

Editorials

A Look At A Blinded Leader

The Holy Bible advises us wisely that the blind cannot lead, and only those who are equally as blind will follow them into the inevitable ditch.

Many years later, Jesse Jackson said much the same thing when he noted: "One cannot lead where one has never been."

Both of these observations, then, raise serious questions about the revived Durham Business and Professional Chain, and its mission to help the final eight businesses displaced by Hayti's destruction find permanent and prosperous homes.

Let us make it perfectly clear that we believe in the founding concept of the Durham Business and Professional Chain, and that if the Chain truly represented the black business interests in this community, its value to the total population would be so phenomenal that it wouldn't have to operate on government monies.

We will not at this point question the Chain's motives or its intentions in entering into a \$40,000 six-month contract with the City of Durham to hopefully settle this lingering municipal headache. Rather our questions center around the logistics of the mission.

How, for example, can the Chain advise these businesses on long range planning, market positioning, location analysis, marketing and management when the Chain's own record in these areas is spotty at best? How can the Chain give "life sustaining" advice to these firms when the Chain, itself, has stumbled along for many years, skidding on the brink of disaster? Why should those of us who daily must struggle to balance the bottom line listen to advice from an organization whose existence depends less on management expertise than it does on the pure and simple largesse of government, federal, state or local?

And so it seems that before the Chain can make any serious effort to lead these businesses to a better day, it must demonstrate a better day in its own behalf. Before the Chain can show us how to succeed, consult as it were, with us on the principles of economic success, it must demonstrate some success of its own.

In other words, according to another Biblical admonition, the Chain should not try to show us the mote in our eyes until it removes the beam from its own.

We Must Fight Drug And Alcohol Abuse Among Us

On a national level, blacks spend more each year for alcohol than we do for food. That is tragic.

And while the expenditures for drugs, both illegal and legal in the black community is not as starkly apparent, the tragedy of drug abuse is nevertheless clear.

We can no longer sit idly by while this demon of abuse continues to run amok among us. We must fight back. The N.C. Task Force on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Among Blacks is leading that fight and needs the help of every black person in Durham and across the state.

Now here's how we all can help the Task Force accomplish its mission, and help ourselves in the process.

We need to request the literature that is available from the Task Force. We need to let these dedicated professionals share with us the information we need to protect ourselves from the ravages of alcohol and drug abuse.

Armed with information on prevention, and treatment, we need to become less tolerant of the problem. Those of us who have relatives with the problem must open our eyes and insist that they get help. We must not wink knowingly at the pusher who drifts in and out of neighborhoods peddling his deadly substances, often to our children.

And just as important as being educated and taking action against this menace in our midst, we must also give the Task Force some money to continue its work.

And in that connection, we make this suggestion. Let's all of us who drink, but who don't suffer from the disease of alcoholism, send the money we would spend this week for our weekend fifth or pint to the Task Force. The address is: Black Task Force, N.C. Council on Alcoholism, P.O. Box 10465, Raleigh, N.C. 27605.

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who propose to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean's majestic waves without the awful roar of its waters.

—Frederick Douglass

To Be Equal

Targeting The Elderly For Cuts

By John E. Jacob
Executive Director, National Urban League

A neglected aspect of the Administration's proposed budget cuts is the effect they will have on older Americans, especially those in the low-income brackets.

Some of those cuts represent the worst kind of nickel-and-dime. For example, the Administration wants to change the rules that now allow a recipient of supplemental security income (SSI) to exclude \$20 per month of unearned income in determining benefits and eligibility. Ending the disregard will save the government about \$15 million next year. But it will mean a loss of \$240 per year to some 135,000 aged recipients. And if you don't think \$240 a year amounts to much, it comes to fifteen per cent of the average benefit for an aged recipient.

Another measure hard to justify is the plan to round off SSI benefit payments to the nearest lowest dollar. So if someone is entitled to a check of, let us say \$108.99, they'll get \$108. That amounts to robbing recipients of 99 cents every check.

If someone steals 99 cents from an older person, it is a crime. But when government does it, it's called revenue enhancement. That little bit of sleight-of-hand will save the government about \$3 million in 1982, barely enough to buy one tank, at a cost of damaging its reputation for fairness and honesty.

Cuts in food stamps will also hit the elderly poor. It is estimated that an elderly couple living on \$5,100 of social security income would have their food stamp benefits cut by more than half, to \$120 a year from \$312.

The proposal to eliminate the minimum food stamp benefit of \$10 per month would affect the elderly poor disproportionately. Again, a small amount that means a lot to people in poverty would be cut.

Nationally, one out of four households with an older person will lose benefits.

Bigger losses would come from cuts in energy assistance programs. The Administration wants to lump all its energy aid programs into one package, funded at more than thirty per cent less than existing programs. The aged poor are the most vulnerable to excessive heating costs and would be the big losers if this plan goes through.

Other changes in regulations would also impose fresh burdens on older Americans, especially the elderly poor. Planned changes in Medicare and Medicaid would raise deductible charges, delay coverage, reduce reimbursements for drugs and dental care, and force "cost-sharing" on the medically needy.

There is more, of course — rent hikes for public housing tenants and other

changes that, added up, will have a tremendous impact on older poor people.

It's hard to make a case for those cuts. The savings they represent don't justify the human misery they cause. And some of those cuts will reduce opportunities for the dependent elderly to become contributors to our economy.

The Administration wants to eliminate funding for the Senior Community Service Employment Program, which helps older citizens find employment.

Many of the elderly don't have the skills or the education to land jobs on their own. They need counseling, training, and assistance. This program gives it to them.

It helps move many off the welfare rolls and onto the payrolls of private industry. It brings hope and a new zest for life to older people who might just have given up. It helps them fill productive jobs serving community needs.

Why cut it? It just doesn't make any kind of sense to do away with a program that helps the elderly poor pay taxes instead of consuming them.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program ought to continue. And other programs aimed at helping the aged poor also should be spared the budget-cutters' axe.

An Independent View From Capitol Hill

Job Training Can Pay Its Own Way

By Gus Savage
Member of Congress

A recent study by a major university on the impact and benefits of Federal job training efforts is indeed timely. Hopefully these data will find their way to open-minded individuals within the Reagan administration.

The study strengthens the contention that Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) employees are not on a form of "welfare", as the Reagan administration maintains. In fact, the report affirms that job training can pay for itself and that such projects are investments in the future economic growth of our nation.

These were among the conclusions reached when the University of Kansas School of Business recently examined the effect of CETA training programs on participants' income. The researchers conducted their study during several three month test periods in 1979 and 1980.

Another conclusion was that the average earned income of persons trained under CETA was 65 per cent higher than the income of similar individuals who had failed to secure such training.

In this connection, the study projected that training costs for CETA employees trained in 1980 will be repaid to public treasuries within seven years, as for those trained in 1979, when the nation's economic climate was better, the investment in job training will be repaid in three years. Such quick returns on the job train-

ing investment will be realized because of increased tax revenues, lower unemployment insurance outlays, and decreased welfare benefits, all stemming from the trainees' improved employment status.

These findings come at a time when unemployment continues to soar to record levels. Joint House-Senate Labor Subcommittees are grappling with the issue of job training and unemployment. Hearings are being held on the question of job training and how to mount an assault against joblessness among blacks and the urban poor.

One method the Reagan administration feels will combat unemployment is the institution of Urban Enterprise Zones in selected depressed areas. However, this approach will create more ills than it cures, unless efforts are made to humanize the Urban Enterprise zones concept and broaden the participation of minorities as employees and employers.

As the Urban Enterprise Zones are now proposed, businesses will be allowed to hide under tax shelters until the fiscal blizzard blows over. However, there is no sign that the economic uncertainty is lessening. The Urban Enterprise Zones proposal is receiving opposition in the black community because the issue of targeted job training remains a whisper, when the issue should be noted in unmistakable terms.

Without job training, urban centers will

become expanding pools of black tension, frustration and discontent. The only way to humanize the Urban Enterprise Zones plan would be to spell out how many jobs will be created for residents who reside within the zones. To further stimulate economic development, black owned businesses must be given a key role. Black enterprise must not be allowed to sit on the sidelines while other firms move in to reap all the benefits.

In addition to the creation of jobs within the Urban Enterprise Zones, existing firms outside of these areas should also be encouraged to begin intensified job training programs.

It is rather disturbing to note that at a time when black unemployment stands at eighteen per cent, many large scale firms are turning to the use of robots instead of residents. From 1979 to the current year, the level of research dollars being allocated toward industrial robots has climbed from \$60 million to \$250 million. Few persons are opposed to automation for its own sake, but automation must be utilized to enhance rather than curtail employment opportunities.

Job training must be woven into any industrial revitalization thrust, so that when expansion and modernization result, those persons most in need of jobs will be prepared to accept them.

Now's The Time To Speak Up

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

America is in very severe economic straits. The Reagan Administration which took office with the promise of high economic growth, low inflation and jobs for all, has instead led us into the midst of a deep recession. Unemployment has reached levels which are eclipsed only by those endured during the Depression — which many of us still remember all too well. Industrial activity, despite enormous tax cuts for the rich, is at a standstill — and most Americans are still waiting for the "better times" to trickle down.

The President has submitted his 1983 budget proposal which represents the second round of his campaign to slash spending on programs which benefit the poor, the sick, and the elderly while providing the Pentagon with the largest peacetime spending increases in history.

The Administration's new budget cuts are in addition to the \$44 billion which

has already been cut from social programs.

Last year, the Reagan Administration claimed that its budget proposals were fair. In fact, however, those cuts were disproportionately directed at programs to assist the poor and disadvantaged, and at investment in health, education, training, and public works. This year, the Administration hasn't even bothered to pay lip service to the idea of fairness. It has once again targeted for cutbacks the same programs which sustained deep spending reductions last year.

Many Americans, particularly those who live far away from Washington, seem to feel that what goes on in our nation's capitol and the budget process doesn't really affect their lives. By the same token, too many Americans feel that since they personally don't receive food stamps or live in government subsidized housing that the budget cuts that the Administration is proposing will not affect them, consequently, they have no reason to be concerned or to speak up.

This type of attitude reminds me of a story which goes like this: In Germany, they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

That story today could be revised to read: In America the Administration cut medicare/medicaid, and I didn't speak up because I didn't receive medicare/medicaid. Then they cut housing programs for the poor, and I didn't speak up because I didn't live in subsidized housing. Then they cut food stamps, and I didn't speak up because I didn't live in subsidized housing. Then they cut food stamps, and I didn't speak up because I didn't receive food stamps. Then they broke up PATCO and I didn't speak up because I was not a

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Things You Should Know

Dr. Henry M.
MINTON

Born in Columbia, S.C., in 1871, educated in New Hampshire, he was class orator and co-editor of his college paper. He got his Ph.D. in 1895; his M.D. from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, in 1906. As a scientific researcher, he made medical history with his pioneer work on the causes and prevention of tuberculosis. He was also a celebrated chronicler of Negro history.

—Continental Features

