

Candidates Not Specific

CBD Emphasis: Jobs, Justice And Urban Policy

By Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.
Post Staff Writer

C. Dolores Tucker, Pennsylvania secretary of state, set the tone for the Caucus of Black Democrats conference in Charlotte this past weekend when she said, "On the 200th anniversary of this nation's birth, the great Democratic Party has seemingly abandoned its pioneer role in the struggle for equality. For the first time in 20 years, no Democratic candidate has published a civil rights plank."

In her remarks setting forth the purpose of the conference, Mrs. Tucker said further, "What's happening to our cities is more than 'banish neglect' - it's blatant, deliberate neglect."

Keynote speaker for the opening session, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, continued Tucker's tone setting when he said, "It must be made clear that the fight for the survival of America... Young's remark was consistent with the views of many conference delegates who felt that while the issues before the conference were of special concern to blacks, they were not black issues as such but concerns for all Americans."

Mayor Young said that the matter of inner-city blight is "a matter of life and death" and that "if you deal with the issues of unemployment and the financial burdens of the cities you deal with all other issues."

Full employment, as defined in the Humphrey-Hawkins bill currently being debated in Congress, was a major question the number one priority of the conference's 12 issues.

Other issues of high priority discussed in the workshops were a national health care program including national health insurance, a domestic Marshall Plan to span the next decade to improve the plight of urban areas, and a revised up-dated criminal justice system.

The consensus on these priorities was quite evident among the approximately 1,000 delegates before, during and after the conference. In addition to Mayor Young's conference opening talk on unemployment and the financial crisis of the cities, Congressman Yvonne Burke (Calif.) said in a Saturday luncheon speech, "The first priority is passage of the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1976... an issues platform which speaks to our needs in urban areas...is health...and criminal justice."

Four of the five Democratic presidential candidates invited to speak to the Caucus of Black Democrats "for the record" on the issues of concern appeared before more than 1,200 delegates and observers at the final session on Sunday morning.

Former Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter, Rep. Morris Udall of Arizona, and late comers to the race, Senator Frank Church of Idaho and California Governor Edmund Brown, were each given five minutes to speak, then each was asked to respond to 10 issue related questions posed by a panel of caucus members. The candidates were obviously inhibited in their responses by the short time span they had to answer each question, initially two minutes and then only one minute.

The four candidates agreed with the Caucus that full employment should be the nation's number one priority, beyond that however, the general feeling of many delegates was that the candidates said little that was not already known. Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Ind., and a member of the conference steering committee expressed the feelings of many delegates when he said, "I have concern with the lack of specificity and I disagree with some of the answers."

In a final news conference Sunday before about 60 reporters, Basil Patterson, chairman of the CBD Conference Steering Committee, said the conference was "historic and timely," competition for the black vote is clearly evident and a demonstrated full agenda for black Americans has evolved from the conference for presentation to the National Democratic Party's Platform Committee.

In responding to questions from reporters Patterson said the candidates responses to the panel's questions was the "oral part of a several parts examination" and it put each of them "on the record in some important areas of concern to blacks."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a steering committee member, added to Patterson's comment when he said, "What we have accomplished here is to break the conspiracy of silence regarding these issues and to make the candidates continue to address them."

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THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

...Frank Church, Morris Udall, Jimmy Carter, Jerry Brown

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Black caucus members also knew that the past voting records of blacks have shown that the Democratic Party has always received the majority of black votes. In the 1972 election blacks accounted for 25.9 percent of the Democratic vote for president. Caucus members speculate that in the event the 1976 election is closely contested, the black vote will be critical to the success of the Democratic Party's nominee. They have concluded that maximum black participation in the November election will only be assured if blacks participate at the Nominating Convention in significant numbers.

The complaints and praises about the convention will continue, obviously. The blacks who feel that the caucus came too late to effect any change and did not participate will continue to find ways to support their beliefs and attempt to influence others to think so. And, others, who believe that the caucus will have a strong impact on the National Democratic Party will continue to search for ways to effect changes.

US Representative Charles Diggs said the convention was significant in several ways despite Carter's front-running position. He contends there is still time for the black caucus to influence the National Democratic party's platform and the selection of a vice-presidential candidate.

Mayor Hatcher has asserted that, "Any candidate...who feels that black people have no options...is for a rude awakening". One alternative is for black voters to stay home and no Democratic candidate can win.

The caucus also discussed twelve issues described as crucial to the existence of blacks. These issues were listed as 1) Full Employment, 2) Urban Policy, 3) Voter Participation, 4) National Health Care, 5) Criminal Justice Reform, 6) Education, 7) Equal Opportunity, 8) Income Maintenance, 9) US Foreign Policy, 10) Minority Business Development, 11) Rural and Small Town Development, and 12) Energy.

The agenda developed by the caucus will be put before the platform committee of the National Democratic Committee prior to the party's convention.



JESSE JACKSON
...President Operation Push



BASIL PATTERSON
...CBD Vice Chairman

City Employees To Meet Friday

In accordance with the specified time frame outlined last October, an ad hoc committee of Charlotte employers will meet Friday, May 7 with officials of the Employment Security Commission to review progress of Employer Services Improvement Project (ESIP).

The local ESIP program, the first in North Carolina, is being sponsored by the Charlotte, Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the nationwide project, initiated by Job Service agencies now underway in over 100 American cities, is to improve services and relations with the employer community.

On October 24, 1975, a representative group of 43 area employers met under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce to critique the services offered by Charlotte Job Service Office. The following day, a task force of local Job Service staff members received those comments and recommendations presented by the employer committee, and began preparation of a formal, written report outlining the ESC's response to those questions raised.

The completed report was then reviewed and approved in a joint meeting of employers and local Job Service officials on January 9th. Among those employer recommendations addressed by the ESC in the document were: improved telephone service, physical reorganization of the Charlotte Job Service office, and the establishment of a suburban, job placement oriented satellite office convenient to outlying applicants.

The employer committee will review the progress made by ESC in implementing the plan of action specified in their written report.

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