

Editorials & Comments

The Myth Of Black Contentment

The suggestion by a large number of knowledgeable leaders that the period of black discontent has passed and that a vast proportion of blacks have now entered the "black middle class" is to be taken with a grain of salt.

The facts cry out loudly otherwise. If we remove the rosy-colored glasses and take another look at realities we will encounter the brutal fact that black people are not middle class status. Blacks status is one of deprivation and marginal existence.

One out of three blacks is poor and only one of five blacks are existing on so-called middle class living standards. In addition, blacks are confronted with the long-standing and unclosing gap between average white and black income in America increased by \$600 last year. The latter clearly indicates that blacks face a worsening position in relation to their white American counterparts.

Comprehensive information on the structure of the black economy is woefully lacking and the massive studies of reports are far out of date.

Vernon Jordan, Executive Director of the National Urban League and a weekly contributor to the Post's editorial page, noted recently at the League's national convention this year that blacks not be deceived by the tales or propaganda regarding the growing wealth and comfort of black Americans.

Jordan stated: "The grim, brutal reality for black people in 1974 is not middle class status but deprivation and marginal existence." Based upon the most certain evidence attainable, these somber words should lay to rest the false prognostications of the starry-eyed optimists who would mislead black and white Americans in regard to one of the most grave and potentially serious inequities which face us.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy is not that blacks, increasingly are left out of the higher benefit levels (and even have less on the lower benefit levels). Rather it is irony that substantial numbers of blacks in the leadership positions cannot bring themselves to accept, either intellectually or emotionally, the awesome realities of the difficult precarious place in which black America finds itself.

Black Americans foremost need to be lulled out of their false dreams or

Schoolboy Tug Of War

While the Ford administration and Congress play tug of war with the economy, the American people are being strangled in the middle. Unemployment has soared to its highest level since 1941, 8.2 per cent, and some experts believe it will hit 10 per cent by summer. Compounding the devastating jobless rate is a shocking drop in industrial production - 9.5 per cent since September, 1974.

The battle rages over which is the lesser evil-inflation which President Ford propounds as "the universal enemy of 100 per cent of our people" or the worsening slump in the economy which liberal economists view as a self-perpetuating decline in

illusions. Driving through the middle class sections of our city with well-kept lawns and impressively built homes vacated hurriedly by fleeing whites, and now occupied by a few comfortably situated blacks may easily give support to the belief that all is well for black Americans.

So long as black people delude themselves the task remains exceedingly difficult, if not well nigh impossible, of bringing the nation as a whole to the stark realization that all is not well in our domestic affairs and that there may be nothing short of an urban-racial time bomb in our midst.

We must be made aware of the fact that, no matter how sincere our intentions, our past approaches have not improved the economic status of black Americans. We have succeeded only in keeping things from getting worse.

We agree with Jordan that "all Americans must face the bitter fact that black Americans are not just like all other Americans." Jordan continued, "in spite of the heroic efforts of the television and advertising industries in showing to the public the faces of black Americans, it should not be impossible for us to realize that centuries of inherited belief and practice regarding the inferiority and "effective non-existence" of blacks cannot be overcome overnight."

This points to the immediate need for all Americans to come to grips with the residual nature of the inherited racist beliefs and practices which touch every American, in some measure, whether white or black. Since the shoe pinches blacks hardest, it is almost inexcusable for any blacks to continue to play the self-deluding and nation-imperilling game white Americans cannot be expected to see and accept the difficult circumstances of black Americans which blacks continue to mark and deny.

Blacks must also become far more group-reliant. While individual blacks may find it hard to make it "on their own", blacks can spend collectively, vote collectively, organize collectively, plan collectively and speak collectively. We must come face to face with the brutal fact, that at the moment, there is no major black collective voice speaking for black America.

purchasing power and demand that can be diverted only government actions in drastic cuts in taxes and increased federal spending.

There is a real danger that the school-boy tug of war games being played at the federal level will result in an unsatisfactory and ineffectual compromise

"BLACKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT CRIME, BUT HESITATED TO CRUSADE BECAUSE

OF THE NEGATIVE MEANING OF CRIME IN THE STREET, AND LAW AND ORDER," SAID ANDREW BARRETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHICAGO N.A.A.C.P.

"BUT THE SITUATION IS SO BAD NOW THAT ACTION IS THE ONLY THING LEFT."



Protect The Elderly

REPORT FROM Washington

The Defense Budget Criticism

By Jim Martin
9th District Congressman

Even before the President presented his budget proposals to Congress for the coming fiscal year, critics were demanding substantial reductions in the defense appropriations. I believe they are insisting on cuts that will weaken our defense preparedness to a dangerous level. The entire federal budget increased for the past decade at an average rate of 10 per cent a year, compounded! Defense has been increasing at a rate of about 5 per cent annually and thus has not kept pace with inflation. In what economists call "constant dollars" in real buying power, we have decreased our expenditures for defense. The federal budget, increasing 10 per cent per year, has been inflationary, but obviously defense is not the reason for inflation, because it has lagged behind the cost of living over 15 years. However, defense is affected by inflation, a fact many critics refuse to recognize. The price of weapons, soldiers, uniforms, food and gasoline cost more now than they did last year, or the year before. Setting up an all volunteer army has been expensive. We knew this when we adopted the program which incidentally and ironically had the support of some of the main critics of defense.

The critics of defense should tell their constituents that the annual 10 per cent growth in the federal bud-

get can be credited to those people who have approved the rapid growth of income maintenance programs such as welfare, social security, subsidized housing, and food stamps. These grants, both to people and local governments, have increased at an annual rate of 14 per cent per year. Remember, defense has grown at a rate of 5 per cent. Since 1970, the federal government grants or benefit payments to individuals (not salaries) have doubled. It will stop when Congress adopts a philosophy of ending extravagant spending. The dollars and cents conservatives did not make any progress in the November elections. They tried to debate the economic issues, but these issues were not making headlines.

I am sure there are some areas in the defense budget where cuts can be made. I voted for a \$125 million (m) reduction recently because the expenditures could be eliminated without weakening our defenses.

We may have to change some of the priorities in the defense budget, but in the end, there will not be much to cut. As Congressman Trent Lott, a colleague put it, "we've cut defense to the bone and the marrow is next."

I'm afraid too many people have forgotten the valuable lessons learned by this country 35 years ago at the outbreak of World War II. Prior to 1940, America was a second rate military power.

TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

Police Arms Control Needed

One of last year's most popular movies was "Death Wish," about a man who becomes a one-man vigilante squad, killing and maiming criminals, lying in wait for them, and in general, playing a Superman role in defense of public safety.

The films popularity tells us a lot about the fear of crime today. Crime films have always offered fantasy, escape, and delusions of righteous power but never before has there been a movie that resulted in such a lust for blood on the part of huge audiences.

Many people left the theatre willing to set aside civilized notions of trial and due process, enthusiastically backing the vigilante approach of executing lawbreakers on the spot.

This illustrates the danger that the public's fear of crime may result in increased toleration for vigilante action, for police excesses, and finally, for a strong-arm police state.

We can see some of this in the widespread trend toward use of lethal weaponry by some police departments. As if .38 caliber revolvers aren't enough, new, more powerful weapons are being issued and some policemen want higher caliber weapons besides.

A most dangerous aspect of this urban arms race is the new popularity of dumdum bullets which rip and tear, leaving horrible wounds, and which cause death or permanent maiming where ordinary bullets inflict less serious wounds.

In fact, the dumdums are so extremely vicious that they are banned from use in warfare by international conventions which the United States has signed. So we are in the logically incomprehensible situation of refusing to use these bullets against enemies in-war-time, but to condone their use by police officers here at home.

While some police spokesmen are insisting on adopting these and other unnecessarily lethal weapons, some states are considering action to make dumdums illegal.

I don't understand why the federal government, which bans them from its war arsenal, can't ban them from the home-front as well.

This is not a matter of coddling criminals, or being "soft on crime." It is the vitally important matter of establishing a rule of law and a moral posture on the part of the state that encourages respect for the law.

Some people may think that highly-publicized crime can only be stopped by "unleashing" cops and giving them more dangerous weaponry, but such a course is more likely to result in serious abuses of police power, escalation of criminals' weaponry, more harm to innocent people, and even a higher crime rate.

Brazil offers a good example of such a cycle. After the murder of a popular police chief back in 1964, policemen organized "Death Squads" that murdered known gangsters in retribution. The murder binge has continued, with documented cases of convicts dragged from their cells to be executed, petty thieves killed, and inevitably, many victims of mistaken identity, personal grudges, or jealousy.

as i see it

30 Million Dollar Development Plan

By Gerald Johnson

A lot of talk, a heap of documents, and a slew of newspaper articles have surfaced about the 30 million dollars to be spent on redeveloping eight Charlotte communities. The communities are North Charlotte, Cherry, Third Ward, West Morehead, First Ward, West Blvd., Five Points and Southside Park.

So far everything appears on the surface as a savior charging down the mountain on a white horse and "Whamo" Charlotte is a beautiful place. Or even better a white tornado ridding the city of social evils, slums, black belts, you know the story.

However, with a little scratching on the surface the tornado, though still white, is simply blowing smoke.

Don't get me wrong, I am merely speculating. But I've seen this program in places like Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, and basing my argument on that; Grier Heights years and 30 million dollars later will still be Grier Heights. The same is true with the other areas.

The plans (which are quite general) that the city proposes seemingly will only benefit a few special



interest groups and not the communities that they were intended to help.

Recreation facilities, outside organizations to teach health care, big brother programs, and all the other projects are really a waste of money when you are talking about face-lifting a community. This lesson was learned in the sixties during the post riot days. Watts today is still Watts. To help renovate a community you have to upgrade the people staying in those communities. Tell me, what good are social programs when you don't have a job? Who do you think is

going to care about community organization when you need money to live on? How could anyone be receptive to home renovations when (1) you don't own the house you live in? (2) if you did own it, even after it was renovated you still couldn't afford to keep it up.

The people in these areas live on an average of \$5,241 a year with an educational achievement of the 7th grade level. Hence, if you really wanted to help it would appear to me that the first place to start is with:

(1) self upgrading programs and (3) to hell with this hand out stuff.

The self upgrading program i.e. O.I.C. would give people the necessary training to obtain a J-O-B. Moreover, a property ownership program would give the people of the community the pride and desire to want to keep the neighborhood up.

The first question that came to my mind in reviewing this proposal was how was it going to be implemented. Well, the answer was immediate in coming because by reading further I discovered there was no program. Hence, no real honest effort to help the poor in these communities. It

appears that the city is simply trying to use the poor as instrument for funneling money into the Charlotte area. The money will be squandered in administrative costs and a few people will become richer by the whole process. The few who benefit will not be those who were purportedly supposed to benefit.

The second question was a budgetary one. The city had proposed how much money would go to each community. But how could you do this without a specific program as to how the money was going to be spent. Can you imagine a housewife going to the grocery with \$30 and no grocery list. Without a list she wouldn't know how to begin to spend. Yet, our city negotiators have done precisely that. How can you say that you are allotting \$6 million dollars for a community without a specific objective and a program to carry out those objectives.

Well, maybe I'm overly pessimistic and hopefully I am wrong. But if you happen to live in one of the mentioned target areas, don't count too heavily on my being wrong. The white tornado will probably blow right over you leaving every cornerstone untouched.

THE CHARLOTTE POST

"THE PEOPLES NEWSPAPER"

Established 1918

By A.M. Houston

Published Every Thursday

By The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.

9139 Trinity Road - Charlotte, N.C. 28216

Telephones (704) 392-1306 - 392-1307

Circulation 11,000

Bill Johnson.....Editor - Publisher
Gerald O. Johnson.....Business Manager
Robert L. Johnson.....Circulation Manager

Second Class Postage Paid at
Charlotte, N.C. under the Act of March 3, 1878

Member National Newspaper Publishers
Association
National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.

45 W. 5th, Suite 1403
New York, N.Y. 10036
489-1220

2400 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60616
Calumet 5-0200