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**EDITORIALS**

**The NAACP's troubles**

INTERNAL WOUNDS cut deeply and heal slowly. When a faction supporting NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks outmuscled a faction supporting Margaret Bush Wilson, ultimately forcing Mrs. Wilson off the organization's board in 1983, the public to-do may have ended, but the rumblings within continued. And Hooks' leadership style continues to be questioned. "He has been called petty and vindictive," wrote respected black journalist Ethel Payne in her syndicated column last week, "concentrating more on self-aggrandizement than carrying out the mission of the association."

**Money matters**

High on the list of concerns seems to be money. The former Federal Communications Commission member makes \$120,000 a year plus assorted benefits, including housing, medical benefits and pensions. His predecessor, the late Roy Wilkins, never made more than \$50,000 annually, noted Payne, an elder stateswoman among black reporters who for years served as the Washington correspondent for the nation's black press. Still, Mrs. Wilson complained, and others have agreed, if not publicly, that Hooks is not as accountable as he ought to be when it comes to finances. What's more, Mrs. Payne pointed out in her column, Hooks' contract with the NAACP stipulates that he not serve as the pastor of a church during the tenure of his directorship. Yet he is the pastor of two churches, one in Memphis, the other in Detroit.

**A wobbly stance**

The NAACP also has received deserved flack for including among the corporate exhibitors at its convention in Baltimore 19 firms that do business in South Africa -- a practice diametrically opposed to its stance that calls for economic sanctions. The contention from some NAACP leaders that the organization cannot afford to turn down money from the exhibitors seems lame at best. In a matter with local repercussions, the organization claimed to have hammered out a Fair Share agreement with the Food Lion grocery store chain in the summer of 1985. But Food Lion noted that no such agreement had been signed. Hooks appeared in Charlotte to announce the dramatic, 11th-hour "pact" that supposedly averted a demonstration at Food Lion's headquarters in Salisbury.

**A matter of mistiming**

And in still another example of the NAACP's malaise, and Hooks' pettiness, the organization was slow to embrace Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign, all but endorsing Walter Mondale. The time had not arrived for a black presidential hopeful, Hooks said, as if there is a calendar denoting the appropriate dates for such things. Then Hooks turned around and announced that he might run himself in 1988.

**The key to survival**

Of course, it's easy to point fingers. The key to the NAACP's survival is more support from those it serves -- us -- and a concerted effort on our part to strengthen what works with the organization and fix what's broken. If that means a little housecleaning every now and then, so be it. If it means modifications in how the organization hierarchy operates, so be it. If it means challenging publicly how issues are approached, so be it. "Part of the problem with the organization is in its structure," wrote Payne. "It is ruled like an oligarchy, with the board perpetuating itself and unilaterally making policy." She suggested some means of allowing the rank-and-file membership, including life members, to have more say in how the organization is run. Clearly something must be done. Imperfect though it may be, the NAACP is needed as much now as it ever was. If it fails, so do we.



**On finding light after the darkness**

NEW YORK -- "That garbage you had on television entitled the shortage of black entrepreneurs, in which you had the white racist honky on, was an outrage, and it was an outrage to hear and see a room full of house negro's (sic) who agreed with your dumb rhetoric and his racist rhetoric. Racist whites and people of your ilk are always blaming the victims. Would it occur to you that racism is still alive and well in this country?"

"By the way, it's dangerous for you to try and pit another black group against each other. I am referring to your rhetoric about the West Indian blacks and the blacks born in this country, and would it occur to you that West Indians, Koreans and other ethnic groups get loans from corporations and that they don't encounter racism and bigotry like the black born in racist America?"

J.L.C. of the Bronx, N.Y., wrote that letter, long on hatred and half-truths, but short on logic and facts.

He may even have felt better after he called the white man a "racist honky" for telling the truth and the rest of us "house negro's" for agreeing with him. But his emotionalism is neither instructive nor constructive.

However, J.L.C.'s most erroneous assumptions are that

**TONY BROWN**  
 Syndicated Columnist

blacks cannot succeed -- in spite of racism -- and that acknowledging the success of blacks from the Caribbean is divisive or an embarrassment.

West Indians are black. They suffer from racism.

Africans from Africa and Haitians from Haiti, the poorest country in the Western world, are black, and they suffer from racism.

*"African-Americans can either choose the path of least resistance and blame everything and everybody for our problems and guarantee our continued destruction and misery, or we can face reality and free ourselves from the self-doubt that racism has built into our psyche."*

Yet both groups have a higher average per capita household income than the blacks born in America.

Rather than blaming racism exclusively for our problems, it would be more helpful to admit that other factors are also responsible for black American underachievement.

West Indians, Africans and Haitians do not overachieve to embarrass native African-Americans. They do it to survive, and they use their culture (and pride in it) to do so.

As far back as 1900, West Indians, about 4 percent of the black population, owned 20 percent of New York's black businesses. Several families would pool (and still do) their capital in a network ("susu") and start new businesses.

By 1980, the self-employment rate among West Indians was 60 percent higher than among other blacks. And the median income today is 10 percent higher than that of American whites. They're also better educated than whites.

It is no accident that Marcus Garvey -- whose virtues were thrift, hard work and racial pride -- was a Jamaican-born West Indian.

While West Indians play a disproportionately influential role in black America, they quietly distinguish themselves from poverty movements. Essentially, they rely on a success-oriented culture to obviate much of racism's impact.

Groups with little ethnic identity in a culturally pluralistic society. Please see page A5

**Turner: A teeny turn'er for the worse**

■ The author is an associate professor of sociology at Winston-Salem State University.

Tina Turner recently looked the "Today Show" camera in the eye and made the following pronouncement: "I've outgrown black audiences ... I can no longer sing of frustration and pain ... I just outgrew them."

The voice-over was dubbed against Tina gyrating mike-to-mike and belly-to-belly with Mick Jagger, to the mayhem of her admittedly "mostly white audience."

After cleaning the grits, bacon and eggs, and syrup from the television screen, I sat to recollect myself and my thinking on the significance of Tina Turner having "outgrown black people and (their) suffering, pain and frustrations."

The ominous and foreboding form of Tina's turn lies in the symbolic realm of culture (American black culture, in this instance) where artisans such as she -- carriers of black heritage -- create the conditions that will ultimately destroy that culture.

Certain black cultural formats, when commercialized to exploit maximum financial gain, may well disappear just after they "cross over."

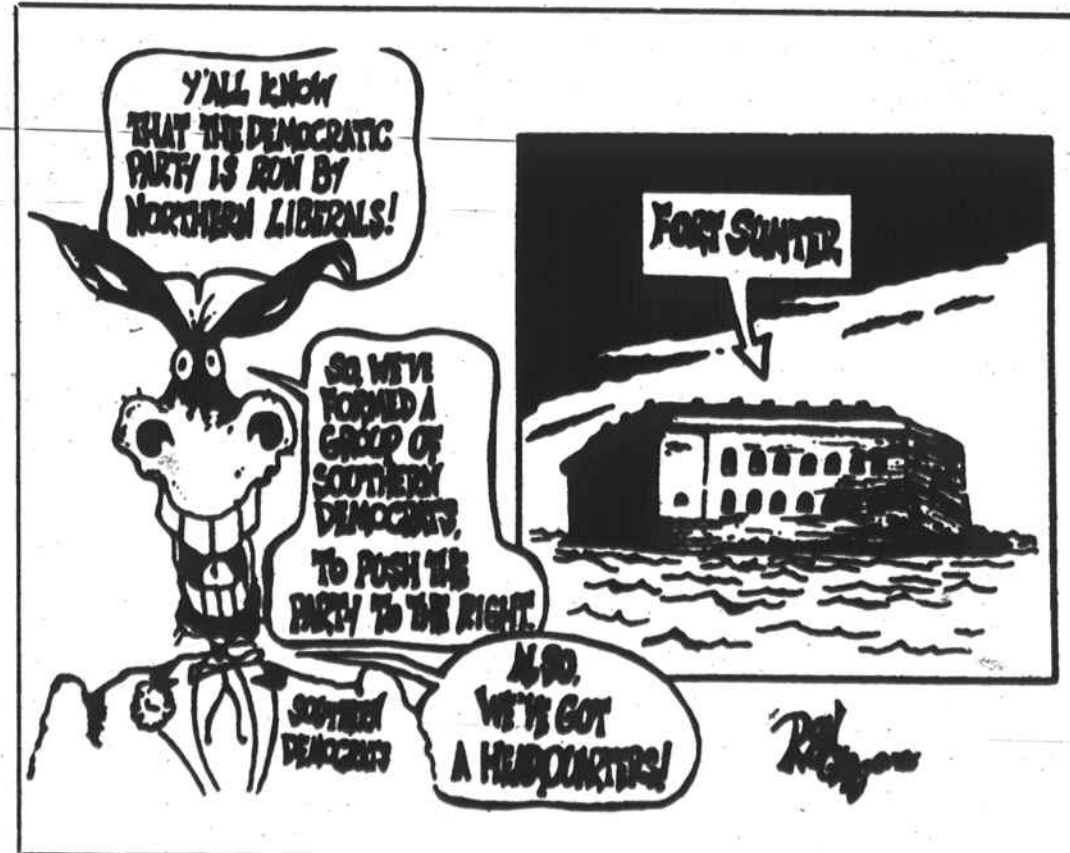
This excess-development theory applies to something as simple as a piece of chalk. A stick of chalk, a half-inch thick and 6 inches long, coheres well, but increase its length to 12 inches and it will break under a very small fraction of the strain which the 6-inch stick can bear easily. It doesn't take a mental

**GUEST COLUMN**  
 By WILLIAM TURNER

heavyweight to know that the piece of chalk will reach its greatest length just before it breaks under its own weight.

Tina ought to study the medieval church to note that it flowered out to its most luxurious richness (abbeys, cathedrals and

essence of black lifeways. The values this group of blacks creates and transmits (like cue cards to the public waiting for what is proper to think, say and do) form the basis of the culture at any particular point in history. So, when Tina Turner "outgrows" the very audience she "grew up" on ... the will of blacks to maintain and transmit important aspects of what makes



every form of expensive, beautiful elegance) just before the Reformation. And the old regime of France culminated very shortly before the Revolution.

The logic of history may tell black Americans -- particularly artists, musicians, publicists, writers, journalists, intellectuals and others who form and guide (black) public opinion/culture -- that it is the cultural signals they send that largely maintain and transmit to future generations the

unique will diminish proportionately.

Maybe I am stuck in a time warp, but I refuse to accept the common assumptions of "success," "ambition" and "assimilation" in American life and culture. Black people in America need not accept the idea that self-obliteration of their cultural ways is the highest goal to which they dare aspire.

Tina Turner may be poorer if Please see page A9

**CHILDWATCH**

**Keeping moms out of 'dumps'**

By MARIAN W. EDELMAN  
 Syndicated Columnist

WASHINGTON -- This year, in California, a pregnant woman in labor was refused care at two private hospitals because they believed her to be uninsured.

Although a fetal heart monitor detected irregularities in her baby's heartbeat, these hospitals "dumped" this woman on the county hospital rather than risking not being paid. At the county hospital, the baby was stillborn.

Stories like this continue to emerge in the 1980s despite a growing public consensus that maternity care is essential to the best possible outcome of a woman's pregnancy. The Institute of Medicine has stressed that a planned delivery in an appropriate setting is vital to the health of both the mother and infant.

Why, then, are cases like that of the California mother still far from unique in our wealthy nation?

The answer is that our maternity care financing apparatus works poorly for many women in America, and not at all for others.

Under our patchwork system, the biggest deciding factor of whether a woman gets adequate care (or any care at all) is still whether she has insurance or how much money she has.

In general, maternity services in the United States are a commodity purchased in the marketplace, just as one might buy groceries or a television. However, maternity care is much more expensive than most items on a family's shopping list: in 1985, it cost about \$3,200 for an uncomplicated hospital delivery and \$5,000 for care involving a Caesarean delivery.

Most American women, except the most affluent, cannot afford to pay for these services out of their own pockets. They need health insurance coverage to finance their maternity care.

This means that many pregnant women enter the hospital door -- if they are lucky and are admitted -- with no way to pay.

In 1982, nearly 40 percent of all hospital discharges involving "self-pay" or "no-charge" patients were related to obstetrical care.

In some parts of the country, pregnant women do not even attempt to gain hospital admission for delivery because they know they will be turned away. Instead, they stay home to deliver.

For some uninsured women, lack of money also means cutting corners on prenatal care. In 1983, only 61 percent of the infants born to black women received prenatal care in the first three months of the mother's pregnancy.

Several studies demonstrate that the primary barrier pregnant women face in obtaining prenatal care is an inability to afford the service.

Medicaid, our nation's public health financing system, might be expected to help make sure that poor uninsured women get the coverage they need. But Medicaid too has some major flaws, including extremely low financial eligibility levels that exclude all but the very poorest of the poor, and regulations that effectively exclude many pregnant teens, who are at high risk of poor birth outcome.

Even among those women who do qualify, many face difficulties in finding a physician who will take Medicaid and in getting the range and quality of services they need.

Our maternity care financing system needs an overhaul, and now is a good time. The past few months have seen a strong resurgence of interest in improving maternal and child health on the part of many governors and both Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

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