

## A More Perfect Union

We have just passed the birthdate of one of America's greatest leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr. While black citizens have celebrated the event since his assassination, the move to make the day a national holiday has picked up momentum. Entertainer Stevie Wonder has written a song commemorating King and has promised to help in any way Congressman John Conyers, D-Mich., who has sponsored a bill in Congress since 1969, to get the necessary legislation passed.

While we as black citizens see the need to honor only one of our great brothers, others have brought into question the "sympathetic to the idea," some say a national holiday is "much too expensive. The cost shutting down the government for a day is too great." Some have suggested that "celebrating the birthday on the weekend is a better idea because the cost involved is much less."

This newspaper endorses the holiday in King's memory. There are several reasons why such a holiday is needed.

First, the recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthdate on a national scale would give the black youth of this country a symbol that black people have conquered adversity beyond the norm and one leader of that group has been singled out as a representative to be honored on a national scale. We all have knowledge of those great black men and women who have done extraordinary things in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds to better the conditions of other black people, and of this nation. Black Americans have made outstanding contributions to the development and betterment of this country and it is time our young people have the chance to honor only one of its leaders of color.

Second, a national holiday would put young people of the majority race on notice that someone not of their race has contributed so much to this country that his fellow countrymen saw fit to honor him with a national holiday. A great part of the racist attitude that has been a part of the history of this country, that most want to hide in the closet, is a feeling of superiority by members of the majority race because they were taught that anyone not of blond hair, blue eyes and white skin was too ignorant to be thought of as anything but a slave. All he (three-fifths of a man) was good for was to do his master's bidding. Such teaching gives members of the majority race the belief that their black classmates have never been and will never be worthwhile beings. This is a most vicious form of racism. Denying a group credit for its accomplishments continues the grip of racism this country has held. One has to question if this is one of the prevailing reasons for not having the holiday. We have been bombarded with underhanded racist tactics for so long that conspiracy theories abound.

Third, to the argument that it would open the door for a rash of requests for other national holidays from other groups and what to do about those requests, we believe the door should be

opened and those requests be given serious and due consideration. American Indians, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Hispanics, Jews, and any other group should be considered. That American Indians do not have a national holiday when they were here first and had the land stolen from them under the guise of 'manifest destiny' and 'God's Will' is contemptuous. Americans have brought 'God's Will' and what they call religion into their every act except to treat their fellow man and woman as an equal.

So, if the cost is "too great" to celebrate these holidays annually, then let's rotate the ones that will be celebrated each year, every other year or every two years: Instead of Lincoln and George Washington, we can have King and an American Indian. Let the major shopping centers have a Martin Luther King Birthday Sale for a change, it wouldn't take that much time. All the promotions that go along with such holidays in financial institutions could continue. Imagine, every few years we would take time to honor different Americans who have contributed to the country. We are surely prejudiced in favor of King, but there are others who have contributed just as much in their respective groups as King in ours. George Washington and Lincoln would neither fade from our memories, nor would their accomplishments be diminished. And honoring other men and women would help us as a nation in changing from the mythical "melting pot" into a real "melting pot".

We have a wonderful opportunity to help the country break the grip of racism with the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday as a start.

We have endured a history of suffering that is beyond compare — stolen from our native country, denied use of our native languages, raped of our heritage, denied our true names, dignity and honor. Remember, Kunte Kinte never denying his name because it was his only link to his past and his only hope for dignity.

Until America takes time to honor all of its citizens this country will forever be held hostage by the shameless grip of racism. This country's attitude toward its minority members has got to change if America is to survive and prosper. While we have won the battle of blatant racism to an extent, but we must attack the lingering attitudes of hate and selfishness which still abound. Until those attitudes are changed, we as a country will never advance and become a member of the 'true' world community. A holiday in King's honor gives the American people a chance to begin to finish a 'dream'. A dream of equality and equal opportunity, a dream of fairness and lack of fear. Celebrating a holiday in honor of a black man should not provoke fear but pride in the outstanding accomplishments of one of this country's citizens. Let America begin to become moral and "form a more perfect Union, establish justice. . . and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

## Knowing Job Market — Key To Job Training

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

Close to one half of all black children in the United States live in families where the total income falls below the poverty line.

Living in such families means that these children suffer the most horrendous kind of social and economic deprivation in housing, healthcare, and education, that always impacts those that must live on rigidly restricted incomes.

The future outlook for such youngsters is bleak indeed. Especially when it appears that this nation is about to severely cut its budgetary outlays, which only minimally keep these children and their families from total economic disaster anyway.

This is why I keep stressing the valuable role that public schools can play, in helping black youth avoid becoming drop-outs and ending up in the job market with no skills to sell (this is particularly the case for black high school youth).

For a great number of them, there is a way out of the cycle of higher drop-out rates, less education, poor job skills and severe unemployment. What it requires is knowledge of where the job market is going, and how to get the necessary education and training for that market.

It further requires the assistance of teachers, counselors and administrators, who work with black high school students and who can provide effective job-orientation counseling and guidance.

Educators who want to help black students get ready for the workworld should be knowledgeable about the job market — including projections for the future.

Most state operated employment offices study their local employment markets and make such projections.

In Los Angeles County area for example, job projections for the period 1980 — 1985, should be used by the schools to plan job training programs for their students.

There are some very clear signs about the Los Angeles County job market, which will average an employment growth rate of nine per cent for all occupations combined during 1980-85.

An important aspect of this growth rate is which occupational groups will be above the growth rate average — and which will be below the average.

Current projections indicate that those in the above category will be sales workers; service workers; managers, officials and proprietors; and clerical workers. In sales, most of the workers will be in the wholesale and retail trades, finance, insurance, real estate, and manufacturing.

Service workers will be employed by the service industry, the trades sectors, and the fast food industry. The most rapidly growing occupation in the service workers group is childcare workers.

Most employment of clerical workers will continue to be provided by the services, trades and manufacturing sectors.

Although managers, officials and proprietors is one of the smallest groups of occupations in Los Angeles County, their growth rate is respectably above nine per cent. Two occupations in this category are more than double the nine per cent figure. They are bank and financial managers, and building managers and superintendents. A logical question to be asked in this instance would be — what kind of course work must a student pursue in order to be part of a managerial occupation?

Black high school students need to be made aware of the employment trends and possibilities in these categories. Information of this kind, can help them make the right subject choices to prepare them for entry-level jobs in sales, in service, in managerial or clerical positions.

Skills development, both in the classroom and in realistic school-sponsored programs, requires as much of a head start for black youngsters in high school, as for head start youngsters in the lower grades. Obviously, early job-training preparation is very important! But it must be wisely coupled with job market knowledge, good counseling, and meaningful in-school job training programs. It seems to me that the school system has a great responsibility to bring about the implementation of a solid job training program, especially for its black students, which includes the aforementioned factors (job market knowledge, good counseling and in-school job-training programs).

Additionally the schools have an added responsibility to develop all the necessary vehicles for such program delivery, including reasonable budget allocations. Thus, when a black student graduates from a Los Angeles high school, the student should not only be academically competent, the student should also be vocationally competent.

Black teenagers and black young adults can be made functionally and productive in the world of work, but a key to their productivity is the kind of education/vocational preparation that I have been discussing.

We know how to shoot a rocket to the moon; we ought to also be able to significantly produce black youngsters who won't become unemployment statistics.

## Business In The Black

### The Reagan Revolution

By Charles E. Belle

The real secret of political success is to exploit the opponents weakness or soft underbelly. Economics will win out in the end with most American voters. Exceptionally high unemployment among all groups of black Americans that grew during the Carter Administration years strained the usually devoted Democratic support normally spilled upon the Democratic Party in a November's election. Some black Americans' votes actually swayed a few states over into the Reagan camp.

In an election day poll by the New York Times-CBS News of 12,782 voters leaving polling booths, fourteen per cent of the black Americans stated they voted for Ronald Reagan. This is five times the percentage of black American delegates to the Republican convention in Detroit. Did these black Americans attempt to baffle or dazzle the deans of the media by making out they joined the winning team at the last moment? Or were they just ashamed to attach their names to James Earl Carter?

Preliminary election results, by the Joint Center for Political Studies, indicate right swinging Reagan received a whopping nine

per cent of the black American votes, over fifteen per cent more than the moderate Gerald Ford. Findings like these cause one to comb the hair for a part if only just to make your head look good!

There were seventeen million eligible black American voters who could have taken time out to go to the polls in November. Unfortunately, the report is that only forty per cent found the inclination to enter the U.S. political process: putting a 23% drop in the black American Democratic voting process from 52% in 1976. Thus, Mr. Reagan not only held his ground in the black American community with Mr. Ford, but found support from more black Americans who "sat this one out."

Statistics indicate that both Republican candidates received about 620,000 black votes. Putting aside for the moment the political differences of either man, Reagan made the most of the great majority who stay away from the polls. In 1976, almost 65% of the registered voters went to the polls, considerably higher than this year's sixty per cent. Perhaps all those who wanted Reagan ran right back this time.

However, this is tangential to the fact that black Americans actually, even if subtly, supported Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party. Apparently, a great deal of them just could not bring themselves to say so, either publicly or in a polling booth.

In spite of this, in some states like Arkansas, Reagan received 8,000 black American votes and won the state by only 5,000. In Tennessee, Reagan received 16,000 black votes and won by only 6,000. Clearly black American voters are a vested interest in the American political system. Some possible new shift in black American political power is working its way into the U.S. economic power structure — albeit slowly.

Black Americans are illustrating the inclination to change political parties and candidates in a conservative fashion. Change, as every business person knows, is an opportunity for profit. President-Elect Reagan can, like Carter, attempt to ride what is pronounced by the major media as a "swing to the right", or recognize the underlying problem of America — uncommonly high and growing unemployment among too many minority group people.

## The New Black Conservatives

By Norman Hill

In mid-December, newspapers devoted front-page coverage to a conference of blacks in San Francisco. However, what made the conference noteworthy was not its size — there were about 100 participants — nor the range of organizations which were represented — few of the participants could be said to represent significant black constituencies. What was special about the meeting, what made it news, was the fact that it was a gathering of black conservatives.

Of equal importance was the fact that the conference was sponsored by a conservative foundation which Ronald Reagan helped found in the early 1970s. In 1980, Ronald Reagan failed to attract a significant portion of the black vote. The overwhelming majority of black community and political leaders endorsed President Carter in his unsuccessful bid for re-election. Yet despite little black enthusiasm for Ronald Reagan, a number of black intellectuals and professionals have begun to embrace Reagan's conservative economic positions.

To some extent there is evidence to suggest that there is a small constituency for conservative political ideas in the black community. However, despite the growth of a black upper middle class of professionals and businessmen who might be drawn to the conservative siren song of tax cuts, the overwhelming majority of blacks are workers and the poor. For them the appeal of black conservatism will ring hollow, and for this reason one can confidently predict that blacks will continue to be a solid voting block which backs pro-labor candidates who support policies dedicated to a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Nonetheless, the two-day conference in San Francisco indicates that a debate will have to begin for the first time within the black community on political options. This debate in my view will be a healthy one insofar as it helps sharpen the arguments of black liberals and moderates.

Who, then, are the black conservatives and what do they stand for? The two leading proponents of black conservatism are Prof.

Thomas Sowell, an economist from the Hoover Institution, and Prof. Walter Williams of Temple University in Philadelphia. Both of them are strong opponents of organized labor, which they claim limits opportunities for blacks. Their view, however, flies in the face of the evidence which shows that organized labor, more than any other institution in American life, has opened its doors to increased black participation. Indeed, today, over thirty per cent of black workers are union members. Rather than adopting a policy of exclusion, the labor movement has sought better working conditions for all its workers, irrespective of race. And, most importantly, unions effectively represent their members, who on the average receive \$2,000 per year more than non-union workers and have better health and retirement benefits.

A second favorite target of Sowell and Williams is the minimum wage. They argue that the minimum wage is responsible for the inordinately high rate of black teenage unemployment, and propose that it be eliminated entirely. At the least, they feel, a sub-minimum wage should be established for teenagers. Their prescription for black teenage unemployment would be worse than the disease it is meant to cure. For a teenage sub-minimum wage would displace unskilled adult workers, a large proportion of whom are blacks with family obligations.

Under conditions of full employment, where every adult is guaranteed a job, the implementation of the youth sub-minimum wage would be of less serious consequence. Under conditions where unemployment stands at nearly eight per cent nationwide and with figures several percentage points higher among blacks, the implementation of a youth sub-minimum wage would produce disastrous consequences for adult black unskilled workers.

Yet despite the fact that the views of Sowell and Williams are not in the interests of most blacks, the black conservatives cannot be dismissed as mere oddities. They are reflective of the sense of frustration with the state of the economy most blacks have felt in

the last decade. In this way they mirror the dissatisfaction which moved many Americans to vote for Ronald Reagan.

Once the conservative policies which Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell espouse are implemented by the new administration, blacks and all working Americans will be able to judge the merits of the conservative approach. If history is to serve as any guide, these policies will be found wanting and will be repudiated in future elections.

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## BLACK GIANTS

Bannister was the first serious black artist in America, and the only one until the emergence of Henry O. Tanner at the end of the century.

He is said to have become an artist simply to prove to scoffers that blacks possessed the ability. In the academically oriented art world of his day, however, Bannister encountered very little discrimination.

He was a regular participant in the exhibitions of the Boston Art Club and was one of the founders of the Rhode Island School of Design-Providence Art Club.

It is said that had been his nature been more self-reliant and adventurous and had early opportunity been more kind, he might easily have been one of America's greatest landscape painters.



EDWARD M. BANNISTER