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30 Years Later, Marchers Say There's Still Much to Be Done

By Sonya Ross

WASHINGTON (AP) — Why march again? Thirty years after their historic March on Washington, civil rights activists say there is still much work to be done in American life: unemployment, injustice, poverty and discrimination from the White House.

So on Saturday, the same crusaders will hit the streets of Washington once more, to say the United States is drowning in a sea of malevolence toward those who are black, brown, yellow, poor or otherwise different. They say they are marching again, under the banner of "Jobs, Justice and Peace," because progress has taken 30 years to come to fore, and the United States can't sit down now.

"We face a pattern around the country where people have given up," said Jesse Jackson. "Hopes have been dashed. We must somehow revive their spirits and recapture their imaginations." As in 1963, 1983 and 1988, the marchers come with a list of demands. And the community of need is now broader, including Hispanics, Asians, Indians, women, gays, the disabled and the elderly.

But the parallels between now and 1963, organizers say, are greater than ever before.

In the months before the 1963 march, blacks were trickling onto the campuses of previously all-white colleges. James Meredith had decided to quit the school he integrated, the University of Mississippi, to become a crusader for his race.

Segregationist court challenges to survive in the bus station of Shreveport, La., the parks of Memphis, Tenn., and the prisons of the District of Columbia. White neighborhoods in Chicago and Folcroft, Pa., emptied in protest as blacks moved in.

In the days before the march, President Kennedy said he opposed job quotas for minorities. Congress was resisting two bills that would strike down legal segregation and barriers that kept blacks from voting.

Then on Aug. 28, Martin Luther King Jr. stood before more than 200,000 marchers, described his dream of equality and declared that America had "given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'" By the end of October, one of those bills made it out of a House committee, and went on to become the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The other became the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Progress came in fits and starts. Black Americans grabbed those two jobs and went, side-by-side with whites, into schools, airports, government jobs and voting booths.

Census figures tell the story. In 1970, only about one-third of black adults had graduated from high school. By 1992, 81 percent were high school graduates, 28 percent had enrolled in a four-year college and 14 percent earned a degree.

The percentage of blacks in professional jobs rose from nearly negligible in 1963 to 17 percent in 1990. The number of black elected officials had risen to 7,355 by 1989. This year, there are 39 black representatives in Congress, and a black woman in the Senate.

"We have made progress in the last 30 years. That's indisputable," said Benjamin Chavis, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"But, every inch of progress we've made has come as a direct consequence of struggle, of sacrifice," Chavis said. "Young people today are paying a high price in racial discrimination and economic inequality. There is still a dual system of justice in our society." In 1991, 23 percent of blacks lived in poverty, and 16 percent lived in what census researchers called "deep poverty" — meaning their annual income was less than half of the official poverty threshold.

As a group, blacks still had the lowest median annual income in 1989, making home \$20,000 a year. The median income for whites was \$31,400. In terms of accumulated wealth, whites had a net worth that year more than 10 times greater than that of blacks, \$44,400 to \$3,800.

Blacks were less likely than whites to own a home, 68 percent to 43 percent.

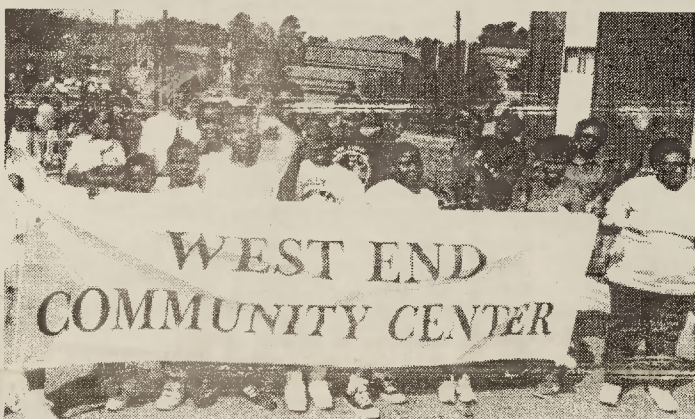
Black men were nearly three times more likely than white men to be unemployed, and nearly eight times more likely to be murdered, 61 percent to 8 percent.

This is why there's another march, said the Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded by King.

"We are here to comfort the disturbed, and disturb the comfortable," he said. "We hope to challenge our administration." They have a long list of lingering questions for President Clinton, whom they expect to visit before marching on Saturday.

They want to know what Clinton is going to do about a Supreme Court decision that allows white voters to challenge the configuration of

(Continued On Page 2)



WEST END HOLDS REUNION. SEE STORY AND PICTURES ON PAGE 2.

Plan To Keep Black Students From Enrolling Is Called Off

WILMINGTON (AP) — A plan to keep black students from enrolling in Brunswick County schools has been called off for now.

Black leaders and county school officials have begun talking about hiring more black administrators in the school system, said Willie Fullwood, vice president of the Brunswick County Citizens Association.

The talks have been so positive that a planned enrollment boycott — which could have cost the school system state money to pay up to 82 teachers — has been temporarily halted, Fullwood said Tuesday night.

The talks may continue through the rest of this week, Fullwood told the Wilmington Morning Star.

The group had threatened to pull black students out of school to protest the lack of black administrators in the system. The group wants the school board to hire a black assistant superintendent and at least one more black principal.

Thurman Gause, a school board member and president of the group, met with school board Chairman Donna Baxter and Superintendent Ralph Johnston last Friday to discuss the issue.

"I think they have a point," Ms. Baxter said. "But I told them we

need to address it through the policies the board has established."

Newly hired Assistant Superintendent Jan Calhoun was appointed in July to head a task force to recruit minority candidates to apply for jobs in the Brunswick County school system.

Businessman's \$10 Million Gift Draws Criticism

FARMVILLE, VA. (AP) — An Atlanta businessman's \$10 million investment in a once-segregated private school has drawn criticism

(Continued On Page 2)

Helms Critical Of Moseley- Braun Again

RALEIGH (AP) — According to Sen. Jesse Helms, the Senate's only black member was acting when she gave an impassioned floor speech against backing an insignia that features the confederate flag.

Helms, R-N.C., questioned the sincerity with which Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun, D-Ill., last month attacked a plan for the Senate to renew the patent for the insignia used by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The patent previously had been treated as a gesture favoring the organization and approved by the Senate.

"The devil makes me do things," Helms said Sunday. "But here's a woman who is phoney-baloney theatrics. Any senator will tell you privately that is exactly what she was doing. She was waving her arms and crying and tears coming down. In the first place, that's not the way a senator acts." Helms made his comments on "Charlie Gaddy Reports," a weekly half-hour live interview show produced by WRAL-TV in Raleigh.

"She took off after the United Daughters of the Confederacy."

She had screamed and hollered and cried about slavery, how terrible it made her feel to see the Confederate flag," said Helms, his voice taking on the tone of someone in tears. "She didn't even recognize the flag on the insignia." No one answered the phone in Moseley-Braun's Senate office Sunday. Neither her press secretary nor another spokeswoman could be reached for comment. Moseley-Braun does not have a published telephone number in the area code for Washington, D.C.

Moseley-Braun told an audience at the National Urban League annual dinner early this month that Helms had sung "Dixie" when he encountered her on a Senate elevator some time after the vote.

Gaddy asked Helms if he thought the publicity generated by the face-off with Moseley-Braun would benefit both senators' careers.

"I don't think it's the best thing to happen for the senate for her to be there," Helms replied.

Helms also criticized Moseley-Braun for an issue involving her family's finances that had been raised during her Senate campaign in 1992.

Last October, Moseley-Braun paid the state of Illinois \$15,000 her mother owed for a 1989 inheritance. Moseley-Braun helped distribute among family members.

Her mother, Mrs. Edna Moseley, has never reported the income to the Medicaid system, as required by law. The state Department of Public Aid declined to refer the matter to the state attorney general for prosecution.

"She got caught with her hand in (Continued On Page 2)

The Freedom Movement Lives On

By Isaiah Madison, Executive Director
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In the August, 1993 issue of *Emerge* magazine, Rep. John Lewis, a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early 1960s, made the following observation about the civil rights movement:

"...You know, whether it was sitting in or going on the Freedom Rides or marching for the right to vote or marching on Washington for jobs and freedom... you were part of something much larger — it was a cause, ... a sense of mission. And you were involved in something that was exciting.

...we felt like the force of the universe was on our side...

Reading this statement brought to my mind how much less hopeful and confident I am today than I was during the '60s. It caused me to wonder what took so much of the excitement and exhilaration out of my life, the sense of being "part of something much larger" than myself.

Not trusting my personal understanding of what went wrong, an associate and I called several current social activists and asked their opinion as to why the movement has lost its luster. Much of what we learned was not only exciting, but extremely reminiscent of the '60s.

We discovered that things are not nearly as gloomy as I had come to believe. We learned of dozens of dedicated and unsung people and communities around the country whose work is just as exciting as ours was 30 years ago. They are just as convinced of the historical

significance of what they are doing. Just as liberated and empowered by it.

One of the persons we discovered is Lillie Webb, a grassroots activist in Hancock County, Georgia. Webb criticized the "unbelievable stagnation" among existing political leaders who insist on "doing things the way they did 20 years ago." "The people have lost hope in the government," she said. "The government needs to be returned to the people... We need to take the full responsibility for what's happening to us; and not just give that responsibility to somebody else."

Webb's attitude is typical of that of other grassroots leaders we interviewed. Like others, her disappointment with established politicians has not caused her to despair, but has, instead, motivated her to create the Center for Community Development of Hancock County to foster community-based development in the area. This Webb's way of putting into practice the returning of the government to the people.

We learned of the work of Margarita Romo of Farmworkers Self-Help of Dade City, Florida, who for 14 years has been organizing farmworkers to create their own jobs, develop their own housing and rescue their own children from teen parenting and inadequate education. Equally impressive were the organizing efforts of Virginia Sexton and Lisa Montelongo of the Cherokees of Western North Carolina who were instrumental in galvanizing the Indian community to successfully resist the siting of a waste disposal facility on their land and to challenge the exploitation of Indians by local leaders and non-Indian owners of tourist businesses.

We also learned of the work of Charles Ballard, a high school dropout

who grew up without a father in Cleveland. After a period of imprisonment, he completed his education and assumed responsibility for an out of wedlock child he had fathered. He is having enormous success in empowering unwed black fathers to take responsibility for their children. Ninety percent are contributing toward their children's support, 75% have avoided a second pregnancy and 70% are employed.

A person who sees with particular clarity the connection between local community self-help and the broader issues of national and global political and moral accountability is Lorna Bourg of Southern Mutual Help Association of New Iberia, Louisiana. Bourg, who works in the area of the former sugarcane plantations, seeks to empower the local residents to transform the conditions of their lives. She said: "Empowerment really means developing... healthy people and sustainable communities... It's a matter of internal national security, which lends credibility to our modeling democracy to others."

We have shared these stories because we believe that they speak to a critical need in our society. Maybe citing them will serve to remind those who are about to converge on Washington in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the '63 March on Washington that we have good cause not only to remember the past but to look ahead with renewed optimism and hope. We only need to acknowledge and appreciate the tremendous surge of internal, bottom-up empowerment now exploding in our midst.

Many people believe that the strengthening of personal responsibility and community empowerment is a development our nation cannot afford to ignore. "Fear, dependency and ignorance breed eventual revolution or at best a colonial economy," says Bourg. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.