

From The Grassroots

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owned franchises in that city did the same. Gary Mayor, Richard Hatcher, chairperson of the Black mayor's conference, authorized a move to ban Coke machines from 194 Black controlled city halls. When more than one hundred stores in Chicago's metropolitan area joined the boycott, Coke president Donald R. Keough, announced his readiness to give Black entrepreneurs "a piece of the action." The agreement represented a "promise that the free enterprise system can do more to develop opportunity for all elements of society."

Coke's "moral covenant" with PUSH including the following provisions: increase the number of Black-owned distributors to 32 within 12 months, establishment of a venture capital fund of \$1.8 million for Black petty capitalists, the elevation of a Black to Coca-Cola's Board of Directors, double the amount of advertising capital spent with Black agencies, quadruple the amount of financial deposits within Black banks, and the hiring of 100 Black blue-collar employees. The total package amounted to \$34 million. Black newspapers widely publicized the boycott, calling it a "wonderful reunion fellowship" of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s old colleagues, including Mrs. King, Lowery, Hosea Williams, Andrew Young, Maynard Jackson and Jesse Jackson. William Raspberry, never at a loss for words, proclaimed the historical deal "as important to Black America as the boycott of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus company a quarter of the century ago. The reality behind the rhetoric is somewhat different. Coke's white investors were furious with what was described as "outright blackmail" and "a \$30 million giveaway plan." On September 3, Coca-Cola President Keough informed the *Atlanta Constitution* that the corporation had neither bowed to "pressure" from Black leaders, nor had given the boycott more than "two minutes attention because we never considered it a real issue." By October, 1981, Coke officials informed the media that any money lent to Blacks for venture capital will be at high market rates. No forced changes in bottling franchise ownerships will occur. Black advertising was increased to only \$2 million from the previous \$1.2 million figure. No loans will be made to Black-owned banks except at competitive rates. Even the one hundred additional jobs may not materialize, because Coke "might be replacing Blacks with Blacks," declared a company executive. The conspicuous failure of the Coca-Cola boycott symbolized more than ever before the utter bankruptcy of "Black Capitalism."

The lack of any basic grassroots orientation or support of the Old Guard was illustrated at the 11th annual Congressional Black Caucus weekend in Washington, D.C. on September 25-27, 1981. The self-described "Black leadership family" included over 1,000 Black doctors, lawyers, politicians and bureaucrats. One participant suggested that the Black Struggle in the 1980's would be led by "cadres of Black professionals." Joe Madison, an NAACP official, stated that the militancy of the old days "during the Montgomery bus boycott" were passe'. "We've got to develop technical militants out of these middle-class affluent Blacks who have received training, acquired good educations and have worked themselves into the mainstream of economic life." Neither the multitude of fashion shows nor the \$150-a-plate awards banquet could

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provide the cultural cohesion necessary to forge new unity among this "Untalented Tenth." Frequently they quarreled among themselves on a variety of public issues. Representative Gus Savage correctly denounced Vernon Jordan, publisher John H. Johnson, NAACP president Margaret Bush Wilson and Rev. Leon Sullivan for sitting on corporate boards and sharing in the "ill-begotten super profits" from doing business in "fascist South Africa." At state levels, Black Democrats joined forces with white Republicans in reapportionment cases to increase the percentages of Blacks and/or Whites within their respective Congressional districts. The most vocal advocate of the growing legislative detente between these unlikely forces is

Julian Bond, a democratic socialist and the most "progressive" Black elected official in the South. The *Atlanta Constitution* charged that "the cynical coalition" of "ghetto Black politicians and country club Republicans" sought "to gut Atlanta for the sake of electing (Bond) to the Congress," while simultaneously extending GOP hegemony across the state.

W.E.B. DuBois once termed Black leaders the "Talented Tenth." Given the lack of originality and utter confusion among the current crop of Black leaders, a new title is needed—"the Untalented Tenth."

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Former hostage demoted to honored guest

Kathryn L. Koob, a former hostage in the American embassy in Iran, was to be the parade marshal at the University of Iowa's homecoming parade.

However, after members of the Moslem Student Association protested that such a parade marshal would stir up anti-Iranian feelings, the parade committee decided to change her status to honored guest. Instead of riding in the first car of the parade, Ms. Koob, an employee of the U.S. International Communication Agency, rode in the second car.