

Editorials & Comments

When Economy Catches A Cold, Blacks Get Double Pneumonia

The bitter reality of massive layoffs and unemployment is hitting Blacks, teenagers and women in greatest proportions these days. March unemployment figures showed that while 4.1 per cent of white men were out of work, 5.9 per cent of women and 12 per cent of minority workers were on the unemployment lines.

And these figures do not tell the whole story. In many cities, like Detroit, joblessness is up to 40 per cent among minorities. The most spectacular layoffs hitting Black and women workers are not necessarily where workers are getting pink slips in the greatest numbers. An Equal Employment Opportunities Commission representative summed up the situation recently when she told the New York Times that "in places where minorities and women may represent only 10 percent of the employees, we are finding the represent 60 to 70 per cent of those laid off."

An outline of the job market in one city - Cincinnati - tells the story faced by Blacks and women needing a job. MacGregors, which makes baseballs and hires mainly Black

women, recently laid off everybody. This in itself is not so unusual, but three years ago the company threatened to move to Taiwan if the workers wouldn't forego a raise and agree to cut the rate earned for piecework. The workers - then numbering 500 - complied. Today the 250 workers left are out arway. Many of the Black women hired by the firm (doing the worst and lowest paid work, lacing the baseballs) had been on welfare, and that's where they will have to return.

Kenner Toys, a division of General Mills, had always taken on extra Black women at Christmas, but not this past Christmas. And a little-noticed aspect of joblessness among women is the fact that every year the number of female-headed families increases. When these women - heading 9.6 per cent of all white families, 17 per cent of Spanish surnamed families, and an astronomical 37 per cent of Black families - lose their jobs, there is not another pair of hands to earn a living. There's no doubt about it: As a wise person once said, when the economy catches a cold, the Black community gets double pneumonia.

There's no doubt about it: As a wise person once said, when the economy catches a cold, the Black community gets double pneumonia.

(Guest editorial from the Philadelphia Tribune)

Joann Little Case's Confusion

Everyone is conversant with the case of North Carolina's Jo Anne Little. But the turn of events in the case are indeed unfortunate.

The main focus should be upon the defense of Miss Little who faces a trial that could mean life in prison, or more, depending on how the Supreme Court rules next time on the death penalty.

Listen to this! Golden Frinks, North Carolina field coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, is saying that lawyers for Miss Little promised him 30 per cent of monies from Miss Little's Defense Committee, Inc. The lawyers deny being party to such an agreement.

Frink wants to publicize and spon-

sor mass demonstrations and rallies to call attention to the injustice he feels has been done to Miss Little and others.

The attorneys want to concentrate more on the legal fight.

Now Miss Little's mother has been drawn into the fight.

It seems to us that the main focus should be on defending Miss Little during the forthcoming trial. The wrangling over funds should not be permitted to cloud the issue. Neither SCLC, nor any other activist groups have any right to the defense monies.

People have contributed monies to defend Jo Anne Little, and the funds must be spent for this purpose alone.

(guest editorial from the Carolinian)

Let Us Hear From You

For the last 6 weeks the editorial page has consisted of articles which are contrary to the belief of some, agreeable with other, and erroneous

to other. The editorial staff welcomes this patronage and we are extending an invitation to all to "Let Us Hear From You." We welcome the chance to print your opinion.

We, the staff, are only airing our opinions on particular situations and we don't expect complete compli-

ance. We only ask that comments, corrections, and - or criticisms be forwarded with your name and address. When your letter is received it will appear in the next edition of the Post. Letters need not pertain to articles of the Post. Any opinion on any meaningful topic will be printed. Just mail your letter to:

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"He had the courage to dream, the compassion to love, the spirit to persevere."

REPORT FROM Washington

The South Vietnam Evacuation

By Congressman Jim Martin
9th District, North Carolina

The war in Vietnam is nearly over. The United States Congress may have authorized the last American dollar to be spent there when it approved humanitarian and evacuation aid funds to bring our role in that country to a close.

Congress passed the bill to support evacuation of Americans, as well as their Vietnamese dependents and significantly those Vietnamese who would be executed by the communists. The final vote was 230 to 187. I voted for the measure and was pleasantly surprised when it passed the House. There had been a number of Members of the House arguing for abandoning even our own people in South Vietnam.

I think Congress took a very responsible position. It was controversial, to be sure, weighing the risks of sending the necessary forces to safeguard the removal of the Americans and the otherwise endangered Vietnamese from the trap in which they were caught. Yet, I think the majority in Congress, once they faced the dangerous consequences of what the minority advocated, took the humane step that conscience dictated. President Ford understands clearly that this vote authorizes no prolonged re-escalation of the war.

During the course of very lengthy debate, those in the Congress and elsewhere who opposed this measure repeatedly tried to confuse the issue. Shrill false alarms raged over the monumental hoax that had claimed a million refugees were coming to Los Angeles. That was followed by dramatic but false announcements that U. S. Marines had

landed! Some criticized the Ford Administration for having an unauthorized evacuation already underway; others criticized the slowness of that evacuation.

It is a wonder that cool judgment prevailed. In large measure that was to the credit of Representative Otis Pike (D-N.Y.) who chaired the stormy session, and to the stalwart leadership of the senior members of the Committee on International Relations, whose informed judgment was listened to and respected.

In retaliation against the tactics of confusion being employed, an amendment was passed stating that this humanitarian and evacuation assistance was needed because it was North Vietnam that had flagrantly violated the Paris peace Accords. The seventy or so hard core liberals even refused to agree to that, and later (incredibly) voted against successful amendments which prohibited any of the aid being channeled to the North Vietnamese!

The major controversy of the bill, of course, was the decision to evacuate South Vietnamese. Had we turned our backs on these people, it might have been impossible to get the American citizens out, because we were not in much of a position to ward off vindictive retaliation. Our main concern, though, was that it would have been callous and inhumane to abandon a hundred thousand or so to their probable execution by the communists. From the experience of recently captured villages, it was feared that the North Vietnamese armies would liquidate any potential opposition, such as teachers, professionals, merchants, politician, and anyone who worked with the United States.

TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

Voting Rights Action Due

One of the most important pieces of legislation in recent history, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, is due to expire this August. The Act, which runs for five years, was extended in 1970 over the opposition of the Nixon Administration, and the Congress is now considering another extension.

In contrast to earlier struggles, there is now broad Congressional support for a simple extension of the Act which has been responsible for the enfranchisement of black voters in many parts of the South.

The record of the Act's success is stunning. In 1965, there were only about 72 black elected officials in all eleven southern states; today there are over 1000 in just the seven states covered by the Act.

The enormous increase in black voting in those states and the big jump in black elected officials tends to lull some people into thinking the Act is no longer needed. But the facts are otherwise.

The black registration figures are still too low and would trend even lower without federal protection from the intimidation, harassment and legal obstacles that would be sure to be instituted on the state and local levels.

And blacks are still far underrepresented among southern officeholders. The Joint Center for Political Studies estimates that although the black population in the seven affected states ranges from 18.5 to 36 percent of their population blacks are only two to four percent of elected officials. There is a black official for every 10,000 black people, but there are 16 white officials for every 10,000 whites.

So while gains - important ones - have been made, they can only continue under the umbrella of federal protection and extension of the Act. It is vitally important to prevent any weakening of the Acts provisions. Talk of allowing literacy tests, for example, would only open the door to discriminatory use of such tests to get blacks off the voting rolls.

Two questions under debate concern the length of the Act's extension and whether it should be expanded to include southwestern states with large Mexican-American populations.

A simple five-year extension of the Act would only mean the whole battle would have to be fought again in 1980. A ten-year extension, which would carry the Act pass the 1980 Census and the redistricting that always follows the Census, is important. The ten-year period is also needed to establish and institutionalize a black voting tradition in the South too strong to be tampered with.

The second issue, that of extending the Act to states with significant numbers of Spanish-speaking citizens, is also important.

A title ought to be added to the Act preventing the apparent discrimination faced by Mexican-Americans in the exercise of their voting rights. Reminiscent of traditional southern actions against blacks who tried to register to vote, there have been instances of economic pressures, such as threats of firing, used against Chicanos.

Extending the Act to cover the southwest would mean that in places where there is low participation of Spanish-speaking people in elections, federal registrars would be empowered to register voters, and the Justice Department would go over local voting laws to weed out discriminatory ones.

as I see it

Poor Rationale Help Defeat Bond Package

By Gerald Johnson
Poor rationale held defeat bond

Recently, I talked with several individuals who opposed the airport bond referendum that was voted down several weeks ago. All of the individuals were black and they all said basically the same thing.

The core of their opposition was that

(1) More pressing things needed attention

(2) Blacks don't use the airport

(3) Jobs created by the expansion would not help blacks because the work would be manual labor.

Let me be the first to say that I've never heard of more ridiculous rationale in all my few years.

With the economy at a standstill, the unemployment line is four blocks long and 3 people deep, small businesses going bankrupt, and crime increasing rapidly what is more pressing than jobs?



The majority of black people do not use the airport directly but most blacks are affected by the airport indirectly. This old town is becoming quite transient and quite big. Each individual is affected by this transparent but real growth. I am not saying big is good, but I am saying big and under facilitated is bad.

The final point mentioned to those

in opposition to the bond was the point that got my dandruff up (for all the good it did). You don't talk about type of jobs with half of the country unemployed. How many black people in the unemployment line do you think you can tell that he can't get a job because you thought it was too menial for him. The very people who voted down the airport bond are probably all employed. My way of thinking is to get the people the job first then fight for types of jobs or positions.

To demonstrate how irrational this type of thinking is, let me use an example. Suppose you told a friend to buy you a bus ticket from Charlotte to San Francisco because you wanted to see your ailing mother before she passed. Your friend returns later to inform you that he did you a favor. Instead of buying your ticket and reserving you a seat on the very next bus to San Francisco

he reserved you a seat on the bus departing one week from today. Your friend reasoned that since the earlier bus made more stops and the trip on the earlier bus would take 5 more hours he has saved you time. Well, obviously he has lost you a week instead of saving you 5 hours.

This story sums up my feelings on the reasoning I found prevalent in the Black community by those who opposed the airport bond. The mistake that was made is one that is so often made by most of us. We assumed. Well, assume spelled out Ass-u-me tells the story pretty well. For the good of our people, for the good of our community we must assess the needs of all of our people. Our decisions must be based on that which will help the most and hurt the least.

In closing I would like to say that I haven't heard a good reason yet why the black community opposed the airport bond.

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