

BLACKS DESTINY IN OWN HANDS....



"BLACK FOLKS THEMSELVES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK OUT MANY OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT UP TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS."

ROY WILKINS

Editorial

Blacks In The Legislature

With last week's election, blacks tripled their numbers in the North Carolina Legislature.

And after we pat ourselves on the back for turning out to vote these men and one woman into these chief lawmaking seats, we need to get to work to make the effort pay off.

Black constituents must stay in touch with the legislator or legislators who represent their district.

Black business operators should speak to these representatives often to discuss the type of climate that is needed in North Carolina for broader and more successful business efforts.

We believe that the state's Black Press carries a special responsibility to cover the actions of these elected officials, because often, we send our heroes off to battle and then hear nothing from them until they return home permanently scarred.

So now that we've won, it's time to go to work.

The Message Could Have Been Clearer

Without a doubt, black Democrats in the 2nd District sent the Democratic Party a message with the recent write-in effort for H.M. "Mickey" Michaux.

At last count, the write-in effort throughout the ten-county district produced almost 17,000 votes. Durham, with almost 8,000 votes for Michaux led the way, followed by Vance and Warren counties with about 1,500 votes each, followed by Caswell with more than 1,400 votes and Edgecombe with about 1,100 ballots.

The message was clear: black voters will sacrifice so-called party unity to vote their vested interests when that is convenient. The principle is identical to the justification for so-called "cross over" voting that had a lot of Democrats casting ballots several years ago for the state's two Republican Senators.

But the message could have been clearer.

If some leaders of the Durham Committee had not haggled and wrung their hands over the prospective insurrection for so long, practically until the last minute, the message might have rung with reverberating impact.

As it is now, the message is subject to interpretation.

Some, like the Durham Committee's Willie Lovett and Dr. Lavonia Allison rule the effort successful, noting that almost 8,000 votes were delivered to the write-in with only a two-day notice.

Others say the effort was a futile protest that runs the risk of isolating blacks here from the political mainstream.

This interpretation problem could have been eliminated by an earlier start and some definitive campaigning and leadership.

We do not here attempt to judge whether there should have been, or should not have been a write-in effort. Rather, we speak to the question of strategy.

If the write-in was a good idea, it should have been considered in light of a victory, the sending of a booming message, rather than an interpretive whisper.

So the next time we have to speak, let's speak more loudly.

"Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

—Frederick Douglass,
August 4, 1857

To Be Equal

America at the Crossroads

By John E. Jacob

Executive Director, National Urban League

However you interpret the results of the election, it is clear that America has moved into one of those crucial historical moments when it must come together to overcome a crisis that threatens to engulf us all.

There are four major observations that must be drawn from any non-partisan view of the current scene. The first is that we are in a Depression. The current downturn started in 1980, unemployment is in the double-digit range, and most of the rest of the world is in the same boat. Recessions are relatively short, not as severe, and don't blanket the entire industrial world at the same time. So this is a full-scale Depression and the sooner we face up to labeling it for what it is, the sooner we can dig our way out.

The second observation is that this Depression has imposed intolerable costs. Over \$300 billion of goods and services that would otherwise have been produced were not. The same is expected next year.

That lost output means lower government revenues and bigger deficits. It means calls for austerity and cutting programs the country needs. It endangers the social security system, which would be fully solvent in a full-employment economy.

The human costs are incredible — almost twenty million people out of work

or dropouts from the labor market because of the scarcity of jobs that even affects previously healthy industries.

Besides loss of income, researchers have found that every one per cent increase in unemployment results in a two per cent increase in deaths, a three to four per cent rise in mental hospital admissions, and increases of five per cent in homicides, imprisonment, and infant mortality. That's the result of unemployment-induced stress and declines in food and health care consumption among the jobless.

The third observation is that Reaganomics has failed. That's not a partisan statement at all, simply an observation that is shared by the President's appointee as chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, who admitted in his confirmation hearings that Reaganomics has "been decisively proved wrong."

It never could have worked. Huge tax cuts for the affluent combined with runaway military spending and deep cuts in social programs were a prescription for disaster. Reaganomics was supposed to encourage investment and create jobs, but capital spending declined and unemployment rose. Instead of stimulating business, it just wiped out thousands of job-creating small businesses.

So fair-minded people of all political

persuasions are concluding that the experiment failed and staying the course for much longer can only inflict still more damage.

Finally, inequality is growing in this nation that has always valued equal opportunity and a fair share for all. That is a direct result of the tax cuts and spending cuts that are an essential part of Reaganomics.

A recent study by the *National Journal* says that the bottom fifth of American families averaged about \$3,800 in cash income in 1981. In 1983, they'll have about \$60 less, dropping their share of national income down to only 4.2 per cent.

The top fifth of American families averages about \$37,000 in income. In 1983, they'll gain over \$2,000 to account for 43.3 per cent of the nation's income.

Instead of all groups sharing in a rise in the nation's wealth or all losing equitably in a Depression, we have the classic situation of the rich getting richer and the poor, poorer.

Now that the din of the electioneering has died down, we need a national effort to come up with a game plan that gets us out of this Depression and into a full-employment economy that invests in the vast human potential of all of its citizens.

The Full Employment Option

By Norman Hill

President, A. Philip Randolph Institute

The monthly recitation of Labor Department unemployment figures lately has taken on the characteristics of a dirge. With each month's inexorable increase in the human misery brought about by the recession come the inevitable grim faced editorialists with their televised commentaries lamenting the Administration's inaction. From the Administration comes the obligatory expressions of concern and the empty promises of prosperity around the corner. When such equivocations were first advanced, they at least had the force of novelty behind them. Today, even the novelty has worn thin and the unemployment statistics only emphasize the bankruptcy of the Administration's economic program.

Each month of Reaganomics brings with it more of the same bad news. The tragedy of 11.3 million out of work, and of millions more working part-time or dropping out of the job market, has been ritualized.

This record of continued failure must test the limits of the public's tolerance. And October's news that the unemployment rate stands at 10.4 per cent indicates where the limits of tolerance lie.

Yet, disastrous as it is, for black Americans 10.4 per cent unemployment would be regarded as a heaven-sent improvement. For today, black unemployment stands at 20.2 per cent, practically double the rate for white workers.

For the last two decades, through ups and downs, under Republicans and Democrats, black unemployment has con-

sistently stood at twice that of other workers.

The reasons for this phenomenon are complex and numerous. Blacks are disproportionately located in such industries as steel and auto, which have been hardest hit by the recession. The black workforce is younger in age and has less seniority than the white workforce. A large proportion of black workers are unskilled and so are most vulnerable to layoffs.

Yet, despite such elegant and sophisticated explanations, the fact remains that today black unemployment stands nearly at the same level as national unemployment during the Great Depression. It constitutes a national failure, and disgrace.

The full extent of the catastrophe have yet to be gauged. But we all know what losing a job can do to family stability, to a person's sense of self-worth, to a worker's sense of motivation. This recession is tearing at the seams of the social fabric of the black community.

What the unemployment statistics would seem to call for is a jobs program that deals with the requirements of all those who are out of work, whether they be black or white, while recognizing the specific needs of blacks.

Yet, according to the October 7 *Washington Post*, Reagan Administration officials in the Education Department have recommended major personnel cuts in education programs that primarily benefit minority and disadvantaged

children. The focus of the recommended cutbacks is Title I, a program that provides states with funds to help disadvantaged children improve their math and reading skills. Such skills are absolutely essential for any worker's successful entry into the job market.

There is, of course, a humane, workable and rational alternative to such inhumane proposals. It is to be found in the anti-recessionary program developed by the AFL-CIO. The program calls for a massive reindustrialization and modernization effort centered around a government-supported Reconstruction Finance Corporation which would target loans; loan guarantees, interest rates, subsidies and tax benefits to stimulate economic growth in high unemployment areas. The program also calls for temporary restrictions on imports which result in the loss of American jobs, for the training and re-training of workers, and for the providing of funds for new low- and middle-income housing.

The disastrously high unemployment rate is only the latest signal that Reaganomics has failed. Yet even with the President and the Republican Party being repudiated on Election Day, the momentum of this repudiation will soon dissipate if it is not channeled into support for a constructive national economic agenda that recognizes the special needs of blacks and other unemployed workers. Only by linking the politics of protest to such a program for economic growth will our country find itself on the road to economic recovery.

Keeping The Dream Alive

Prejudice and Politics

By Don McEvoy

Senior Vice President
National Conference of Christian and Jews

Pollster Mervin Field has surveyed California voters to attempt to get a reading on how certain racial, ethnic, and personal characteristics might influence the electorate against a particular candidate. This study was undertaken to ascertain whether or not there might be an element of "hidden bias" which was unrevealed in regular polling.

The process was to present potential voters with a list of characteristics, giving them the opportunity to indicate whether or not they "would be disinclined to vote for" a person who fell into these specified categories.

The results? If you are a member of Ku Klux Klan, forget it. Ninety-three per cent of the voters are against you before you file. If you are black, you've got a shot at victory. Only five per cent are "disinclined" on that basis. If you are a Jew, you've only got a four per cent "disinclination" to overcome. Since blacks and Jews have traditionally been the primary targets of the KKK, that indicates a rather remarkable turnaround in American attitudes. Half a century ago those percentages would probably have been reversed. Maybe not to these extremes, but certainly tilted in the other direction.

If you have ever undergone psychiatric treatment, are a homosexual (male or

female), or have ever filed for bankruptcy, this is not an opportune time for you to be running for office. Over half of the voters indicate that these characteristics would disqualify you in their eyes.

Approximately one-third of the electorate would find it difficult to pull your lever in the voting booth if you were considered a young radical in the 60s, if you belong to a party other than the Democrats or Republicans, if you are a feminist, did not attend college, head a major corporation, or were not born in the United States.

Another major shift in public attitudes seems to be revealed in the fact that only seven per cent indicate that being divorced would give them cause to consider withholding their support. Less than two decades ago a divorce was considered the political kiss of death. Whether you consider that an indicator of growing tolerance and liberality or a symbol of the society's moral decay is up to you, but it certainly does show change.

I can't vouch for the reliability of these findings any more than for any other. The pollsters may have misled the pollsters to the same degree they do in other kinds of public opinion surveys. But they do seem to point to the lessening of our old prejudices while alerting us to some new biases of which we should be aware.

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

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