson in recent days. Jackson publicly endorsed Sawyer in the Democratic primary, despite the fact that the black incumbent had been pushed into office by anti-Washington, anti-black city alderman.

In one Chicago Sun-Times poll late last year, Evans was supported by 52 percent of all African-Americans surveyed vs. only 14 percent for Sawyer.

Overwhelmingly, black voters know that Evans, not Sawyer, represents a fight-back strategy which will increase black and progressive power.

A correct strategy would be to bypass the Democratic primaries, building a progressive political network which can be represented by a broad-based electoral ticket outside of the Democrats' control and manipulation.

The issues which progressives are confronting in Chicago's upcoming mayoral race must be faced at a national level as well.

If we simply place our collective aspirations upon Jesse's presidential bid in 1992, we will continue to exist on the margins of political power in this country.

White, mainstream Democrats learned several lessons last year. They understand that the black electorate represents the cutting edge of any liberal-left politics, which was symbolized by the Rainbow.

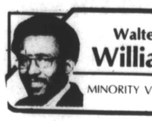
To destabilize progressive and black politics, leadership from the African-American community must be absorbed or coopted into the mainstream.

In one sense, that is why Bill Gray has become such a media superstar in the past year; it's also the reason for Ron Brown's emergence.

Tragically, most white Democrats accept the view that Dukakis and Mondale lost because they were too far "left," and that blacks, feminist and liberals must take a back seat in the Democratic Party.

To operationalize this strategy, a group of blacks and other minorities are necessary in leadership roles. Jackson doesn't seem to comprehend what's at stake.

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, Ohio State University.



Walter E. Williams
MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Language conflict

Language differences divide people leading sometimes to bitter and bloody conflict. Quebec, Belgium, South Africa, India, and Nigeria, are just few places where language differences have promoted resentment.

America has had numerous immigrants — Jews, Italians, Poles, Germans, French, English, Swedes, and many others with different languages.

Strangely enough, while a great potential existed, language has never been much of an issue.

Our potential for language conflict is greater today than at any other time. During the last election, Florida, Arizona, and Colorado passed measures making English their official state language.

The campaigns for English as the official language were in areas with large Hispanic populations. Several commentators pointed out the ugliness of some of the campaign activity, citing the possibility of racist overtones.

I agree.

Spurred on by success at state levels, there are people actively engaged in pushing to make English the official national language.

Language became a political issue because do-gooders using government made it so. During the '60s and '70s, laws were passed in certain areas requiring that official documents, public signs, and other notices be printed in Spanish as well as English.

Bilingual instruction was mandated. Some job requirements mandated fluency in Spanish. Recalling their own heritage, many Americans found this offensive.

After all there were no language laws for Jews, Poles, Hungarians, Armenians, or other non-English-speaking immigrants. They simply assimilated the language and went on about their business of upward mobility.

If Mexican-Americans and Caribbean peoples were left to their own devices, they would do likewise.

Politics is politics, and what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If one group of people uses the political system to impose their language values on others, then why shouldn't some other group do the same with English? A far superior solution is to not use the political system that way at all.

Some folks argue that Americans should learn other languages, comparing us to Europeans who are fluent in two, or possibly three or four languages. There is no important economic reason for Americans to be fluent in another language.

The average American can travel one or two thousand miles in most directions and still be amongst English-speaking people, whereby in just a 500-mile trip in Europe one can encounter three, possibly four, different languages.

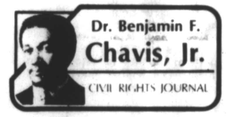
Learning a foreign language in high school for us is a matter of cultural enrichment, but so is music and art.

Anyway, English (or more properly American) is one of the most efficient languages, and that's one of the reasons it dominates the world in science and trade. Language efficiency is measured in part by the average amount of information conveyed per character (letter), fidelity, noise, and redundancy of the language.

In these respects, Chinese and Japanese are among the most inefficient languages. Moreover, unlike the French, we are not chauvinistic about our language.

We take any useful words (like chauvinistic), and adopt them as if they were our own.

Americans have enough to quarrel over without adding language. Let's get rid of laws mandating bilingualism, and those calling for English as the official language, or is that too much like doing the right thing?



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Supreme racism

The recent ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States against state and municipal minority set-aside programs is the latest in a series of anti-civil rights rulings by the Reagan-dominated court. Thus, another blow to affirmative action has been dealt.

The Supreme Court is the highest judicial body in the nation and its rulings have far-reaching implications.

Theoretically, this court is supposed to display the greatest amount of objectivity and fairness in the quest to ensure justice for all citizens of the nation.

Former President Reagan was successful, however, in stacking the court with persons who are ideologically opposed to equal justice when it comes to the rights and privileges of African-Americans and other racial and ethnic citizens of the United States.

In other words, the recent rulings by the Supreme Court do not have the ability to prevent their own racial prejudices from influencing their decisions on matters of racial justice.

In writing the dissenting opinion, Justice Thurgood Marshall stated, ". . . today's decision marks a deliberate and giant step backward in the Court's affirmative action jurisprudence."

Justice Marshall added that the Court's "unnecessary pronouncements will inevitably discourage or prevent governmental entities, particularly states and localities, from acting to rectify the scourge of past discrimination.

This is the harsh reality of the majority's decision, but it is not the Constitution's command."

With the unemployment rate in the African American community soaring at an unprecedented level, the action of the Supreme Court will now cause thousands of others in racial and ethnic communities to become unemployed.

Minority set-aside programs were designed originally to ensure that a fair percentage of contracts, particularly government contracts, would be given to minority vendors and contractors.

Of course, minority contractors were able to provide thousands of newly-created jobs as a result of this approach to affirmative action in the letting of contracts.

This ruling should not go unchallenged.

Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us 25 years ago that it is immoral to obey an unjust law. We believe it would be equally immoral to accept this latest ruling of the Supreme Court without issuing a call to continue to demand affirmative action.

Justice Marshall has taken exception to this ruling and we have a responsibility to do no less. When the Supreme Court engages in racism it is up to the people to become involved in the necessary legislative processes to rectify judicial injustice.

Les Payne

Revelations from: African-American Inst. Conf.

LUSAKA, Zambia — The gathering of experts on Africa here recently churned but did not pasteurize the key issues affecting the continent at this critical point of its evolution through neo-colonialism.

The lively issues of Pretoria's stunning setback in Angola and Namibia, the $200-billion African debt, economic development, all graced the agenda at the 19th annual conference of the African-American Institute.

Much was made of the opportunity available for the new Bush administration to begin to heal the relationship between the United States and Africa's 50 nations, with their combined population of some 560 million people.

At times, the off-the-record testimony from the high-level officials was quite revealing about momentous events and policies so poorly reported from this significant part of the world. America has thrown its prestige behind midwifing the New York Accords, which promise peace in Angola and the removal of Namibia from the racist claws of Pretoria.

It clearly emerges that South Africa scampered to the peace table because Cuban and Angolan troops mauled Pretorian forces in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

Washington has the unenviable task of holding mendacious South Africa to its promise to get out of Namibia in exchange for Castro's removal of his 50,000 troops from Angola.

The chief stick the United States plans to use in coaxing Pretoria toward promise-keeping is the threat of sanctions. Interestingly, for these many years the Reagan administration folks told the anti-apartheid forces that sanctions would not work in South Africa.

Grappling, sometimes heatedly, with this and other thorny African issues at the conference hosted by President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia were some 200 leaders, officials, ambassadors and personalities from the United States and the African continent.

There were representatives from the State Department, the National Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the African National Congress, the South-West Africa People's Organization, key African foreign ministers, church officials, a four-man delegation headed by Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and, of course, the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

I say, "of course" because it has been duly written in the scriptures that "wheresoever 10 or more journalists shall gather there shall Jesse Jackson be in the midst of them."

During one closed primary session, it arose quite dramatically that the United States contributes only 11 percent of its foreign aid budget to Africa. Further, this token represents only 8 percent of the total aid package that the continent receives from abroad.

France's contribution is far greater and even Italy's aid package is more.

This revelation floated like an acid-rain cloud over the remainder of the conference.

Several civilian Americans thundered against their country's contribution as "disgraceful" and "a travesty." One New university president said he didn't know the African aid package was so low. The two black congressmen and even the ranking U.S. AID official seemed embarassed.

One expert on the continent, now a university professor, pointed out that one-half of the U.S. aid package goes to Israel and Egypt, with the latter getting $1 billion a year for agreeing to recognize Israel at Camp David 10 years ago.

Several of the specialists stated that, unlike Israel with its 4 million people, Africa, with its 560 million, lacked "constitutent support" in the United States.

President Kaunda lent his prestige to the discussion of the Africa-Israel aid disparity in a closed dinner meeting between Zambians and black American conferees, arranged by Jackson.

Careful to head off any charges that he was chairing a racist gathering, Kaunda said white delegates were not invited because he and Jackson wanted to discuss problems peculiar to the relationship between Africans at home and those in the diaspora.

"I'm told that Israel is untouchable in American," Kaunda said. "Well, we are over 500 million Africans on this continent with 30 million in America. "We must act so that the Bush administration" will improve trade relations with Africa. "What contact are we going to establish between the African-American lobby and the U.S.?"

In response, Jackson pledged a determination "not to ask Bush what his policy toward Africa would be, but to help determine what that policy will be."

(c) 1989, Newsday, Dist. by Los Angeles Times Syndicate.