

Editorials

## Weep For North Carolina

When white North Carolinians feel the urge to brag about how our state has progressed, we hope they will think about this election, shut their mouths, and go to work to eliminate their obsession with insane racism that seems to permeate every decision. We hope that they will begin to recognize that their racism is the biggest threat to the survival of the U.S.A. as a great nation in this world — not communism. Racism is literally destroying this country and those who continue to practice it are the most un-American. Will they who are so insecure ever be able to remove their blindfolds of insecurity before it's too late? The time is very late now!

The far, far better prepared man lost the run-off election for the 2nd district congressional seat for one reason and one reason only — black skin. If Michaux's skin had been white, he would have swept the election the first time around based on qualifications alone.

We do not weep for Mickey. We weep for our state — our congressional district, our country — which needs Mickey in Congress far more than Mickey needs the headaches of the job.

## End The Farce

When the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People endorses a candidate, that's news. And it is time that Committee leaders recognize that and act accordingly.

The endorsement decisions should be openly and formally announced the evening after they are made. That, then, would end this farce of secrecy.

The secrecy of the Committee's vote is a farce both as a matter of practical application, as well as a direct result of the Committee's historical structure.

Every year, on the eve of every election, Committee leaders stand up and plead with the audience, all black people, at their meetings not to publicize the decisions made in the meeting.

But the Committee has absolutely no way of enforcing that desire, partially because every black person in Durham County is a member of the Committee, including those who are co-opted, or who have interests that conflict with Committee interests. They participate to whatever degree they chose and then go tell whoever they choose.

The openness of the Committee is admirable, but we might as well face it: with that openness, we render secrecy a farce.

There is no way to determine who might be in the meeting for purposes inconsistent with the Committee's objectives. There is no way of knowing what someone might do as a result of having lost a vote in the Committee, or when they sincerely believe the Committee has made a mistake.

But one thing history appears

to indicate is that whatever people might do, one of the things they don't do is keep the results a secret.

Actually, the desire for secrecy often puts unfair and unrealistic demands on people. For example, if a black employee of a candidate comes to the meeting, often at the behest of the candidate, is this person going to leave the meeting and tell his or her employer that the results are secret? To believe that is unrealistic and unfair because the Committee can't give this employee a job. Neither can the Committee subsidize his or her personal and family responsibilities until the person finds a new job if the employer/candidate fires the black person for adhering to the secrecy rule.

If a black campaign worker comes to the meeting and his or her candidate wins, should this person not get that exhilarating word to the candidate and other campaign workers? If this supporter's candidate doesn't get the endorsement, should not a conscientious campaign worker get that word out as quickly as possible so as to minimize as much as possible the impact of not getting the Committee's endorsement.

So it seems to be an unfair and impractical burden that the Committee places on many black folks with this secrecy practice. And since it seldom, if ever, works anyway, why not simply publicize the decisions immediately after they are made, and end this farce of secrecy? To do this will also erase the pall of treachery that hangs over the Committee's work after every decision.

## Being Black Is A Qualification

In the fight for the 2nd district congressional seat, the I.T. "Tim" Valentine camp hurled many racist charges at H.M. "Mickey" Michaux, while at the same time contending publicly that race was not an issue in the campaign.

Of all the insults attributed to the Valentine camp, one in particular demands an immediate, forthright response.

The statement charged in effect that black voters who supported Mr. Michaux voted for "race" in the June 29 Democratic primary, while white voters who backed Mr. Valentine voted for qualifications.

The very nerve.

Based upon his education, his background and his political experience, Mr. Michaux is clearly qualified to sit with the nation's lawmakers and try to help guide America into new directions. After all, he's an attorney, a former assistant district attorney, a businessman, a former state legislator and U.S. Attorney — and has been successful in each pursuit.

But there is more.

Mr. Michaux qualifies and frankly leads the field in the race

for the 2nd district seat, not because he "happens" to be black, or in spite of the fact that he's black, but rather **BECAUSE** he is **BLACK**.

This definition of being **BLACK** speaks less to pigmentation than it does to perspective, perception, sensitivity and attitude.

And in a time when this nation sorely needs leaders with a positive perspective, perceptive vision and an attitude sensitive to the needs of people, Mr. Michaux clearly qualifies.

But unfortunately, 2nd district voters whose to repeat the mistakes of tradition and denied Mr. Michaux an opportunity to service this district.

We contend strongly that Mr. Michaux was clearly the more qualified choice for the office. And one of those qualifications, a chief qualification, if you will, is the fact that he is **BLACK**.

So the supposition that when black voters vote for black candidates they are voting for race rather than qualifications stands soundly refuted, because being **BLACK** is a qualification.

## To Be Equal

## Reforming The Tax System

By John E. Jacob

Executive Director, National Urban League

Every few months some hot new idea surfaces in Washington. This time it's the flat rate tax and it has attracted interest from liberals and conservatives alike.

The basic idea is simple: wipe out all tax loopholes and then tax all income from all sources at a flat rate. Since the tax base would be larger than it is under the present loophole-ridden system, the government could collect as much revenue with lower rates.

Like all simple ideas, this one has some appeal. But it is a good idea to examine this piece of goods very carefully before buying it. Given the fact that the same people who helped blow holes in the present tax code so enthusiastically embrace the flat tax, we ought to be suspicious.

And a good ground for suspicion is the fact that a flat tax would replace what is — in theory, at least — a progressive tax system with higher rates for those who earn more.

That makes sense, even if a high White House aide has called the progressive income tax "immoral." But tax progressivity is a sound corrective for adjusting gross disparities in income; those in the highest brackets have the greatest stake in society and so can and should do more to support it.

But all that is theory. In practice, the affluent take advantage of a broad variety

of tax shelters and tax-free investments.

Such special tax benefits, called tax expenditures, cost the government about \$250 billion a year through lost revenues from individuals and businesses.

The other bad thing about those loopholes is that they distort the economy, since investment decisions are not necessarily made because they are wise or productive, but because they shelter income from the tax man.

So why not move to a flat tax? For one thing, the flat tax system would immediately become encumbered by fresh loopholes.

You can be sure that present modest tax breaks for low and moderate income people such as deductions for charitable contributions or exclusion of social security benefits would go by the boards. But old loopholes for the affluent would worm their way back into the tax code.

And the principle of progressivity is important; it should be kept in any reformed tax system. Even if all rates are reduced by ending loopholes, it is unfair to tax a \$10,000 earner at the same rate as a \$100,000 earner.

Most plans for a flat tax rate would cut tax rates for high income families and raise them for everyone else. That kind of

"reform" would be disastrous.

The only way a flat tax rate system would be palatable is if it is part of an income maintenance plan that transfers funds directly to people who don't make enough to pay taxes.

In one form or another, such a "credit income tax" has been suggested as a replacement for the welfare system. Introduced on a sliding scale, it would provide helpful supplements to low income working families while providing a minimum acceptable level of sustenance for the poor and correct the inequities of the present welfare system.

If such an income maintenance program were to be part of a reformed tax system then it would be assured of wider support. But without such a combination of an income maintenance system and the tax system, there is no justification for moving to a flat rate tax.

The present problem lies in the loopholes, not in the progressivity of the tax system. People are angry about taxes because the system is not fair — it is not progressive in its workings and the average wage-earner often pays higher rates than the wealthy.

Stripping away loopholes would broaden the tax base enough to lower all rate levels and result in a progressive tax system people can respect.



## Civil Rights Journal

### A Message To Black Preachers

By Charles E. Cobb

Executive Director  
United Church of Christ  
Commission For Racial Justice

In America, there are, almost sixteen million black Christians. Less than two million are members of predominantly white denominations. The black church has always kept the flame of freedom burning in the hearts of our fathers. In a sweep of prophecy the Apostle Paul hailed the preacher as God's agent for the saving of humankind. As a black preacher, I am of the belief and opinion that we must lead the black church away from a future of being an imitation country club. White Christianity is primarily middle class oriented. The black church cannot take on this kind of character

simply because so many in the black community are not middle class. The white church has historically been ineffective and/or silent on the great issues of racism, war, poverty and injustice, with a few exceptions, such as the United Church of Christ, a young denomination. On the other hand, these issues have been the life blood of the survival of the black church. We have had to address these issues because these are the issues that are afflicting our community.

We of the black church have the unenviable responsibility of providing the fulcrum on which black liberation and

self-determination must rest. Our ministries are inextricably tied to politics, economics and social values.

There was a time when the black church was alive and awake. It simply is not enough to call ourselves a sleeping giant, as we so often do and yet continue to sleep.

My brothers and sisters of the black clergy if we, the black church, are this sleeping giant, then we have the responsibility of waking the black church and making it the giant it once was and ought to be. This is our challenge.

## Business In The Black

### Kennedy and Kruschev Concerned; Nuclear Negligence Negates Gains

### Another Perspective

By Charles E. Belle

"It is a grave and fearful thing that I do to lead this great nation into war." Had the speaker foreseen nuclear war he would have winced even more. As it turned out, the atomic bomb was used against mankind in that World War II man made hell. Hope has sprung eternal that the world would be safe from nuclear holocaust since the end of World War II. Now each of us, "red and yellow, black and white," must decide if further detonation of nuclear weapons is wise.

Well, I don't know about you, but I for one am not yet ready to end all living life on this earth. Every individual will, of course, have to decide his/her fate and that of all further generations in the near future. Failure to sign a nuclear weapons test ban treaty by both super powers allows other more irresponsible nations to develop nuclear capability to be used against any country. Fighting for your life and all other life is the issue. Nuclear war once started knows no boundaries or favorite persons.

### 'Army Of Occupation'

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plex of security forces in the operational area is designated by the Ovambo word "omakakunya." We found it hard to determine the literal meaning of the word, but its implications are by no means flattering: "bloodsuckers," "bone-pickers" and so on. Not all units may be guilty of atrocities but the local population is inclined to lump all security forces together under one common label.

Stringent security measures are provided for in two proclamations: AG9 and AG26. AG26 allows the Administrator General to detain any Namibian likely to be a threat to law and order. AG9 allows for the repeated detention of persons on 30-day orders without recourse to legal counsel.

That detention and interrogation in any part of the country are accompanied by beating, torture, spare diet and solitary confinement is accepted as common knowledge. We found this attitude among most church representatives we met and among many others as well.

Reports of what oc-

curs in the operational area indicate that it is commonly accepted that in searching out SWAPO guerrillas the Security Forces stop at nothing to force information out of people. They break into homes, beat up residents, shoot people, steal and kill cattle and often pillage stores and tea rooms. When the tracks of SWAPO guerrillas are discovered by the Security Forces the local people are in danger. Harsh measures are intensified. People are blindfolded, taken from their homes and left beaten up and even dead by the roadside.

Women are often raped. It is not unknown for a detachment to break into a home and, while black soldiers keep watch over the family, white soldiers select the best-looking girls and take them into the veld to rape them. There is no redress because reporting irregularities or atrocities to commanders is considered a dangerous or fruitless exercise.

[Since such actions] are accepted as characteristic among people in the operational area, it is easy to understand their attitude when they say that they do not fear the SWAPO guerrillas but the South African Security Forces. These forces are looked upon generally throughout Namibia as "an army of occupation."

We discussed SWAPO with practically all the people we met and gained the impression that support for SWAPO is massive and that it would be easily victorious in any free and fair election held under United Nations supervision.

Church circles like the Council of Churches in Namibia and the entourage of the Lutheran Bishops of Ovambo-Okavango said that they had no evidence that SWAPO was Marxist. On the contrary, they knew great numbers of SWAPO guerrillas who are believing and practicing Christians. Whatever the Marxist tendencies of SWAPO, it seems to be a movement with powerful popular support, inspiring little apprehension in the majority of Christians in Namibia.

As is usually the case in situations of conflict,

F. Kennedy and Nikita Kruschev as concerned citizens for the safety of all humanity. Signatures for a test ban treaty took place after the Cuban missile crises created the "conscious courage" to cut off atmospheric nuclear bomb testing. Unfortunately, as Dr. Seaburg reflects, this removal of one of the greatest fears of mankind surrounding nuclear explosion releasing deadly radioactivity into the atmosphere, is today not an immediate concern of enough countries. Coming to a conclusion on a total nuclear test ban would be quicker if the danger was being demonstrated daily.

Death by nuclear explosion is more likely today than yesterday. You, however, may not be counting the days until calamity. Consider nevertheless, that it will be swift or very slow and painful, as there can be no plans for medical assistance after the start of this final war. Nuclear weapons wreck hospitals and kill the help. Have a nice day.

the picture presented on one side by the South African government and on the other by the churches in Namibia and by persons interviewed by the representatives of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference are so different that they scarcely seem to refer to the same issue.

According to the Prime Minister "the struggle surrounding South West Africa/Namibia is increasingly turning into a struggle between the advocates of the free expression of the right of self-determination and the advocates of power seizure by means of force and intimidation."

South Africa, in the eyes of the prime minister, is an unselfish benefactor of the Namibian people and its great protector against violent domination by SWAPO.

In contrast with the picture presented by the South African authorities, South Africa, in the eyes of church personnel and other Namibians that our representatives inter-