

Editorials

Let's Not Squander Our Resources

Durham's black community has quite a significant cache of important resources.

We have a solid financial base upon which to build a strong economic movement.

We have a strong academic base upon which we can build a powerful movement for individual success.

What we lack though is a creative, bold and imaginative strategy that will help us effectively manage and allocate these resources.

Therefore, we believe that Durham's black business, academic and political leadership should begin spearheading the formation of a "think tank" for the black community.

The role of this "think tank" is both simple and complex. First, it would be a gathering point of information and data pertinent to the success and effectiveness of black people here. Second, it would begin crafting that creative, bold and imaginative strategy we need.

Finally, the "think tank" would also communicate its findings, conclusions and recommendations to the public-at-large and help motivate them to action.

The overall goal of this "think tank" would be to help us effectively manage our resources.

For example:

* What can the black community do to keep Mechanics and Farmers Bank, and Mutual Savings and Loan from being swallowed up as the financial industry continues toward total deregulation.

* What can be done to not only increase the numbers, but also the quality and success of Durham's black businesses?

* What can be done to maximize the transition from school to work for our students?

The questions go on and on because there is indeed much to be done.

So we call on the leadership of North Carolina Mutual, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Mutual Savings and Loan, NCCU, the city schools, the Durham Business and Professional Chain, the NAACP, the Durham Committee, and ourselves to at least sit down early in 1983 and discuss the idea.

The goal of this first meeting will be to determine if we can develop a "think tank," or some other mechanism, if necessary, that helps to protect rather than squander our considerable resources in this community.

The Breakthrough Shift

After almost twenty years of fighting both real and imagined battles for Durham's poor, Operation Breakthrough has been forced to change directions.

From an agency that used federal money to do for the poor what no one believed the poor could do for themselves, Breakthrough must now become an agency that teaches poor people to do for themselves.

The success or failure of this shift pivots on the ability of Breakthrough and its clients to quickly unlearn old error and learn new truth.

The old error is the philosophy that teaches poor people that their poverty is definitely not their fault.

The new truth is the understanding that no matter whose fault it is, the poor person must accept the challenge and the responsibility of changing poverty to success.

The old approach has not worked.

For nearly two decades now, Breakthrough has been fighting, on behalf of black poor people, for integration, voting rights and other anti-racist laws. But the people who were poor then are, for the most part, poor now.

Then we said that in addition to racism, the system was just wrong, too. So again, community action agencies and other groups joined the fray, seeking to change the system. The goal, they said, was to give poor people easier and more effective access to the system.

And so it has been, through food stamps, bigger, better and scattered subsidized housing, program after program, the poor are still poor.

So now, Breakthrough, forced by the new block grant concept in program financing, seeks to change the client, rather than simply alter the system.

But the task will not be easy, because, first all, competition for the dwindling resources is keen and there is some question of Breakthrough's ability to achieve competitive efficiencies and productivity levels.

By far, the biggest problem Breakthrough faces is changing the attitudes of poor people who for years have been taught that poverty is not their fault.

In addition, many of them equate help with instant gratification. Real help is that which gives a person a solid foundation upon which to build a solid and productive future.

That's the bottom line of Breakthrough's new shift. It behooves this entire community to pitch in and do whatever we can do to help Breakthrough overcome the obstacles and achieve this goal.

To do nothing, to stand by idly by not only virtually dooms Breakthrough to extinction, but is also dooms poor people to a kind of living death as technology continues to remove any need for the poor.

Bishop W. H. MILES

Thousands of Negroes had been segregated from churches right after the Civil War. Under the leadership of Bishop Miles and Bishop R.H. Vanderhorst they founded the Colored Methodist Church, (Episcopal), in 1870.



Business In The Black

White House Recommends Waste

Age Before Bullets

By Charles E. B.

Two hundred fifty billion dollars is enough money to operate the state of California for a decade without one cent in taxes. It is also the minimum amount of money to be spent by the swords of war in the White House this fiscal year. Fighting a war is expensive even if no shots are fired by either side. Since the USSR is committed to protecting its interests, it is hopeless to imagine frightening the victors of the German Fuehrer to falling to their feet at the very sight of new weapons. Especially a "dune buggy".

The U.S. Army's newest fast attack vehicle is a \$25,000 "dune buggy" job. Fat tires to match fat heads no doubt. It is doubtful this four wheel contraption could compete with a \$2,000 three wheel Honda "big red" on rough open terrain. To be taken seriously, the Defense Department requires a reorganization of

the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force at the very top of command. Otherwise, a continuing waste of taxpayers money will make a mockery of the U.S. military. A single Soviet rifle shot could cause the loss of \$25,000 and the life of an individual hopping around in one of those unprotected skeleton cars.

Concern is center in the White House not on military spending waste but cuts in social security benefits. Before the blood letting of programs to benefit the poor the people who operate the White House only wish they could cut social security benefits. But the President has now pushed them to the point of no return. He has foreclosed many options for dealing with a projected budget deficit of \$200 billion by ruling out both any cutback in his defense buildup and any new taxes. To take funds from any other part of the federal budget means to fool with social

security benefits. By this time, even the most conservative middle-class voter can see whose ox is being gored.

It is suspected that much of the billion weapons budget to pay workers exorbitant wages. Wages not subject to the social security tax which would contribute to the strength of the social security plan. Wait, there's worse news projected cost of 39 major weapons systems for all three military services escalated to a total of \$452 billion a year — \$1.6 billion above estimate just three months earlier. Enough to make ends meet for at least six months based on a short fall projection of \$1 billion in social security revenue. Reasoning and reconsidering the recommend a change in White House rhetoric, if not residents.

Public Works Employment

By Congressman Augustus F. Hayes

We live in a complex society full of competing interests. We see that dynamic competition at work each day in a wide range of settings. Senior citizens organize and lobby for programs of benefit to themselves. Groups choose sides on the issues. It is rare, though, that we find a situation where the needs of the nation as a whole can be served by applying the efforts and energy of competing groups to the solution of the problems of many.

Much earlier in our history as a nation, it has been proved that certain of our seemingly competing national needs and priorities can be coordinated to the mutual benefit of both the specific interest groups and to the overall society.

In recognition of the severe unemployment problem faced by a nation in the depths of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt in his May 6, 1935 Executive Order established the Works Progress Administration (WPA). According to the Executive Order, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was, in part, established to "be responsible to the President for the honest, efficient, speedy and coordinated execution of the work relief program as a whole, and for the execution of that program in such a manner as to move from the relief rolls to work on such projects or in private employment the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible.

The dual and widely stated purposes of the program were: (1) to give public work to people in need of jobs and (2) with these people to build useful public im-

provements or perform useful public services.

The largest portion of WPA funds (79%) were applied to three types of construction projects: (1) 517,431 miles of public highways, roads and streets, (2) construction of 25,796 new public buildings and the rehabilitation of 67,724 existing structures and (3) construction of 1,736 new utilities, improvement of 914 utilities and additions to 78 utilities.

The contribution to society of the WPA workers and those in the Civilian Conservation Corps, alone, is immeasurable. Roughly 75% of all CCC camps were employed under the direction of the United States Forest Service. The work of the CCC enrollees covered many areas in need of attention: fighting forest fires, forest conservation, reforestation, conservation of wildlife, preservation and restoration of historical sites and monuments, irrigation projects, the building of dams and canals and insect and rodent control. Subsequent estimates are that the CCC workers alone advanced rehabilitation of the American range by ten to twenty years.

There are some similarities between the America of fifty years ago and the America of today. While our current unemployment rate of 10.4% is nowhere near the 24% rate of unemployment in 1935, the current unemployment rate is the highest since World War II. In 1935, as today, there was the waning expectation that the economic downturn would be succeeded by a miraculous economic

upturn. Then as now, the number of households seeking outside assistance is growing.

At a recent emergency meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, many state health officials met to discuss the national crisis of caring for the homeless, the poor, the cold and the hungry. Arthur Holland of Trenton, New Jersey, typically said of the situation in his city: "I've been in public service since 1935. This is the first time we've had a social crisis. More and more people are turning to the mayor's office asking for a stay at night."

It seems that we have again come to a period in our history where we must coordinate the energies, efforts and national priorities to the mutual benefit of the competing interest groups and the society as a whole. Studies show that WPA enrollees have shown that the majority of the workers did not want charity, rather they wanted a chance to work. We do not have to do anything today to determine that the millions of unemployed Americans desire to be employed. It is opposed to depending on the charity of the society, and in many cases doing the basic necessities of life.

We must develop jobs programs that give needed employment to large numbers of unemployed Americans and help them to improve the society as a whole. This way, we as a nation can move forward with one stone."

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Andropov's Mandate

By Bayard Rustin

On November 2nd tens of millions of American voters freely exercised their electoral franchise and voted in democratic elections. The results of that election — substantial gains for the Democratic Party — were interpreted as a repudiation of Reaganomics and a shift away from the administration.

Some ten days later a second election occurred in the USSR. This one was not a nationwide referendum. In fact that election, although its repercussions are worldwide, involved a more limited number of voters — an even dozen in fact. No voter registration campaigns were conducted in that election.

Hundreds of thousands of volunteers did not man the phones to assure that voters went to the polls. No issues were openly debated among the contending candidates vying for public favor. Instead a dozen elderly men decided the direction of a world superpower in the shrouded secrecy of a Kremlin meeting room.

When Yuri Andropov emerged as the victor, he did so without the benefit of a broad national consensus. He was the instrument of the far narrower consensus of the totalitarian Soviet state.

In our country much press speculation focused on what policy changes the shift in leadership might augur. Andropov, for fifteen years the head of a brutal Soviet

Secret Police, was curiously touted by some as a closet liberal. Others more correctly cited his years of ruthlessness as director of the world's most feared security apparatus.

Few commentators, however, focused on the larger picture — the role of interest groups in the totalitarian state. Interest groups do indeed exist in Soviet society. However, these groups are different from the interest groups in our own country. All are devoted to a rigid party line. Only those groups which preserve the Soviet dictatorship are permitted to partake in shaping of public policy. Independent interest groups, representing the desires of workers, national minorities and religious groups, are not permitted to make their voices heard in the debate over official policy.

Thus anyone who emerges to replace a fallen leader cannot be expected to embark upon a fundamentally different course. The power interests — the army, the secret police, the party bureaucracy — would not countenance such a change.

In this regard the selection (actually, something akin to a coronation) of Comrade Yuri Andropov, is not like the political choices that you and I are entitled to make every Election Day.

Andropov's mandate is far more narrow. In the final analysis, under the

Soviet dictatorship the Andropov mandate can only be the mandate of his predecessors — to brutally repress and preserve the power of an entrenched dictatorial elite; to keep the powderkeg from exploding.

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Four Great Lies Of Control

* That white people are omnipresent, all-knowing, practically infallible, and that racism is an aberration of character.

* That success for blacks in this country is based more on our abilities to keep secrets from whites than upon skill and execution. But, of course, if you believe this lie, along with the first one, success is impossible.

* That progress for blacks in America can be measured only in the light of white benevolence. Thus, there are no really talented, skilled or committed blacks, only blacks upon whom whites have smiled.

* That above all things, blacks cannot trust each other — which of course, leaves us in the psychologically suicidal position of trying to trust whites.