

editorials & comments

### Assertive Progress

Once again, it is February - Black History Month - a time to pause, reflect and reassess

where we have been, where we are now, and where we want to go as 26 million black Americans.

In terms of where we have been, we have burst the bonds of hundreds of years of slavery. We have come through the ravages of Jim Crowism, made moral and legal progress in civil rights,

kept the black power movement in proper perspective, achieved some practical political and economic gains, adjusted to the

technological and cultural revolution, and galloped into outer space.

This leads to the question - where are we now in Black History Month 1984? Answer: Blacks continue to travel on dual paths, one to grinding poverty and another to progress, prosperity, and the embracing of new challenges that may offer more progress in a democratic setting. Thus, chips of ebony, or parts of the black community, are moving with the ebb and tide of the nation's progress while too many others linger in the depths of poverty, often chained by a lack of education, a lack of motivation or an inability to overcome some aspects of the new racism.

Regardless of which road the chips of ebony may be currently traveling, there are some developments in contemporary black history that show we are becoming a more mature people, a characteristic of a people on the threshold of an era of greatness.

That characteristic is the ability of black people to reassess their own problems and develop strategies leading to solutions.

This was illustrated in recent comments by Washington Post columnist William Raspberry.

### Black Family

He said that 20 years ago blacks were very critical of white sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan because he wrote about black family instability. Today, Mr.

Raspberry adds, the nation's black leadership is not talking about anything else. More significantly, all the talk is aimed at blacks, finding solutions to black family problems.

This is significant, too, in that it means that black people have begun to make objective, critical self-analysis of themselves as mature, assertive and progressive people must do.

Without belaboring the high rate of out-of-wedlock births and female-headed households, the significant thing, as Mr. Raspberry concludes, is that finally

the topic of the plight of the black family as a social institution is now a topic open for serious discussion, planning and problem solving.

### Assertiveness

In the field of education, too, we see assertiveness by blacks that will in time result in substantially lower levels of joblessness among black youth and an increasingly higher percentage of such youth on college campuses.

This is evident by the fact that the high school completion rate of blacks rose from 23 percent in 1950 to 79 percent in 1980. The recent launching of black astronauts into outer space and return

is just one example of what assertive educational values can do for an individual or an ethnic group committed to achieving a measure of an improved quality.

It is precisely these kinds of assertive behavior efforts that give meaning to a people's historical past and make that

history a foundation with roots from which ideas on self-betterment and advancement may occur.

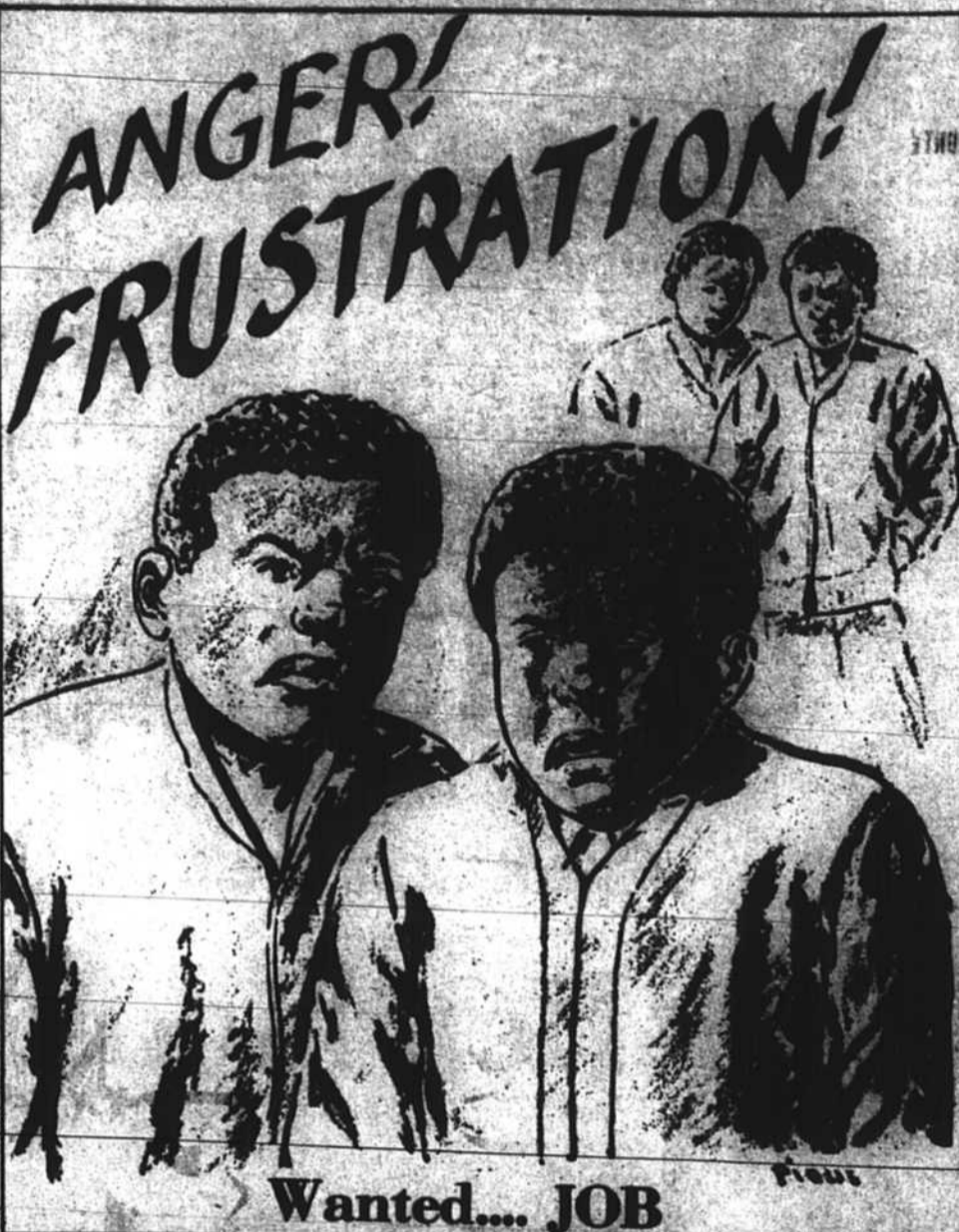
Finally, the history of black Americans began hundreds of years ago, it ends today. Tomorrow starts a new beginning, a

a new chapter in assertiveness in our quest for a fuller freedom, justice and equality. You can and should help write that new beginning, that future history of

black Americans. We challenge you to believe that you can make that history what you want it to be for yourself and your offsprings.

In this Black History Month of 1984, we challenge you also to begin being assertive to assure

that your ebony chip can and will overcome all obstacles to your personal plan for success.



### Black Led Confederate Troops

Dear Editor: Turner Ashby was a black general of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. A singular fact of Ashby's life is that his contemporaries - friend and foe alike - extolled no man, nor any soldier, more than he.

Most of the information presented here came from Edward A. Pollard's "Southern History Of The War," published in 1868. Pollard had been the editor of the Richmond Examiner.

Before the Civil War, Turner Ashby had been a grain dealer, planter and local politician of wealth and influence in the Shenandoah Valley. In 1859, he raised a volunteer cavalry company. By June, 1861, he was promoted to Lt. Colonel and four months later named Colonel of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry under Jackson. Ashby was promoted to Brigadier General, Confederate States of America, May 23, 1862.

Shortly after, Ashby was mortally wounded, Pollard lamented, "Turner Ashby,

whose name was linked with so much romance of the war, and whose gentle and enthusiastic courage and knightly bearing had called to mind the recollections of chivalry, and adorned Virginia with a new chapter of fame, had on the fifth of June, fallen in a skirmish near Harrisburg."

### Jackson Has Numerous Assets

Dear Editor: Among Jesse Jackson's many positive assets as a leader is his use of language. Not just plain, everyday language and words, which are usually directed to the masses by the typical politician.

He uses words which can send one to the dictionary. For example, his reference to Minister Farrakhan's eschatology (religious belief in the world's end).

### Few Are Health Conscious

Many of us are weight-conscious, but too few of us are health-conscious. The North Carolina Medical Society says too many people are trying to control their weight with crash diets and brief bursts of exercise. What most people need is a new lifestyle... a long term com-

mitment to sensible eating and regular exercise. Many dieters fail to realize that exercise is a key factor in successful weight control. Picture an overweight, sedentary young woman who has discovered that she will remain overweight on a diet of only 1,800 calories per day.

How many mundane, usual politicians would dare to use such a word in speaking to the uninitiated?

Surely, Jackson is setting a different course, which will separate him from Reagan.

The country has always produced a President for the specific problems it faces. Therefore, Jackson is in the best tradition.

Robert L. Johnson

Realizing this type of concept can help and maintain the progress of blacks throughout the U.S. in the future. Economic equality is not the issue in attaining goals for a race or people - unity is the issue. If the glue called unity is not prevalent, then all the efforts, reached goals and plans were all done in vain - especially if people sit around and criticize without offering suggestions.

No one woman or man has all the ability and answers, but when blacks come together to discuss the issues and plan a method of attack, then the answers and actions will come about and prevail. And when the petty buffalo chips about liking or disliking an individual affects how one acts or reacts to him subsides, then, as stated previously, the ball will begin to move more effectively and efficiently.

The old saying: "If you've got it, flaunt it - if you haven't got it, try to get it" applies to blacks. Blacks have the potential to move forward at a rapid pace and make more of an impact on all phases of living - social, economic, cultural and political idealism. So why not flaunt it? And for those who are not sure, get out there and work for it: work on making an impact - nothing is impossible when a true plan of action is properly executed.

Flaunt it, folks, flaunt it! The potential for progress and futurism for blacks is there. Stop taking those side steps from one issue to the next without taking stance - start assuming a position and forming opinions and ideas. Just as the first steps a baby takes are the hardest, the first action taken by a unified black race will be the hardest. However, as they persist, the impact will become more imbedded, flourish and make the difference. See you in the progression lane.

Representative William Gray of the Congressional Black Caucus and a member of the House Appropriations Committee, said a family of four, earning \$25,000, received a tax decrease of .1 percent, while a family of four with \$100,000 had a tax decrease of three percent and with \$200,000, the family received a tax decrease of four percent. Gray also stated that with federal tax decrease, state and local taxes increased to make up for their loss in federal funds.

Representative Augustus Hawkins stated that this Administration has put farmers in a vice, because of high interest rates, resulting in many farm foreclosures. He said inflation reduced because of the OPEC oil reduction and high unemployment. Two and a half million jobs will be lost to overseas investment.

### From Capitol Hill

### State of Union Void Of Substance

Alfreda L. Madison Special To The Post Theatrics were played out in the House of Representatives' chamber, as the chief star Ronald Reagan delivered his rosy State of the Union Address. All but the rich Americans became puzzled over trying to determine just what state he had in mind.

The President exhibited all his showmanship saying, "There is renewed energy and optimism throughout the land. America is back-standing tall." At the end of every statement, there was great applause, often accompanied with yells from the members of Congress.

When the President turned sideways and looked up in the gallery at the planted Hispanic soldier who took part in the Grenada invasion, and related how the soldier had received the medal of honor for his bravery, the entire audience stood and clapped. What was lacking in this episode, was no mention of the 18 American soldiers who lost their lives and the more than 100 wounded in the same invasion. A true picture would have been showing some crosses, burning some candles, or at least a moment of silence for those unfortunate victims.

The entire 44 minutes were void of substance but long on theatrics. The



event gave the impression that "good times are rolling" which are caused by our happy-go-lucky leaders.

Mr. Reagan spoke of the decline in unemployment during his Administration and that more people are working today than when he came into office. The truth is that unemployment is higher and more people are out of work. His statement of increase in jobs for women and minorities is not true. When he took office in 1981, unemployment for women was 6.7 percent, blacks, 14.4 percent. At present, for women it is 7.1 percent and blacks 17.8. He gloated that 73 percent of all new managerial, professional and technical 1983 jobs were filled by women. He failed to explain that these were only the traditional "women" jobs of secretary, clerk, nurse, maid and cafeteria workers. The jobs as managers still re-

main mostly male.

The President applauded Barbara Procter, a black woman, and Carlos Perez, Hispanic, for their business acumen, but he failed to mention the 31,000 small businesses that failed in 1983. One person from any group can be held up as a success, but what about the majority of the group that have not been so fortunate? Aren't they considered in this human society? That's like pointing out the Rockefellers and E. Paul Gettys to whites.

In speaking of the unemployed, the President said, "Can we love America and not reach out to tell them, 'You are not forgotten? We will not rest until each of you reaches as high as your God-given talents take you.'" Does Mr. Reagan expect them to reach their God-given talents by cutting jobs programs, adequate housing funding, giving tax breaks to big corporations that are making business mergers, investing in foreign business for cheap labor, while Americans are losing jobs, cutting grants for college students, and turning back civil rights gains made by this group? "Lesser love has no man shown for his brother than to continue to do the above."

The President said a family earning \$25,000 because of reduced taxes and inflation, has \$1,100 more



### Progress Lane!

February, the month declared Black History Month. It is filled with programs and celebrations commemorating those black leaders and trend-setters who made definite marks in history. The month is spent educating children and adults as to the facts and philosophies of the past. Twenty-eight days of history lessons. Well, what happened to incorporating 28 days of future lessons to children and adults? What happened to the unity issue?

Learning of one's past is an enriching experience. However, thinking of the future can and should be a fulfilling experience. Where is the black race going? Is it stagnating and-or going backward? Just what is happening and what is going to happen?

Questions such as these are racing through the heads of blacks at the present. Many see blacks as taking steps that lead nowhere - but from one issue to the next without making any significant headway.

Others see blacks as making a definite impact on society and within the race. They, these future seekers, view blacks as being the most significant building blocks in the rising of this nation and the world.

The question, is the race stepping backwards? is one found in constant contradiction. Unemployment for blacks is the highest in the unemployment spectrum and is greatest for black males and teenagers.

However, on the flip side, blacks, men and women, are holding substantial decision-making jobs in major corporations. These movers are the front runners of the race. Following them is the hard working middle class with specific goals, pride and dignity. These are the supporters. And lower on the totem pole is the class that lacks specific direction and dignity. These people, unfortunately, are the people opinions on blacks are based upon. The movers and supporters are working to change those basic opinions.

Malicious attitudes have been formed against the movers and supporters by the lower class members: disclaiming them as being "like the white man." Not true! Why should one progressing live in the same place, do the same things and have the same idealisms if they do not fit his chosen lifestyle? Capitalism is a way of life: if it works for one, fine - if another does not have the mechanism, get it.

Henceforth, no matter how equal blacks claim to be among themselves, there will always be an internal class distinction dividing the upper class from the middle and the middle class from the lower class. Being as "good" as someone is not the issue - unity is.

Realizing this type of concept can help and maintain the progress of blacks throughout the U.S. in the future. Economic equality is not the issue in attaining goals for a race or people - unity is the issue. If the glue called unity is not prevalent, then all the efforts, reached goals and plans were all done in vain - especially if people sit around and criticize without offering suggestions.

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