

LEADERS MUST ORGANIZE



FIGURE

ARE WE GOING TO SIT AND LET BLACK COMMUNITIES CRUMBLE AROUND US? GRASS ROOTS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, MUST EMERGE, TO FORGE A UNITED EFFORT AGAINST CRIME, NARCOTIC TRAFFICKING, BLIGHT AND DECAY.

NNPA Editorial

Coca-Cola Settlement Does More Than Avert Mass Protest

As blacks across this country were preparing to engage in their first mass activity in protest of inequities in the marketplace, Operation PUSH and the Coca-Cola Company announced a "moral covenant" in which Coke will channel over \$30 million to black business and the black community.

We applaud the leadership initiative taken by Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of Operation PUSH, in pressing Coke officials to the wall, until they reconsidered and abandoned their previously adamant position of not moving beyond what they were presently doing. And that was not acceptable to PUSH officials who had been in negotiations with Coke for several months.

The settlement was more than a victory for black leadership, but it produced a "mini miracle" in bringing together the scattered civil rights family of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For years, there has not been the best of communications among those who were chief lieutenants of Dr. King.

However, in the Coke settlement, Rev. Jackson was in regular touch with Mrs. Coretta Scott King, widow of the slain civil rights leader; Rev. Joseph

Lowery, president of Dr. King's organization; the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Andrew Young, and others. At the press conference announcing the settlement were Mrs. King, Rev. Lowery, Hosea Williams, Andrew Young, Mayor Maynard Jackson, Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., Jesse Jackson, etc. This was a "wonderful reunion fellowship", in the words of Mrs. King.

So, if Dr. King was looking through the heavenly clouds on the historic setting in his hometown of Atlanta, we are certain he was overjoyed and proud of those who are following in his footsteps to make real that dream he had of a better life for all black America.

We also salute Coca-Cola officials for coming to their good senses and giving us "a clear indication on the part of a major American company that business can listen and respond to presidential and congressional actions for tax cut relief to business, and also to the message and the promise that the free enterprise system can do more to develop opportunity for all elements of society," in the words of Coca-Cola president Donald R. Keough.

Spectacles: A Closer Look

Social Security Reform, A Must!

By Ada M. Fisher, M.D., M.P.H.

In a breach of trust with the American people, Mr. Reagan violated a campaign pledge in attacking the Social Security System. Though the public's outrage has caused a softening on some points, nonetheless on one point, Reagan is right — as presently funded, theoretically and logically, Social Security funds will not be able to provide sufficiently for the elderly. Given this country's demography (population composition) with the elderly threatening to soar beyond their present 17% of the total population; the number of newborns at slightly above replacement numbers; and three workers now supporting one retiree as opposed to seven supporting one thirty years ago, Social Security Reform Is A Must!

No matter how sympathetic we may be to the plight of the elderly, many have not understood what Social Security is and how it functions. Juanita Kreps (previous Secretary of Commerce) has noted in her works on the economic plight of the elderly, "Social Security is a Pay As You Go System." This means that money collected from this generation pays the elderly of this generation. The money withheld for social security is neither saved nor invested for future retirees. Many of today's elderly are withdrawing far more from the system than they paid into the system. Many are withdrawing from the system who paid nothing into the system. And there are also more elderly to draw from the system than there are working adults to finance it at its present level.

For the generation in the 30-50 age group, our practice of family planning has meant there will be fewer workers in the future to support us in our old age. Declining school enrollments bear witness to this phenomenon. Realistically, taxing or withholding monies at the present rates with annual escalations — means that workers (taxpayers) are having to sacrifice the comfort of their own families to continue our increasing support of the elderly. More tax payer revolts will follow if these trends continue unabated.

Proposed Solutions: The Reagan Administration's solutions are both impractical and severely punitive to those affected by this system. 1) Upping the retirement age to 70 is the most discriminatory tactic the young worker and black worker

will face. For workers it means that power in private and public industry can be retained by a few for longer periods of time with a resultant limitation to qualified individuals on their upward job mobility. In my first "Spectacles" column for *The Carolina Times*, I detailed how increasing the retirement age would "railroad" an aging black individual who will most likely not live long enough to reach retirement or to collect the benefits he/she paid into the system. 2) Decreasing the benefits of those who take an early retirement from 80% to 55%. 3) Coupled with this decrease in benefits for early retirement, the current administration wants to restrict disability benefits for those who might retire due to disability. This blatantly neglects an interpretation of data showing that many of the workers who take the early retirement route, do so because they are disabled. The disability system, presently in existence almost requires that one be blind, crippled, and crazy simultaneously before they'll rule one eligible. To restrict it further is to threaten the public's health by inflicting cruel and inhumane judgements upon those who most need our compassion.

Workable Solutions: The only true equitable economic solution for this nation's problems is a proportionate taxing system which the rich and politically powerful vigorously oppose. A reform of the Internal Revenue System (IRS) with 10% federal, 5% state and 5% retirement and disability (FICA) taxes should be imposed uniformly on all employed individuals without exemptions. This system would a) be fair for all citizens without placing the burden on the middle income group; b) would generate sufficient revenues for our expensive tastes by having all workers — the rich, the poor, and the in-between — pay taxes uniformly, eliminating time consuming accountants, tax lawyers, etc.; and c) would save billions of dollars annually by paring down the size of our tax collection agencies, simplify tax forms, and simplify filing procedures.

Secondly, it is time to eliminate the preferential retirement system given to civil servants and military personnel. You can't say you're opposed to the bureaucracy without looking at the plush

benefits civil servants and military personnel can take that aren't available to those same citizens who pay for them. In the military's need for an expanded budget, over one-third of the people to retire at up to two-thirds of their maximum salary for thirty years of service. This income is minimally taxed and can be supplemented through "double-dipping" jobs which pay equally as well.

Thirdly, all retirement income over \$10,000 or over a basic subsistence level up to this amount should be taxed except that derived directly from support.

Fourth, children might be allowed and encouraged to support their elderly family members, particularly their parents, through deductions for amounts given up to \$2,000 per year. Additional allowances should be given for those who care for the elderly at home.

Fifth, industry needs to be encouraged in the development of part-time positions and "shift" jobs which the elderly, mothers with small children, the disabled, and teenagers might perform. This would allow the elderly to supplement their incomes and provide employment for those who need a second income.

Lastly, the disability system needs to be reviewed. It is not realistic to think that garbage men can lift those cans "til they're 70, that assembly line people will continue to see with the "eagle-eyes" or enthusiasm of youth, that the seamstress' fingers will be forever nimble or that the majority of people will be able to continue in labor intensive jobs much beyond 60. Raising the retirement age without looking at other job options available to this group denies the physical realities of aging.

Black people wake up! More than any other group, we as those who will most likely fill the most labor intensive (back-breaking) jobs, have a stake in all proposed changes in retirement legislation. Plan for the future. Make politicians accountable to you and representative of a future in which we can all participate and do so while remaining able. Vote, write letters, and support reforms which distribute the retirement issue equitably without neglecting our elderly who need our support or without punishing further those already over-burdened with taxes.

Voting Rights Act Extension:

What Can We Do?

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has gone a long way toward achieving the promise of the 15th Amendment — that the right to vote shall not be denied to any man or woman because of the color of their skin or national heritage. Nevertheless, racism in voting is a problem which racial and language minorities still face when they endeavor to exercise their right to vote in this country.

Yet to hear critics tell it, because of the success of the Act, its key enforcement provision could be eliminated or substantially watered down without jeopardizing the gains both racial and language minorities have made.

At this point, the fundamental question we as citizens and particularly as minorities must ask is: of what use is the right to vote if that right can be sabotaged by racial gerrymandering, biased at-large elections, suspicious annexations and other schemes developed for the sole purpose of nullifying the electoral strength of minority voters.

Whatever the motivation of those who oppose the Act's extension, the inevitable results of such an action will be the denial of the rights of the black, brown and poor of our nation.

While the past sixteen years have seen the end of the poll tax, literacy tests and the flat denial by racist authorities of the right to vote, those who would deny proper representation to blacks and Hispanics have not been without new tactics. The police dog and the billy club of yesteryear have given way to artful reapportionment and manipulation of registration laws.

Of specific importance to us at this time of critical cutbacks in needed programs and both rising prices and unemployment is the right to defeat those officials who are responsible for these conditions.

In several southern states, for example, Congressmen who voted against our interest represent Congressional districts in which the black vote is the balance of power — sometimes comprising as much as forty or more per cent of the total. It is vital that we not allow this vote to be nullified by failure to extend the Voting Rights Act.

Black people in the United States must realize that it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to protect the right to vote for our southern brothers and sisters and at the same time ourselves.

The call to have the Act applied nation-

wide is the not so subtle battle cry of those who seek to warp the true intention of the act and to so increase the paperwork overload of the government as to neutralize or at least severely hinder the effectiveness of the Act. Such a situation would not only turn back the clock on black and minority voting rights, but the enormous expansion in coverage would be prohibitively costly. It is ironic and revealing that the proposal to have every state covered by the Act is being mouthed by many who in the same breath call for reductions in government spending.

The bill to extend the Voting Rights Act will face its first hurdle in a few weeks when the House of Representatives will consider extension of the Act. You can make a difference in the outcome. If you believe as I do that minorities must have unbridled access to freely exercise their right to vote; and if you do not want the sacrifices of thousands upon thousands of blacks and minorities to gain the right to vote to be in vain, then you will let your elected officials ranging from the President, to your Senator, to your Congressman know that you want to Voting Rights Act extended and even more importantly, without crippling amendments.

Business In The Black

Ford Financing Team Training

200 Get Quality Upgrade Program

By Charles E. Belle

"I was one of the lucky ones," said the soul brother in a cowboy hat at the San Francisco International Airport. But the brother wasn't lucky at all — he was smart! Starting back about four months ago he had joined Ford Motor Company's volunteer increase productivity training program. Now he and some 100 other employees at Ford's San Jose, California Assembly Plant were taking off on a chartered plane to train for a week side-by-side with quality upgrade operators at Ford's Wayne, Michigan Assembly Plant near Detroit. Doing a better assembly job in San Jose on the hot selling Escort and Lynx cars was the goal of this group of men, women and minorities.

Over ten per cent of those getting on board the plane were black Americans. Destination: Detroit. Task: Training. Objective: More money. Maintaining high quality at the outset of assembling Escort and Lynx cars in the fall is a firm commitment of these chosen few.

"Each one, teach one," is not news to families from darkest Africa and apparently Ford has found this answer for all its assembly plant workers. The lesson learned in Detroit in assembling the extra high quality Escort and Lynx cars will be donated and taught to the remaining San Jose plant employees. Every department in the assembly plant from paint to trim will be involved in this higher quality control on Ford's Escort and Lynx cars.

Competition, mainly the Japanese manufactured car, is behind this quality build up at Ford. Robert McGrath, pre-delivery manager at the San Jose plant, says the strategy has been "six to nine months in planning" and the "Wayne (plant) personnel more than cooperative."

Comments Lester C. Thuron, professor of economics and management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "The Japanese have become successful not because they have better individual

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Things You Should Know

John Henry CONYERS



BORN IN SOUTH

CAROLINA. HE WAS THE FIRST NEGRO EVER TO BE ADMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY AT ANNAPOLIS, MD.!--

— ADMITTED ON SEPT. 21, 1872!

ARTIST'S CONCEPTION ABOVE.

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