EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Give Hunter a chance

The letter-writing campaign instituted by Del. Elijah Cummings is a direct approach method of soliciting support for the Superintendent of Public Schools Dr. Richard Hunter.

In the letter, which has been sent to ministers, community leaders, friends and associates, the daily press is taken to task because of the melange of negative criticism and attacks on the actions of the superintendent during his less-than-one-year tenure.

Completely overlooked is the fact that the head of a department or agency is hired to make the tough decisions. There have been many, and Dr. Hunter has faced up to all of them, despite the unpopularity of some.

When a new leader is brought into office, his plan of action begins the slow process of being instituted. But before this is possible, the existing plans must be examined, assessed, and dealt with. Only then can a new program occupy center stage.

We say give the superintendent a chance to institute his concept of how the city education system shall operate. No one is perfect, nor is anything perfect, but these known truths should not obviate a leader's attempt to put his plans into effect without the constant carping and bad mouthing of his perceived detractors.

The superintendent was hired to make the tough decisions and we're glad that he is!

We hope and expect to receive better objectivity from our daily paper counterpart.

Jackson and Barry

Many people who preach brotherly love don't show it in their daily lives, but the Rev. Jesse Jackson is different. He has said quite clearly that our Marion Barry is his friend and he will not run against his friend for the position of mayor of Washington in 1990.

Some are saying it is not just friendship that this man of the gospel is trying to show wayward souls...the second lesson is loyalty.

Marion Barry has been a loyal supporter of the Rainbow Coalition which Jackson heads. It was Barry's leadership which helped Jackson carry the District of Columbia in the last two presidential elections.

But we believe it is more friendship and loyalty.

Jesse Jackson — being the astute politician that he is — knows that the grassroots people of Washington love and support Marion Barry. He has walked with Mayor Barry into schools, hospitals and churches and seen admiration on the faces of Washington voters.

Jackson also knows that the more the white media harasses Barry, the stronger Barry's support base grows because black people are the most loyal people in the world. And, Jackson understands that if the white power structure could find any criminal acts to charge Marion Barry with, it would be Barry on trial right now and not men like Oliver North.

We want to thank the Rev. Jesse Jackson for being the man he is and for standing up for what he thinks is right... that's what makes him so great in so many people's eyes.

Anthony Armstrong
Political Consultant

Run free?

The people of this city cannot allow an unopposed race for mayor in 1991. Talk or thought of it ought be put down certain and soon.

There's a broad stream of unsettled opinion out there about the leadership Baltimore is getting, far too much to permit this mayor to run free the next time around.

Unopposed races are generally reserved for the very strongest financially, or the few who've governed especially well. Even then there seems to be something just a bit uncomfortable about one candidate non-races, particularly for the number one office.

Contemplating such a situation for Baltimore seems almost as strange as a one candidate race for President of the United States.

It's hard to see how any first term mayor of any big city would warrant so much largess. Congressman, famous for their ability to get reelected still get opposition the first and maybe the second time they run, even in the safest districts.

Many politicians want opposition. Oh, they want to win for sure; but they'd choose to run against another live opponent, albeit weaker, live nonetheless. Beside, every four years local voters are due the right to tell the chief official whether they still want him or not, and a reasonable case obliging the official to run can be made.

During the Parren Mitchell years, the congressman ran unopposed on several occasions, and there is some feeling in Baltimore that this ought not become the luxury for Mr. Mfume. As African-Americans become more familiar with politics we increasingly the idea of unopposed races as less than beneficial, if for no other reason than the need to keep our leaders on their toes.

In Mitchell's case he possessed a unique aura bordering on reverence, but to claim the same for Baltimore's mayor is obviously a debauchery. Remember, however, this is politics where fiction is often the father of fact.

Ironically, the psyche of voters permits all kinds outlandish extremes, and political kingmakers are always looking for ways to exploit even the smallest opportunity. In that environment the worst situation can be given a spin that seeks to turn near disaster into the perception of huge success.

Afterall, why not; don't we say, "Gee, it must be the truth, nobody would be so bold as to tell such a lie!" Yet, when there is little or nothing positive to honestly point to, who's to stop such people from trying to turn sand to gold, and furthermore expect voters to be fool enough to buy the stuff.

So now there are stirrings that the mayor is attempting to mount an unopposed effort for 1991, to convince any potential opposition that he is so strong that a race against him would be futile. We heard a version of this in the last race with reports that Schmoke had a 30-point lead early in the contest.

It was a contrivance then, and any effort to make the mayor appear invincible now would be a further trip into lala land. Should the mayor's handlers try such a trick they would be saying to the people of this town, we duped you once, we can fool you again.

Suppose they test the unopposed idea, how could they sell it? Three ways: the first is dry up all the political money, so much so that there wouldn't be enough left for another candidate to fund a meaningful campaign. This strategy has begun in earnest with the mayor's planned $500 and $100 a ticket bash now on tap.

Another tact would be to set a racial tone that could trap any white would-be candidate into being afraid to run for fear of being viewed as someone trying to deny African-Americans their turn at leadership — as if a turn was owed us anyway.

And then a third twist would clearly be to make another African-American seem like a traitor to his people for opposing the city's first elected African-American mayor. One of these would have to be the base for trying any unopposed effort.

None of these can be allowed to run free.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

High expectations

". . . The more you know, the further you go." ". . . I will learn all that I can, to become all that I can. . . ."

These words are repeated daily at the Duke Ellington Primary School No. 117. The youngsters are reminded that inside their little bodies of today are famous blacks of tomorrow. Our school motto is "If it is to be, it is up to me." With these words, how can anyone say or imply that the children at Duke Ellington Primary School have low self-esteem?

On the issue of parent involvement we would like to state that even though some parents may not be able to attend during the day most do co-operate and reinforce the concepts and skills that are taught.

One parent, who is also a member of the staff, stated emphatically, "When my little one came to the school she had dreams and aspirations. I wouldn't leave my child where her dreams and aspirations were destroyed. This type of attitude can be credited to the united staff and community effort that we extend to all children who come to our school.

Our P.T.O. president serves as a volunteer, a paid lunch aide and fosters parent involvement. Through the years, our parents have been an integral part of the on-going program. They have responded freely when called upon and extended themselves through their attendance, participation in meetings, assistance on field trips and work with small groups to reinforce skills.

We take pride in the fact that even though our staff is small we are a highly competent and diverse group of qualified professionals, who share a wealth of experiences with our students.

Currently on staff there are three former nominees for the Teacher of the Year Award. The average length of teaching experience is 15 years and the majority of us have master's degrees as well as Advanced Professional Certificates.

Duke Ellington Primary School, No. 117 is known as the "Friendly School in the Air" not only because of its location above a supermarket, but because of how we motivate, believe in and insist upon excellence in education. We are a super school over a supermarket!

Deeply resentful

As a former member of Lemmel Junior High School, I deeply resent Dr. Cooke's accusation that she entered a school where the "quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, staff attendance was poor, as well as student attendance." For an individual to generalize and to make blanket statements about a faculty who for years had many successes is indeed very unprofessional.

Lemmel had the reputation for producing an excellent student. Our students completed senior high school to become doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, civic leaders. Our students can be found in almost every profession.

I chose to send my own children to Lemmel. They were able to compete successfully on all levels of their education. I boast of the daughter who graduated cum laude from Georgetown University. I know other faculty members who would testify to these truths.

Of course, we experienced some turbulence during the seventies. All schools nationwide also experienced the unrest of the sixties and seventies. However, the Lemmel faculty rallied and without exception met the challenge and worked to meet the needs of the changing society and atmosphere.

Frankly, I am of the opinion that Dr. Cooke walked into a ready-made situation that had been created by a fine faculty that made the task easy for her to do what she says she has accomplished in just three years.

MRS. ELVA ROBINSON

School Number 117

I am responding to an article, in your "School of the Week" column on April 8, 1989. It was about Duke Ellington Primary School No. 117 and I immediately took exception to the "low self-esteem" statement regarding children and teachers. I also felt the "sting" of the "knife in my back" regarding parent involvement.

Firstly, the students are very motivated and are always encouraged to have a high regard for themselves and their talents. I have a little person in kindergarten who has been steadily climbing to become a superb achiever.

I also had a little person who left second grade from Duke Ellington and is still one of the top students in a whole class of Duke Ellington graduates, that her new school is still shaking their heads over since September.

The students are making the teachers go back and study! It is more than apparent that this is not an exception, but the norm that is expected by teachers and parents of Duke Ellington.

Believe me, as a very competitive parent, I don't make these statements lightly. I hold the teachers and staff accountable for the education of my children and have been greatly rewarded with my children's manification.

Regarding parent involvement—I can only say that Duke Ellington's administration is getting socialization mixed up with parent involvement.

I don't step into that school everyday to socialize with grown people who give the impression "I have mine." I do it for the business of educating the little ones. I have sat in classes where I didn't even have children, to help with "control."

I have "held" classes for teaches during emergencies. I was very active in helping to get the Reservoir Hill library reopened, attended each and every City School Board Meeting and have gone to Annapolis to lobby for Superintendent Hunter's school budget for fiscal year 1990. And yes, I am a single parent!

I don't appreciate having "my school," teachers and parents painted in such a way as to suggest that because a man is not in the home or a teacher in school, there can be no self-esteem for students, parents and teachers and we are belittled as idiots.

SHARON McKINLEY
Single Involved Parent

The Afro-American
MEMBER
The Audit Bureau
MDDC
NNPA
UPI

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

Failure of UN Resolution 435

Like you, I too receive a great deal of my information from the media. As a United States Congressman, I also have early access to other sources of public information from, for example, the Library of Congress, official government studies and private research groups.

Nevertheless, I have awaited in vain for information concerning the events surrounding the April 1st commencement of United Nations Resolution 435.

The Washington Post and **The New York Times**, for example, have related only that information provided by the South African military in Namibia.

Having long ago concluded that the South African government has systematically sponsored and funded a propaganda campaign of lies and misinformation, I was skeptical about news reports concerning their version of the military "incursion" of South West Africa People's Organization (S.W.A.P.O.) forces into Namibia from bases in Angola.

Since the facts have too slowly made their way to the Capitol three separate documents tell of what has really happened and why.

The documents include **The Nation**, 5/1/89, **Jane's Defense Weekly**, Vol. 11, Number 15, and a report from the **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law** (LCCRUL).

Several points come to light that I would like to take time to address:

(1) the media reports we have received thus far have only related the South African governments' view of the event;

(2) the United Nations has been manipulated by some Security Council members and the government of South Africa,

(3) the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG), which will monitor the cease fire, is underfunded and late in its deployment,

(4) the events as related by eyewitnesses support a very different conclusion than we have been led to believe.

According to Gay J. McDougall, Director of Southern African Project, Alexander Cockburn of **The Nation**, citing eyewitnesses, David Beresford of **The Guardian** and Dudley Viall, deputy director of communications for the Council of Churches in Namibia, the facts are these:

SWAPO units journeyed south as "cease-fire day" (April 1) approached. They were instructed by their commanders to seek out UNTAG forces in Namibia where they would be escorted to holding areas under UN protection.

Instead, the returning SWAPO units encountered Battalion 101, the notorious Koevoet, who fired first ambushing the unsuspecting troops. Inspection of corpses reveals that most were not killed during fire fights but rather at close range by small calibre weapons to the face.

Inspection of one battle site reveals that the SWAPO units were eating a meal and not acting as a hostile force.

According to Tony Banks and Thalif Deen of **Jane's Defense Weekly**, (April 15, 1989) the facts are these:

United Nations' peacekeeping force has a projected deficit of $1.5 billion, it was three weeks behind its own schedule for deployment in Namibia, the Security Council has reduced the number of troops, police and election supervisors.

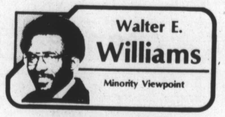
All these factors contributed to the small UNTAG force in place to prevent what turned out to be the heaviest fighting in the 23-year-old war between South Africa and SWAPO.

It is the opinion of some that these are sufficient reasons to explain (1) how Koevoet precipitated the carnage on SWAPO personnel, (2) how South Africa managed the international media concerning the "incursion" and (3) why the UN (to save face because of their incompetence agreed with the South African security forces account of the events).

The U.N. Security Council should cooperate in the implementation of Resolution 435. The news media should make good on their unquestioning regurgitation of the South African security force's propaganda and print the facts as they are now understood.

The International Court should investigate the events on and after April 1st to determine the degree of South Africa barbarity.

After 74 years of South African occupation of Namibia, SWAPO commanders have no excuse for naivete in regards to UN capabilities or Pretoria's intentions, and neither should we.



Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Hill rascals at it again

They're at it again. The House of Representatives has passed a bill calling for stepped increases in the minimum wage to $4.55 an hour.

Here are the same congressmen who tried to hoodwink us into raising their own pay from $43 to $65 an hour in February; how can they expect the rest of us to make do on less?

Seriously, Congress is up to no good even though they profess to be acting on our behalf.

Virtually all economists — left and right—agree that the minimum wage law causes unemployment for the lowest-skilled members of the workforce. The only real debate is in regard to the magnitude of the unemployment effect.

The minimum wage law causes unemployment because it requires employers to pay some workers wages that exceed their productivity.

Pretend you're an employer. The law says you must pay a minimum of $4.55 an hour, plus Social Security and other mandated costs which could easily come to $5.50 or so an hour.

Would you hire a person who was so unfortunate as to have skills whereby he can only produce $3 worth of value per hour? If you planned to stay in business, you wouldn't.

That's how the minimum wage law discriminates against the employment of underskilled people.

In our labor force, that person is most often a teenager, who is low skilled due to immaturity and inexperience.

The minimum wage hasn't been raised since 1981 but inflation has eroded its real value. One result has been the easing of teenage unemployment. Now Congress, pressed by unions, wants to ratchet it back up.

If teenage unemployment only meant foregoing spending change, we might graciously pass it off as just another example of congressional nonsense. But early work experiences mean more than spending change.

Early work experiences teach youngsters: You have to go to work Friday even though you get paid Thursday; you must respect your superiors; you must be prompt; you must form good work habits.

It also gives them a chance to make mistakes before they have dependents counting on their continuous source of income.

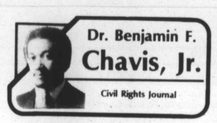
Finally, early work experiences produce a sense of pride and self-respect that comes from being at least partially independent financially.

All youths benefit from the world of work, especially black youths who attended grossly inferior schools. For them, early work experiences may be the only opportunity to learn something which will make them more valuable in the future.

The minimum wage law also lowers the cost of racial discrimination. If it costs you $5.50 an hour, no matter who you hire, racial discrimination is free.

With the current minimum wage bill, Congress has become more devious. They call for a commission to regulate the minimum wage annually in order to remove it from periodic politically scrutiny. President George Bush should veto the bill for that reason alone.

The bottom line is: Higher wages are most often associated with higher productivity. To that end, we must focus on how to make people more productive. A good start is eliminating of the fraud produced by the public education system not increasing the minimum wage.



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

Drug dealers sell genocide

Today in nearly every small town and large city across the nation, drug dealers and their financial investors and backers are making huge monetary profits by selling killer-drugs. Genocide in this society is indeed profitable.

Recently, there has been considerable focus on the drug related murder epidemic in Washington, D.C., the nation's capitol.

Now this predominantly African American city is not only besieged with continued political disenfranchisement, but also the devastating consequences of having one of the highest murder rates in the nation.

The majority of these murders are drug related. The majority of these murders are committed by African Americans on African Americans.

The majority of these murders serve to swell the profit of drug barons who are not from the African American community.

The newly-appointed Federal narcotics chief, William J. Bennett, is attempting to lay the primary blame on the Government of the District of Columbia led by Mayor Marion Barry.

One of the classic political and racist maneuvers of the powerful forces of this society is to blame the victims for their victimization.

Yes, the Mayor of Washington has his own set of problems on the issue of challenging the drug epidemic in this city.

Yet, to blame Mayor Barry for the genocide that is taking place in the nation's capitol is to camouflage the real culprits and profit barons.

In reference to Washington, Bennett stated, "Here, where the problem is so glaring, so out of control, serious questions of local politics and governance can no longer be avoided or excused."

The truth is that what is happening in Washington is only a clear mirror image of what is now happening in most of the large urban areas of the United States. The situation nationally is glaringly "so out of control."

Despite the rhetoric of the Reagan and now the Bush Administration, there really is no present Federal priority on stopping drug dealers and in particular their financial backers who have control over this multi-billion dollar illegal industry.

It appears that the Republican Party is rather comfortable with the self destruction and self genocide that is being encouraged by the politics of toleration.

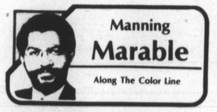
There will be no effective solutions for this crisis until there is a greater understanding by the majority of the people of this country as to the profitable role that drugs play both financially and politically by the powerful oppressive forces that really control the United States.

Thus, the immediate burden is on the African American community to take all appropriate measures to educate all segments of the community about the reality of this unfoldiong genocide and to be more committed than ever before to challenge those in power to stop the madness and the drugs from dealing death in the community.

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



Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

African Summit: an assessment

Part I of a Two Part Series

The African American Summit held in New Orleans on April 21-23 was promoted as the most important gathering of black leaders and activists since the historic black political convention of March, 1972 held in Gary, Indiana. The Gary Convention represented a highwater mark of black activism.

The New Orleans Summit tried to recapture the political initiative for the black community, undermined for years by Reaganism, political conservatism and economic reaction.

But despite its ability to attract over 1,200 delegates, observers and media representatives during a three day period, it failed to propose a concrete strategy which could unite most black working people behind a progressive agenda.

The African American Summit's political godfather was former Gary, Indiana mayor Richard Hatcher. One of the principal convenors of the earlier Gary convention, Hatcher exercised considerable political clout during the Carter Administration.

Despite his defeat for reelection as Gary's mayor, he has remained a power within Black politics partially due to his close personal relationship with Jesse Jackson.

Following Bush's victory last November, Hatcher concluded that a major conference was needed, bringing together the major political figures in the African American community.

Of critical assistance to Hatcher's plans were the contributions of Ronald Walters, Howard University political scientist and Jackson adviser. To solicit the support of conservative blacks, Hatcher recruited Republican leader Gloria Toote to assist hjm.

The call for the Summit issued by Hatcher evoked the historical tradition of black struggle since the very first black political convention held in 1830.

"This Summit would not be possible were it not for the landmark meetings of the past, those gatherings where agendas were set, strategies were fixed, the African American cause advanced," Hatcher declared.

The Summit would be "open to all African Americans of every political persuasion, religious organization, and all economic levels, ages, philosophies and walks of life." In short, the "greater our diversity at this summit," Hatcher stated, "the stronger the mandate which emerges."

Walters was more specific than Hatcher in outlining the expectations and goals of the proposed gathering. "We meet in order to regain the forward momentum in our movement," Walters stated before the Summit.

"We have not done enough to stop both major parties from taking our vote for granted, to make our leadership more responsive . . . (We need) to develop a more powerful leadership strategy."

Hatcher served as the Summit's chairperson, with honorary chairs extended to traditional civil rights leaders, such as NAACP secretary Ben Hooks, Urban League director John Jacob, SCLC leader Joseph Lowery, Jesse Jackson and Coretta Scott King.

But the actual work in mobilizing the conference rested with the steering committee, whose members included Walters, Toote, progressive state legislators Dave Richardson of Pennsylvania, and Maxine Waters of California, and Romona H. Edelin, President of the National Urban Coalition.

Theoretically, statements from the workshops would be consolidated into a statement of African American policy priorities "in an effort to challenge government, Congress and the philanthropic community," according to Walters.

To solicit a popular response to the Summit, the organizers relied upon (Jesse Jackson's formidable powers of political persuasion. "This conference was devised as a free marketplace of ideas," Jackson declared. "If we ever as a family needed to come together, we certainly need to come together now. We must seek Common Ground."

Given the cast of political characters, it was predictable that trouble would first surface from the far right. When Walters and other more liberal members of the Steering Committee identified several participants with controversial views on the left, such as Angela Davis and Amiri Baraka, many black Republicans threatened to walk out.

When Louis Farrakhan's name was raised as a possible major speaker, the black Republicans and many Democrats nearly bolted. "Ideological diversity" to them meant the inclusion of black Reaganites and traditional liberals, but not black nationalists, socialists or nonpartisan independents.

The liberals and progressives on the steering committee won the argument for free speech, but with limitations. Davis was allowed to speak at a workshop, but not at a large, plenary session. Lenora Fulani, the independent presidential candidate of the New Alliance Party, was also relegated to a workshop.

Farrakhan was permitted to speak at a plenary, but on Sunday morning at nine a.m., not a convenient time. Farrakhan's marginal presence was still enough to frighten away some black conservatives, and possibly some civil rights leaders. Neither Hooks nor Jacob were in attendance, despite their endorsements of the Summit.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lenore Fulani spoke at a plenary session on Friday, opening night of the Summit. The Farrakhan speech at the Sunday morning plenary session was S.R.O.