EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

No publicity Summit

Now that some 1,000 delegates and leaders like the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Hon. Louis Farrakhan have left New Orleans after a three-day Summit to set the agenda for the survival of blacks in America and around the world, there must be another SUMMIT- held underground without publicity and fanfare-for family members only, to coordinate how the plan is going to work.

Jackson has proposed and Farrakhan has supported the idea of an American Investment Bank- patterned after the World Bank -by using 10 percent of the $800 million in worker's pension funds and investing in junk bonds. The funds would be used to build affordable housing and investing in small businesses. But this was just one of the many agendas discussed at the Summit.

Farrakhan,who says that blacks need reparation for 300 years of slavery, has called for studying the Marshall Plan,which was used after World War I to rehabilitate Germany — and other similar welfare plans that helped Japan and Israel. These plans gave away our hard earned tax dollars while African Americans,Hispanic and native Americans starved.

As we look around our communities and see our newborn babies suffering from drug addiction and AIDS; our children graduating from high school unable to read; millions of our men hanging on corners uneducated and jobless; and our youth strung out on drugs which they sell in our neighborhoods,we must understand what Farrakhan means when he talks about the planned genocide of the black race.

The Summit meeting in New Orleans was unlike any convention of blacks held in recent years...it was strictly business.

The registration was modest —starting at $25—there were no paid luncheons, dinners or cocktail parties either arranged or paid for by corporate America...in fact few delegates, who sat through the entire proceedings, had a chance to eat; and there was only one reception planned in the three days. This meant that delegates were expected to work late into the night to keep their delegations on target.

And this is the way it should have been.

We believe that plans to reverse the treatment now being afforded black Americans cannot be discussed before the glare of television lights.. The NEXT Summit must also include leaders from all church denominations, and heads of organizations, businesses and education institutions who feel the urgency to make a plan that will work. The group should be small enough to assure success ,yet large enough to represent even the subculture in our society.

We congratulate the steering committee of the New Orleans Summit—especially Mayor Richard Hatcher, Dr. C. DeLores Tucker, Rep. David Richardson and Dr. Ramona Edelin, and urge them to work with state delegations, the black press and other like minded groups to plan the next SUMMIT . We've had enough and it is time we let the world know it.

Needle exchange

Earlier this month, researchers at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health put forth a proposition calling for an experimental program to supply clean needles to drug addicts, in an effort to stem the spread of AIDS.

The proponents of the plan sought to enlist the aid of city officials, and Mayor Schmoke announced that he felt this is a way to reduce the incidence of AIDS in the inner city, and that he would be in favor of it, if it were a part of a national program.

There was an immediate hue and cry, lambasting the mayor saying he was pro-legalization of drugs, and that this program would encourage the use of hard drugs.

The idea is not new. It was proposed in Maryland in 1987, but put on the back burner and never implemented. The program is being tried in several European cities, in addition to New York, Tacoma, Wash., and Portland, Ore.

Analysis of results thus far has produced no evidence that the needle exchange programs encourage increased drug use. These findings have been unanimous. This eliminates the primary objection to the program.

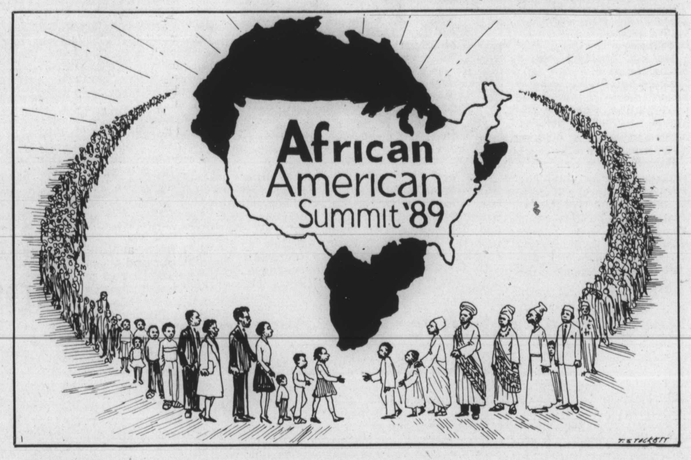
It is indeed unfortunate that whenever our mayor proposed a plan which may be contrary to the establishment, he is instantly castigated, verbally flogged in the local white-owned media.

The bottom line is there are 40,000 drug addicts in Baltimore City. At least 30 percent of them are already infected with AIDS. Any effort to help curb the spread of this dread disease, is worthy of exploration. And that's all the mayor proposes.

Most effective

Recently, four black legislators in the Maryland General Assembly were voted as among the ten most effective by their peers. Sen. Blount was selected on the Senate side.

Delegates cited as most effective included Del. Howard (Pete) Rawlings, which was duly reported in a previous editorial. Overlooked however, were Dels. Elijah Cummings, and Del. Richard N. Dixon. The slight was unintentional.



Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

Reclaim streets, protect churches

I promised to tell you an encouraging story about effective cooperation by police officers in the battle against drugs. I will tell you that story, but first, we must assess how bad the situation is in our communities because of the narcotics traffic.

"Don't walk any place at night, Parren, it's just so dangerous." "Don't go into that area alone at any time, P. J., that is drug heaven and they are not responsible for their acts."

"You are a fool to try to talk to them, because their brains are drug damaged." These and other admonitions are passed on to me all the time.

To date, I have not run into any difficulties on the streets, so I have walked the streets and will continue to do so. Yet, I know many people are afraid in the streets, afraid to sit on their front door steps or on their front porches.

I am particularly incensed over the fact that the drug users and suppliers are congregating in front of our churches. They use these locations because they assume the churches are not used during the week days, hence, there is less likelihood of someone calling the police.

Yes, we need to reclaim our streets and let us begin by reclaiming our church properties.

The situation at Israel Baptist Church in Baltimore had become intolerable. Drug users and their suppliers hung out in front of the church each day.

After getting their drugs, the users would go into some vacant houses in back of the church and "fire up." The gutter alongside of the church was littered with needles and other paraphernalia.

Some in the drug traffic had the audacity to mingle in with the congregation as they went into 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday. They sold their drugs, believing that the police would believe that they were church members or attendees.

Senior citizens were afraid to attend evening church services. The brass rail in front of the church had been bent from the weight of users leaning on it or sitting on it.

For several days, I spent several hours in the area before taking the next step.

The very fine, committed and courageous pastor of the church, Rev. H. Walden Wilson, and I met with Police Commissioner Edward Tilghman, who agreed to our call for an intense clean-up effort.

Commissioner Tilghman delivered on his promise. A foot patrolman was assigned to the area. Squad cars and a police wagon patrolled the area on a regular systematic basis. Four drug houses in the vicinity of the church were raided. The vacant houses in back of the church were boarded up.

In my subsequent follow-up visits, no matter the hour when I went, the church corner was clear. Effective policing does work. The church and the community are appreciative of good, cooperative police work.

We know that after a period of time (perhaps two or three months, users and suppliers will begin to drift back to the area. When that happens, another hard, intense crackdown must be initiated. I know we will have the full cooperation of the Police Department again. Eternal vigilance is required.

I was horrified to learn that other churches are facing situations equally as bad as that faced by Israel Baptist Church. This simply cannot be tolerated. It is wrong to desecrate church property! It is wrong to intimidate people into staying away from church!

The churches facing this kind of problem must have some persons inside the church during the day and during the early evening so that they can call the police. Church members must drive by the church daily, and call the police when necessary. Churches under such adverse situations must seek and demand police crackdowns.

Yes, we must reclaim our streets. Let us begin by reclaiming our church properties.

G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

New frontiers to be conquered

Have any black sociologists made any in-depth analysis of what makes white people tick, what are their peculiar family problems, and what makes them so universally anti-everybody and anti-everything that is not ethnically white?

This question is being asked because, up to this point in history, it seems that all the surveys, the studies and the research are directed from whites towards blacks, with the blacks always as the guinea pigs.

This is not to belittle such investigation, by and large. Certainly, very much that has been worth knowing has come from the universities, north and south; certainly, too, African-Americans have learned very much about themselves and their ancestors because of such studies .

The rub is that African-American sociologists, and anthropologists, too, have surveyed and studied their own people to death, with no inquisitiveness to find and give answers to the "white problem," from the black perspective.

It is though everything white is perfect and not in need of the microscope of investigation — scientific and scholarly investigation — with the extra insights of Blacks.

What is true of the sociologists was also true of the African-Americans in economics and businesses, until very recently. Although blacks are still doing little on the higher branches of mathematics and theoretical economics, they are now operating on a very broad scale in applied economics, especially banking, commerce and financial planning, across racial lines.

Some blacks are economists with government and several hold seats as governors of federal reserve banks. No writings by African Americans, however, have addressed the large economic questions, national or international.

In the field of religion, it is always whites going to Christianize the Blacks. Never the other way around.

German Moravians, in the 1700s, set up the first churches for slaves in the Virgin Islands and other parts of the Caribbean. The British Society for the Propagation of the Faith did the same, later, all over Africa. The slave system of the South introduced slaves to the Bible — and of course, with a slant that justified and protected slavery.

With Emancipation, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of whites, mostly from the north, headed to the former slave states, to establish churches and schools for the freedom.

Again, it is as if those who have been enslavers, lynchers, oppressors and practitioners of discrimination are not also in the need of prayer and do not also need to hear the message of Christ, Son of God — perhaps message in a new voice.

Black historians — Woodson, Franklin, Quarles, et al — for the most part, also deal largely with matters of African-Amerian interests.

They rose to fill a vaccuum in orthodox history, however, and they could not write of the great questions of the abolitionist movement or the War Between the States, without enmeshing themselves in the evolution and problems of both races as they impacted one upon the other.

Lack of space prevents an attempt at probing into the ways in which the black artist and the black writer of fiction and non-fiction have met the bonds of racial limitation, as they have considered the entire world — or the entire society — their stage.

In a nutshell, the question is this: "Has the time not come when the guinea-pig approach of investigation and research — and Christianizing — should be more of a two-way street?"

The African American Summit agenda

Compiled by
Dr. Ron Walters

The African American Summit which convened in New Orleans April 21-23, 1989 sought progressive solutions to the conditions faced by African Americans in this country and abroad.

Following are the agenda items agreed to by the delegates. Further clarificatiion of the agenda will be made in the next 30 days.

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY

1. Value: Let us send a message to friend and foe alike that we still value the nuclear family-man, woman and child - and the extended family, as not necessarily the best, but the most functional form of family that will enable us to survive as a people in a society which is based on cultural and economic viability. To that extent, we will fight to both restore and to preserve it as the basic unity upon which the health and welfare of the entire African-American community is built.

2. Policy:

Housing:

1. We need to house the family. The Federal government should resume its role as a builder of housing and as a "last resort" provider of housing for the indigent. And the states should take a more active role in housing availability and accessibility. Market intervention strategies such as those contained in the Fair Housing Act should be utilized in order to make housing accessible and available to the public.

2. The "red-tape" should be reduced for the conveying of federal foreclosed housing to non-homeowners. Home ownership should be a universal goal of the African-American family.

3. Support for mutual housing concept and public housing residential management leading to ownership.

Education:

We call for a massive increase in appropriations for education at the local, state and national levels, in order to provide the resources to educate African-American children, since they will be a major portion of the educational systems of the future and major share of the American workforce as well.

We call for a halt to rush to implement testing, certification schemes and other devices designed to basically eliminate black teachers from the public school systems, and a national evaluation of these instruments for their fairness. We also agree with those who want to restore integrity to the teaching profession, find more male teachers, and increase teaching salaries.

We call for a massive increase in federal commitment to the financial support of historically African-American colleges, assistance in and substantial increases in financial assistance to African-American students in order to increase their enrollment in colleges and universities and in graduate and professional schools as well. In this regard, we urge the administration to reduce the portion of financial aid packages comprised of loans. We also, voice our opposition to any plan to require volunteer work in order to receive financial assistance as a new impediment to equal educational opportunity. We furthermore, oppose the implementation of National Collegiate Athletic Association Proposition 42.

Employment:

African Americans must forge an agenda for investment in our people and, indeed, the bottom four-fifths of the American people. That agenda must include investment in our present and future workers. Not only must their education prepare them for high technology jobs of the future, but they must have the right to a decent minimum wage, health care, child care, housing assistance and free exercisable right to collective bargaining.

Welfare families must also be given equal access to income through gainful employment, and transitional assistance given from the welfare defendant status to employment opportunities; extended Medicaid coverage should also be implemented.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In every age, economic development has been a necessity for social progress for any group in America. African Americans, however, have been kept-and have participated in keeping themselves-in a situation of economic powerlessness. This, however, is uniquely the age to focus on economic development-and win. Therefore,

1. We call for the support of all African Americans for economic development projects in force, such as the U.S. Investment Corporation, the "Buy Black" campaigns, the POWER program, and others. These projects and others are based on the principle of mutual economic support as the primary foundation for generating indigenous capital and as the most basic step of securing large amounts of capital from others.

2. We call for the reclamation of our capital. We give away enormous sums of money which are managed by others for the benefit of others.

3. We call for reparations. If they are good enough for the Japanese Americans, and Native Americans they are good for those of us who worked for hundreds of years unpaid, and who now need that capital that was used to build America and Europe, for our own development in this country.

4. Each state unit of the African-American Summit should take an analysis of all public money known to exist in those communities, and African Americans should carefully monitor the distribution in and growth of such funds.

5. The lack of access to capital for business development constitutes a major impediment, so African Americans should form joint ventures in order to increase the capitalization of projects which are likely to enhance community development. They should also call attention to the enormous resource capital flows to the non-minority business private sector and redouble their efforts to obtain set-aside legislation and enforcement that is binding.

6. African Americans should also devise new projects such as the U.S. Investment Corporation in order to be able to invest in stocks and bonds owned by an African American investment firm to earn a fair market rate of return and simultaneously enhance the pool of capital available.

7.African Americans should investigate the use of pension funds stored in labor unions and state governments as a source of investment capital for community development project funding.

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

African Americans are reaching a critical point in American history in the multiple number of candidates for offices, and the often unstable receptivity of the major political parties to their participation. At the same time, recent great strides have been made in presidential political politics and the attainment of African-American leadership of the party. It is therefore, recommended that:

1. Strategies to enhance the competitive position and role of the African-American vote should be sought at local and national levels. Therefore, we charge the Democratic and Republican parties alike that, both as a matter of fact and of logic.They will not and should not get the African-American vote without the same incentives for voting that they offer other groups in the political system.

2. African ,Americans who run for office should not make their decision to do so purely on an individual basis, or on the basis of coalition politics with those outside of the community as a primary matter, but should consider whether or not their candidacy will have the result of diluting the opportunities for the continued maintenance of African-American political power.

3. We call for the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by the Justice Department, the states and the major political parties, and especially in those areas where the right to vote and the impact of the vote has not been clearly and fairly established.

4. We call upon African-American politicians to be accountable to their constituents. We understand that in many places where we attained significant political power, that power is not utilized to the maximum effect to ensure protection of human needs for the African-American community.

5. We call for the revival of community organization politics as the key to accountability of elected and appointed officials and as the critical missing element in fighting and eliminating grassroots problems.

THE GLOBAL COMMITMENT

African Americans are indeed a global people with a history and a future rooted in world affairs. We understand that root in the past, but we only dimly perceive the magnitude of what a free South Africa or a free Namibia could mean to the freedom of African Americans. Thus, we must assume our responsibilities to Africans in the Diaspora for the mutual benefit must accrue both now and tomorrow. To the extent, we must:

1. Work for the freedom of the black people of South Africa and Namibia and for an end to the bloody civil wars sponsored by South Africa and its allies in Mozambique and Angola.

2. We must support the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Committee as the repository of regional influence of South Africa. At the same time, we must support military assistance to governments of Southern Africa to enable them to establish internal stability as the proper environment within which economic development ean take place.

3.We must support the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1989 which calls for a comprehensive regime of sanctions against South Africa as the most important anti-violent method of pressuring the white minority regime to peaceful settlement.

4. We must work to secure the necessary funding for the African Continent, recognizing that the condition of its peoples is among the neediest in the world and yet, in terms of it geography and mineral wealth it is one of the most strategic in the world.

5.We must support the kind of peace in the Middle East which encourages a settlement based on security for Israel within its legitimate borders, and justice for the Palestinians, including a homeland. This must begin with the cessation of the repression of Palestinians on the West Bank and the holding of an international conference to establish the legitimate rights of each party in the eyes of the international community.

6. We must say clearly to the Eastern and Western powers that we support the reduction of tension between them, the development of arms control agreements beneficial to the world and their cooperation to end regional conflict. But we do not look forward to a new East-West alliance which pressures Third World states into regional "peace" settlement agreements prematurely.

DRUGS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

African America is under siege. Drugs, drug perpetrators,anddrug violence are killing African-Americans by the thousands. Each day, far too many African-American children are the victims of drug related child abuse, and, perhaps even worse, an unconscionable number is born into lives of drug addiction and horror. Those in African-American communities who are not involved with drugs, live under the constant terror of those who do. This nightmare must end. We must act forcefully and we must act now to stop this cancer which is destroying our communities and our youth. Toward that end the African American Summit makes the following recommendations:

1. It is imperative that America launch a full-scale national attack on drugs and all those who profit from them. This offensive must address every aspect of the drug market, including not only the local level but the national and international ones as well.

America must recognize that the war on drugs can not and should not begin and end at the borders of African-American communities. We all know the problem is bigger than that: it is international and it is defined by neither race nor class. We must not fail to attack every aspect of the drug trade and all perpetrators of that trade. There can be no discrimination or preferential treatment where drugs are concerned. For example, stiff penalties should be imposed against all foreign countries that produce and export drugs to the United States.

2. Vigorous protection of the civil rights of African Americans must go hand in hand with an all-out war on drugs. We must combine toughness with fairness. There must be uniformity in drug sentencing guidelines so that judges will not have the leeway to racially discriminate when sentencing drug offenders. Criminal and civil sanctions or penalties should be imposed on all correctional institutions either found trafficking in drugs or found guilty of mistreatment of African-American inmates. All state legislators should introduce resolutions calling for the inspection of their penal institutions for compliance with state health codes. Also, law enforcement organizations should be ordered to adopt and implement strong affirmative action programs to help reduce the incidence of racial brutality by police officers.

3. On the demand side of the equation, we must develop an effective and comprehensive national drug prevention program. This program should minimally includethefollowing elements: state and federally funded rehabilitation and detoxification programs for low income addicts and strong individual and community sanctions against those participating in the drug trade and strong law enforcement presence as a deterrent to participation in drug trafficking.

4. To stop the havoc that drugs and drug crime are wreaking on the African-American community, we should establish a national think tank to guide a real national war on drugs. The mission of this think tank should be to marshall the resources of the African-American leadership, legal, and law enforcement communities and bring those resources to bear upon the urgent drug threat confronting African-American communities across America. The think tank will conduct research, convene local and regional summits and hearings, and develop more effective strategies and policies for waging the war on drugs.

These policy recommendations should then direct the nation's law enforcement efforts, particularly as they relate to African-American communities. The think tank will also become the hub of a nation-wide drug policy network, which will constantly monitor the war on drugs both to keep the nation informed as to its progress and to identify and overcome barriers to its success.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

A Legislative Agenda is both a guidepost which points the direction of our needs and demands in public policy and a mechanism designed to coincide with and adjust to the changes in national power relationships. As such, it matches the :"rhythm" and dynamics of our planning to the national political system. We, therefore, recommend at the local, state and national levels that the following general recommendations constitute a Legislative Agenda.

1. Because of the history and revival of racism in American, there should be legislation to ensure that race relations is taught as a mandated subject in both secondary and post-secondary educational systems.

2. A national assessment should be made of legislation passed which benefits African Americans on the function of the legislative process so that they might more effectively intervene. This might develop into a "Black Information Network for Survival" where lobbying and other strategies may be necessary for both offensive and defensive approaches to legislation.

3. Repeal of government programs like the Jobs Partnership Training Act (JPTA), which do not address the needs of African-American youth or adults, and create new innovative programs that offer skills training applicable to the job market.

5. More aggressive oversight of legislation and monitoring of follow-through, in an effort to make sure that the intent of legislation is not circumvented when implemented by the executive branch and especially agency department heads.

The call to the Summit:

On the shoulders of giants

By The Honorable
Richard Gordon Hatcher
General Chairman

An African American Agenda for the next four years and on out to the year 2000, which transcends party and partisan considerations was developed at the African American Summit '89, in New Orleans, La., from April 21-23, 1989.

The Summit was open to all African Americans of every political persuasion, religious organization and all economic levels, ages, philosophies and walks of life. We believed that the greater our diversity at this Summit, the more representative it was of the entire African American community, the stronger the mandate which emerged.

This meeting did not spring full blown from a vacuum. The African American Summit '89 is the inevitable consequence of what has gone before. A great person who was credited with provoking change once said that if he was able to see far, it was because he stood on the shoulders of giants. So, here and now, do we. If we do not see far, our own myopia is at fault, not those who preceded us. Those who have gone before intended us to stand on their shoulders, but not simply as burdens; rather to see, to act, and to move on, carrying their work forward.

This Summit would not have been possible, had it not been for the landmark meetings of the past, those gatherings where agendas were set, strategies were fixed, the African American cause advanced. Since the watershed NEGRO CONVENTION of 1830, organized by Richard Allen in Philadelphia, and even before, those gatherings have each made the next step possible. All have continued to change and humanize this country. Without them, we could not have the opportunity we are given here and now.

We are the heirs of the great men and women whose names ring so clear today. Who each in turn cleared the thicket another league onward. We salute them all. The famous and those whose names history does not record. If we fail to roll up our sleeves and advance dramatically here and now, while at the same time preparing for more striking significant advances in the remainder of the 20th Century, then we have failed them — the Giants who preceded us. What they won was often won at a terrible cost. We haven't the right to let them down or to betray that heritage. We are obliged to succeed and honor-bound to remember and to understand that this African American Summit '89 is the latest point on our determined path to progress, participation and parity. We shall see far because we stand on the shoulders of Giants.

We did not come to New Orleans to grumble and complain, though there is much to complain about. Nearly one out of every three African Americans are officially poor according to government poverty standards. There are hundreds of thousands of young African Americans between 18 and 25 years of age who are destined never to have a full time job. There are more young black men in prison than there are in college. One out of every nine black males will be incarcerated at some point in their lives. If the rate of births to teenagers continues, a majority of African American women become pregnant before their 20th birthday. Most will be unmarried and unemployed. In point of fact, we are witnessing the institutionalization of a social underclass for an entire generation of young African American people.

Nevertheless, the major thrust of this Summit was to focus on solutions and find answers in new ideas and new strategies. We intended to light a thousand candles, rather than waste time cursing the darkness.

Unlike some of our earlier meetings, we shall move immediately to put in place mechanism to implement the conclusions, recommendations and strategies which come out of this African American Summit '89. As part of the Summit follow-up, we shall seek an early meeting with President Bush and the leadership of the Congress. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss our Agenda and enlist their support for specific actions, including a four-year legislative agenda.

We shall call upon the leadership at the state and local level to assume their share of responsibility to changing the way America treats its African American citizens. The role of the private sector, particularly corporate America, will be a matter of intense focus at the African American Summit '89.

Finally, we shall address ourselves; we shall speak to our own community. The painful process of self-examination is long overdue. We are not perfect people and those among us who continue to meet the standards necessary to achieve freedom, progress and parity in this country must be exposed, isolated and re-educated. We cannot afford the luxury of their actions any longer, if we ever could.