

BLACKS DESTINY IN OWN HANDS



Editorial

Challenging Citizen Participation Is One Approach

In its August, 1981 report on citizen representation on appointed boards and commissions in the city, the Durham Human Relations Commission clearly presented a case for improved citizen participation in local government.

We applaud the Commission for its generally fair and evenhanded approach, not simply in saying there is a problem, but also pointing out those external, often traditional factors which mitigate against pat and easy solutions.

But we also believe that the Commission's recommendations for improvement stopped far short of suggesting approaches that will not only correct the obvious problem, but will also alter the underlying principles that produced the problem to begin with.

Citizen participation is most often determined by the individual's perception of his or her relationship with government, rather than by simple desire alone.

Persons, for example, who have been taught for generations that they are the government perceive public service as both a responsibility and an opportunity.

On the other hand, persons who view government as a distinctly separate entity from themselves, are not likely to insist that they have a responsibility and an opportunity to participate, particularly in the governmental decision-making process.

Most often, these people — certainly too many black folks among them — wait until decisions have been made, and then they react, often unfavorably, or selfishly, in regard to relatively narrow special interests.

Obviously, we must work to alter these negative and counterproductive perceptions. Therefore, we recommend a course in Citizen Participation taught, hopefully, at NCCU or Durham Technical Institute, that will explain local government's many roles and effects on our lives.

The purpose of this course is not to passively convey bureaucratic data and statistics, but rather to stir its students to action — to challenge them to participate.

The results will be a reservoir of prepared, excited citizens who not only understand the vital necessity of citizen participation, but who are also eager to accept the challenges, the responsibilities and the opportunities to BE the government, rather than be victimized by it.

Things You Should Know

Jean Louis
1785-1865

A POOR OPPHAN FROM

THE WEST INDIES WHO JOINED

THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONIST

ARMY AT AGE ELEVEN — HE

BECAME THE GREATEST SWORDSMAN

IN HISTORY. MASTER FENCER AND

MILITARIST, HE SERVED WIDELY;

RETIRED IN 1830 AND OPENED FRANCE'S

MOST FAMOUS FENCING SCHOOL IN

MONTPELLIER. HIS ADVANCED TEACHING

METHODS WERE ADOPTED BY THE ARMY AND MOST

FRENCH FENCING SCHOOLS, MANY OF WHICH ARE

NAMED AFTER HIM.



CONTINENTAL FEATURES—

Business In The Black

Aid to Families Cut 32%

Fed Up With Federalism

By Charles E. Belle

Presidents past and present have been news for the last few weeks. With Lincoln and Washington to work with, the present occupant of the White House could learn a couple of lessons. Like Lincoln's "you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

The administration's budget contains many allusions to the "new federalism initiative," outlined in the President's State of the Union message. But the sweeping proposals for realignments of Federal and State responsibilities are not reflected in the budget projections of spending for 1984 and later years, indicating few people feel the new "federalism initiative" is here to stay. Instead, only a sharp 32% cut in "aid to families with dependent children" of \$2.6 billion is actually proposed for next year from 1981's budget.

This is an especially devastating dollar

decision against black America. The undue and disproportionate number of black American women on AFDC rolls results from racism in America. In 1981, the 15.5 per cent unemployment rate for black American women was double the rate for all workers.

The unemployment rate for black American teen-age females is currently more than double that for all teen-agers, according to Dr. Leonard Cole-Alexander, director of the Labor Department's Women's Bureau. She believes there are "many difficulties" facing black American women in their dual roles in the home and work place.

Perhaps Dr. Cole-Alexander could suggest a solution to the President, especially since black American women worker median educational attainment has risen to 12.4 years nearly equal the level of 12.6 years for white women.

Equal job opportunities open up with

affirmative action goals would go a long way toward reducing the disproportionate number of black American women on AFDC in a positive and constructive manner.

Making the same mistake as George Washington is a waste of time and human resources. We are not worried about whether Washington chopped down a cherry tree, but his conclusion to call back black Americans into military service during the Revolutionary War. With defeat looking lanky George in the face, Washington found the common sense to use all the human resources this country had to offer in order to deliver freedom to the colonies.

Countries come and go. Presidents persist in pretending the people prefer their aesthetic form of government. People must play a part in government and government must play a part for people. All of the people — all of the time.

Affirmative Action:

Blacks and The Military Budget

By Gerald C. Horne, Esquire

The announcement of President Reagan's budget has brought wounded cries of outrage from the Congressional Black Caucus.

Like so many others, they have protested loudly about the fact that programs for the poor face the deepest cuts. Food stamps, Medicaid and Aid to Families with Dependent Children which were expected to reach \$36.5 billion in the current fiscal year, would be cut back to \$32 billion in the next year, a whopping reduction of 12.3%.

At the same time, the Pentagon's budget has been pushed up dramatically. By fiscal year 1986, Reagan plans to spend \$342.7 billion (in current dollars) more than twice the 1981 total.

Though some mistakenly feel that at least building bombs and tanks means jobs, a new study done by economist Marion Anderson in conjunction with Operation PUSH sharply challenges this conventional wisdom.

Entitled *Bombs or Bread: Black Unemployment and the Pentagon Budget*, this finely crafted piece of research maintains that the astronomical unemployment rates prevalent among blacks is directly tied to more military spending.

This study found that military spending has a seriously depressant effect upon job opportunities for blacks nationwide. During the period 1970-1978 when the annual average of military spending was \$85 billion, it cost the jobs of 109,000 black Americans each year. Every time the military budget went up \$1 billion, blacks lost 1,300 jobs.

Blacks lost 483,000 jobs in construction, the service sector, state and local government. This number was far greater than the 84,000 jobs gained from military contracts even when combined with the jobs of the 290,000 blacks who were members of the armed forces.

Moreover, Anderson demonstrates convincingly that if a billion dollars were transferred from military industry to civilian industry 9,000 more jobs would be created.

If a billion dollars were used by state and local governments to hire teachers, police officers and firefighters, 35,000 more jobs would be created than if the same billion dollars were used to hire military personnel. Either way, the economy gains and unemployment goes down.

Even those blacks who work on military contracts suffer diminished job opportunities, for if there are fewer jobs available nationwide, a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job, who wants to ask for a raise or more has just that much less opportunity to do so.

Thousands of blacks who join the armed forces feel forced into this decision because of job scarcity. Once in the armed forces, their upward mobility is severely limited. A young white person joining the military has approximately once chance in six of becoming an officer. An Afro-American has a slim one chance in thirty.

Perhaps the most startling conclusion of this remarkable study is its clear demonstration that in the 21 states where 90% of the black population lives, 17 of them show a net loss of black employment when the Pentagon's budget goes up.

For example, New York suffers a net loss of 58,000 black jobs, Illinois-24,000, Michigan-18,000, Florida-14,000, Pennsylvania-7,000. On the other hand, the top three states that "benefit" from military spending in terms of jobs gained — Hawaii, Colorado and Washington state — have proportionately small black populations. This ravaging of the states' employment rolls is surpassed by the Pentagon's effect on inflation.

Most military contractors produce on a "cost-plus" basis. Thus, they have no incentive to improve efficiency and cut waste. Indeed, the contrary is the case, as contractors get guaranteed profits no matter what the costs incurred.

A report by the General Accounting Office showed that 55 major Pentagon projects were initially estimated to cost \$125 billion. As of September 1978, the total cost of these projects was put at \$210 billion.

Moreover, resources are used in the production of military hardware at the expense of the civilian sector. Bombs are not bought by the public. Building them reduces the stock of civilian goods and bids up the prices of raw materials.

Over half of the U.S. scientists and engineers work on military and space contracts. There is no mystery why German and Japanese autos and electronics are preferred. Laid-off auto workers would do better to picket the Pentagon than scream at the Japanese.

Further, the federal government must

borrow money in the open market to finance the military. This not only adds to the federal debt, it adds to the interest costs of servicing that debt and it bids up interest rates — the price of money — which everyone has to pay.

These high interest rates have a destructive impact on the sale of cars, houses, on city and state financing and, ultimately, on jobs in all these areas.

Military contractors also enter the money markets to borrow capital for military production. This, too, reduces the availability of capital for the civilian sector and gives an additional boost to interest rates.

This inflation whipsaws the black community. The value of black paychecks are reduced as raises don't keep pace with inflation. Blacks are also hit through their jobs. When interest rates spiral to 18% or 20%, autos are not bought, homes are not built, small businesses are not expanded. Black workers are trapped in the vice: higher prices with fewer jobs.

Consequently, jobs are exported from the Midwest, Industrial Northeast, and even the South to Taiwan, South Korea and Latin America.

Thus, the spiral continues. The capital siphoned off through taxes to the Pentagon means that it is not available for civilian enterprises. Less capital investment means fewer jobs and less spending on maintaining industry. Railroads, highways, bridges and the infrastructure generally are neglected.

What is to be done? Slashing severely the military budget is an absolute necessity. Giving the generals so many toys to play with only encourages them to be used in El Salvador and elsewhere.

Taking a mere \$10 billion in mass transit would yield 300,000 jobs per year. An investment of \$457 million — the cost of twelve F-15 fighters planes — would save the Guaranteed Student Loan program from a massive hemorrhage. The \$400 million authorized for development of the Pershing II missile system could restore massive cuts from health education and training programs.

All of these moves would aid the black community, languishing at Depression level unemployment rates. If you haven't already, let your Senator know this directly. For as time passes, it becomes even clearer that the Pentagon is a vampire sucking the very lifeblood from blacks.

To Be Equal

Business And The Cities

By John E. Jacob

Executive Director, National Urban League

The time has come for massive business involvement in making our cities work better for all their people, and for special efforts to bring disadvantaged minorities into the mainstream.

I'm hardly calling for the kind of "voluntarism" the present Administration is pushing as a partial replacement for its abdication of federal responsibilities.

Even with federal programs running full blast, there would be an important place for private sector responsibility. The private sector is where the jobs are, where countless decisions affecting cities and their people are made, and where vast potential exists for creative solutions to many social problems.

But now, with the budget cuts, the spreading misery and hopelessness in America's ghettos, and the abandonment of local governments to face those problems on their own, it will be absolutely necessary for business to step up its present limited commitment.

That's what makes it so heartening to hear prominent business leaders placing fresh emphasis on the private sector's role in stabilizing local communities. That new interest probably has its most comprehensive expression in a new report issued by the prestigious Committee for Economic Development.

The report, titled, "Public-Private Partnership" sees partnership efforts between

business and local governments as providing opportunities for urban health.

It suggests that such "collaborative efforts" can stabilize cities, improve services and neighborhoods, and create training opportunities and jobs for the disadvantaged.

But it does not pretend that such efforts can substitute for federal action or that, as some fantasize, the private sector can fully replace federal programs. That's an important point, for if we buy the sales pitch the Administration is making that the private sector can do it all, then we face bitter disillusionment.

Far better to demand from the private sector what it can and should do, which is to work with governmental bodies and community based organizations toward achievable progress. The CED report mentions a number of case studies where such cooperation has paid off, and promises a further volume of in-depth analyses of those situations.

If anything, the report might have placed greater stress on the role of those community based organizations. Often, simple partnership with local government is no guarantee that benefits will reach the disadvantaged, as can be seen by some federal programs that let local authorities have a "partnership" arrangement that fails to include community groups.

A tri-partite partnership is called for:

(Continued on Page 12)

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