

The pot of ashes at the Rainbow's end

W. LAFAYETTE, Ind. -- In the two years since Ronald Reagan's re-election, it is clear that the vast majority of white Democratic leaders have learned nothing of the significance of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow campaign for the presidency. The bulk of the Democratic hierarchy now concurs with many of the central tenets of Reaganism: major reductions in social welfare programs, massive increases in military expenditures, an aggressively anti-Communist foreign policy, and so forth. Jackson has received virtually no concessions from the Democrats, and party regulars have scapegoated him and other black leaders for their own abysmal showing in 1984.

The Democratic Party's rejection of the Rainbow coalition and

FROM THE GRASSROOTS

By DR. MANNING MARABLE

its accommodation with Reaganism forced some black leaders to rethink their entire approach to politics.

For a quarter of a century, "black politics" exclusively meant Democratic politics. But what precisely had blacks gained from their faithful allegiance?

Although the number of black Democrats in Congress had risen from five in 1964 to 20 in 1984, black legislators as a group had very little power. Since its founding in 1971, the Congressional Black Congress was virtually ignored on most public policy issues by white Democratic leaders.

The only black politician elected to the Senate during this

period, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, was a liberal Republican. Few black Democrats were elected to statewide positions, and those who sought higher public office were frequently discouraged by their party's hierarchy.

By the 1980s, black votes amounted to 20 percent of the national Democratic bloc in presidential elections -- yet blacks were still treated as "second-class" citizens in their own party.

Jackson's inability to solidify the Rainbow at local levels, combined with the stampede to the right by most white Democratic leaders, has directly contributed to a renaissance of black Republicanism in some quarters.



This conservative current is still small, but it is beginning to expand significantly.

This year alone, blacks ran as Republican congressional candidates in Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Georgia, Illinois and other states.

In Maryland, attorney George Haley, brother of "Roots" author Alex Haley, was an unsuccessful

candidate in the Republican Senatorial primary. In Atlantic City, N.J., black Republican Mayor James Usry was re-elected in a non-partisan race.

The black electorate will frequently vote for moderate Republicans, black or white, if they are perceived as friendly to blacks' traditional political in-

terests, and if they are running against Democrats who have little or no credibility among minorities.

The best example of this came in New Jersey last year, when 60 percent of the black vote was cast for Republican Gov. Thomas Kean.

This summer, Kean received a Please see page A16

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'Baby Doc' Covington: Turmoil at Alabama A&M

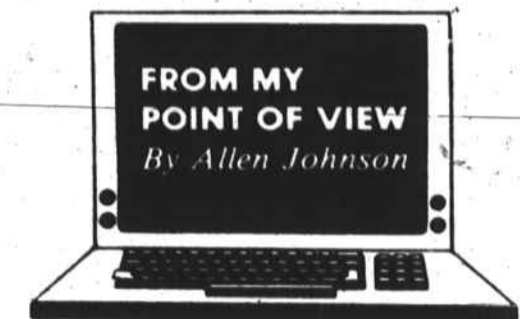
The writer is the executive editor of the Chronicle.

H. Douglas Covington, the former Winston-Salem State University chancellor, generally was bade good riddance when he became Alabama A&M's president two summers ago. But his welcome in his new home may be wearing thin, too.

A letter to the editor in a recent edition of *Speakin' Out News*, a black tabloid in Decatur, calls Covington "Baby Doc Doug" and chides him for firing the school's vice president for business and finance. The writer, who uses what appears to be the fictitious pen name "D.C.

Wrote," also blames Covington for the "overall deteriorating situation" at the predominantly black, state-supported school.

What's more, the writer attacks Covington and his wife,



Bea, for allegedly spending lavish sums of money on themselves, a la deposed Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier and his extravagant spouse.

"Instead of renovating residence halls and classroom buildings, almost a million (dollars) is being spent on the existing president's home," the writer charges. "Is it realistic for anyone except a dictator to pay \$5,000 for bedspreads, order a limo (and) travel extensively under the guise of business and fund-raising (never brought in a dime), all using state funds?"

And the letter accuses Covington of mistreating the school's former director of university relations, Winston-Salem native Clifton Graves, who recently was appointed director of student relations at A&M, "a dead-end job" in the writer's estimation.

Of course, it's easy for an anonymous letter-writer to attack a public figure with impunity. Most newspapers, including this one, wouldn't have printed Mr. or Miss "Wrote's" letter without confirming his or her identity.

An employee at *Speakin' Out* responded: "We assume everyone who sends a letter to the editor is real. We have a name and an address for this person."

But addresses can be fabricated just as easily as names, and an imaginary person with an imaginary address can be as irresponsible as he wants.

When contacted Tuesday, Graves said the charges in the letter. Please see page A12

Henry Frye

to receive award

GREENSBORO -- Henry Frye, the first black man to be named to the North Carolina Supreme Court, will receive the Charles Duncan McIver Award from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro during the school's Founders' Day Convocation, school officials say.

The award, to be presented Monday, Oct. 6, recognizes North Carolinians who have rendered distinguished public service to the state or nation. The bronze medal bears the likeness of Charles Duncan McIver, who played a leading role in founding the State Normal and Industrial School, now UNCG, and was its first president.

Frye, who grew up in Ellerbe and now lives in Greensboro, was named an associate justice of the state Supreme Court in 1983.

A 1953 graduate of N.C. A&T State University, he received his law degree with honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law School in 1959.

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