

# Editorials & Comments

## Black Political Awareness

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
Post Executive Editor

After observing the Democratic National Convention via television, we asked at the end, what does it all mean to and for black Americans?

The convention began Monday of last week with a dynamic address by Congresswoman Barbara Jordan (Tex.), the first black, and the first woman, to have served as a keynote speaker in the 144 year history of Democratic Party national conventions. It ended, four days later, with a charismatic mini-sermon-benediction by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., and the singing of the famous civil rights song of the 1960s, "We Shall Overcome."

Between these historic events, Congresswoman Yvonne Burke (Cal.) gave "seconding speeches" for California Governor Jerry Brown for the presidency and Senator Walter Mondale (Minn.) for the vice presidency. In addition, Congressman John Conyers (Mich.) offered a nominating speech on behalf of Congressman Ronald Dellum (Cal.) for the vice presidency which was followed by a speech by Dellum himself.

Probably most important, Congressman Andrew Young (Ga.) gave a "seconding speech" for Jimmy Carter for the office of the presidency of the United States.

Finally, Congresswoman Jordan, never a candidate for the vice presidency nomination, and Congressman Dellum, who had withdrawn his name from consideration for the same post, nevertheless received nine and 12 vice presidency candidate votes, respectively.

### Rhetoric And Ballyhoo

Some might dismiss these events as merely a part of the rhetoric and ballyhoo of a national convention, however, the POST sees it as a definite sign of the growing awareness of black political power in America, the quality of the national black political leadership, and a new enlightenment within the Democratic Party as symbolized by Jimmy Carter. We believe this for two very good reasons.

First, when Jimmy Carter was still an obscure unknown school board chairman in Plains, Georgia, he was setting in motion much of the foundation for school integration in that southern rural community. In addition, in a losing cause, Carter has attempted to get the deacon board of his church to vote to admit blacks to membership. To most Americans these may not sound like earth-shaking efforts, however, in rural Georgia they were, and still are, considered to be radical moves.

Furthermore, Carter's chosen running mate, Walter Mondale, has a long history as a strong advocate of civil and equal rights for blacks and other minorities. For example,

he has worked hard in the U.S. Senate on issues such as problems of migrant workers, education for Indians, child nutrition, open housing and equality of educational and job opportunities. In the latter case, Mondale headed a special Senate committee that fought those attempting to end busing as a tool for school desegregation. Furthermore, Mondale led the fight to protect the jobs of black school administrators and teachers who were being selectively discriminated against in hiring for positions in integrated schools.

### Party's 1976 Platform

Secondly, the Democratic Party's 1976 platform addresses itself to issues of concern to black people. These issues include unemployment, national health insurance, aide for the cities, and equality integrated education.

It is the view of the POST, therefore, that the degree of black visibility in key convention roles, the long-standing commitment of both Carter and Mondale to resolving issues directly affecting blacks, and the 1976 Democratic Party platform mean that the convention was a good omen for black Americans. Vital, however, to making the convention's pledges a reality is the active participation by blacks at election. Voting is the key, let us all vote.

### Garage Victory

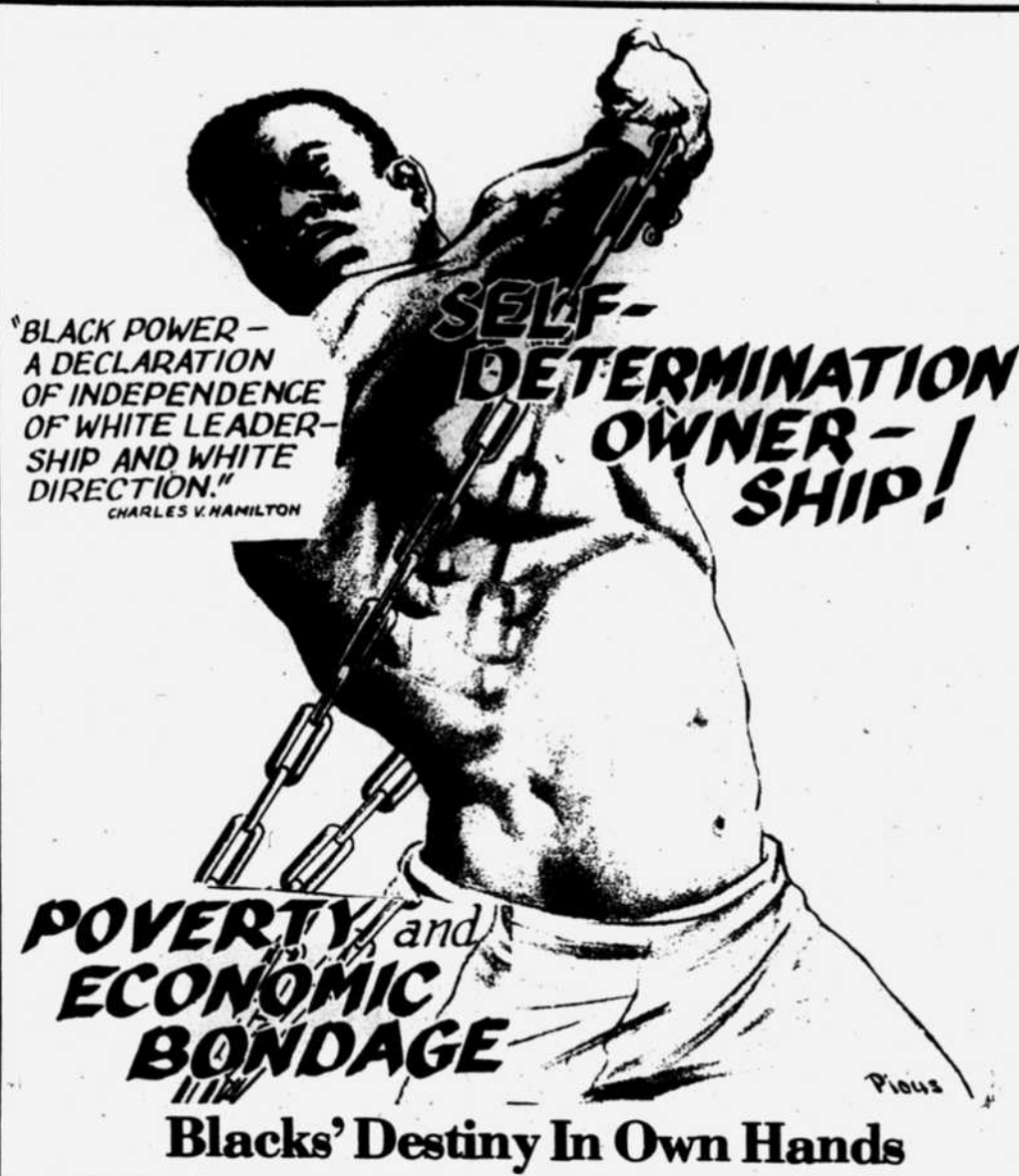
The POST extends its best wishes and congratulations to the Northwood Estates Community Organization and its supporters in gaining the support of the Mecklenburg County Commissioners to overrule a Planning Commission recommendation to place a motor vehicle maintenance garage near the intersection of Hoskins and Beatties Ford Roads.

Petitions with over 1,500 signatures, letters, telephone calls, numerous community meetings and appearances before the Planning Commission and the County Commissioners were all a part of the behind-the-scenes effort that made this victory possible.

### Untiring Leadership

Mrs. Johnnie Evans, a retired nurse, and the Rev. Bryant E. Clancy are to be commended for the untiring organizational leadership, determination and courage in carrying the neighborhoods' fight against the garage to its victorious end. It was not an easy task, but it was well worth the effort.

The POST hopes that other community groups and their leaders will learn a lesson from the courage exhibited by Mrs. Evans and Rev. Clancy.



## REPORT FROM Washington

### Sunset Legislation

By Jim Martin, 9th District, Congressman

Once Congress approves funding for an agency to do a specific job, that agency has the potential for an endless life span, whether or not it gets that specific job done. It becomes a perpetual motion machine. This is one of the big problems in the federal government. Some of us in Congress feel strongly that unproductive agencies should close up shop if they cannot show enough progress to justify continuing operations. This method of reviewing government agencies is already being encouraged in a couple of state governments and is called "Sunset" legislation. If they can't stay awake, let the sun set on them. Even though the idea is in its infancy, it appears to have a lot of support from legislators and the public.

Surveys tell us that a majority of Americans feel that our government is out of control. A recent Louis Harris poll revealed that a majority also feels that government officials do not care what they think. The overall image of government officials do not care what they think. The overall image of government is that it is not responsible to the needs of the public and is unable to deal with simple day-to-day problems.

A case can be made for the many government workers

who are dedicated to doing a good job and serving the needs of the public. However, statistics will bear out concerns expressed in the Harris poll that government is out of control. In the twenty years between 1954 and 1974, the portion of our Gross National Product (GNP) consumed by government has grown astonishingly, from 1/4 to the current 1-3 of our GNP (26.5 percent in 1954 to 32.8 percent in 1974). Since 1974, nothing has been done to slow government expansion or cut it in those areas where it no longer serves a purpose. Much has been done to speed up that growth.

This year in the official government catalog of programs, grants and financial assistance, 52 agencies are listed as administering 1030 programs. The system is confusing for state and local governments seeking federal help. It is a nightmare for the citizen not accustomed to dealing with the federal government. I have witnessed this on a daily basis in trying to help constituents' cut through governmental red tape.

Congress must take the blame for the unchecked growth in the federal government. In the period from 1960 to 1974, 329 governmental bodies were created while only 126 were abolished. In general, the agencies abolished weren't nearly as large as

the new ones created.

The federal budget reflects the way new programs have cropped up like crabgrass on a neglected lawn. In the last decade, the budget has increased by 132 percent.

The productive members of our society have paid for all of these programs through increasingly higher taxes each year. In 1953 the average family paid 11.8 percent of its income in direct taxes. In 1974 the tax burden had doubled (23.4 percent). Year after year Congress has allowed expansion of the budget at taxpayers' expense and has not shown them any reason to believe that they are getting their money's worth. As an example, we see evidence that some of the programs of the 60's which attacked poverty and social ills were successful. Others were resounding failures, but Congress has done nothing to tell the taxpayers where mistakes were made and what programs should be abolished. We just add new ones.

This "Sunset" Act would require Members of Congress on record as to where they stand on programs of questionable merit. If the spendthrifts want to continue a program that has failed, then the taxpayers will be able to determine for themselves whether their representative has been a good steward of their tax money.

## TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

### Court Affirms Death Penalty

The question whether the death penalty violates the Constitution's prohibition of "cruel and unusual punishment" has been hanging for some time now. The Supreme Court side-stepped it back in 1972 when it struck down state death penalty laws as being capricious and inconsistently applied.

Now, it has finally decided the issue, wrongly. In the closing days of its term, the Court upheld the death penalty laws of Florida, Georgia and Texas, stating that they met the requirements of fairness set out in the 1972 decision. There are 147 people on the death rows of the prisons of those states today who now face execution.

Those states' laws were upheld because they met the Court's test for penalties based on the nature of the crime and the character of the defendant. In Georgia a first trial is held to determine guilt and a second trial determines the sentence. In Texas the jury has to decide that there was intent to kill, that if the act was provoked, the offender's response was unreasonable, and that the defendant probably would commit other criminal acts in the future.

According to the Court, these state laws take the death penalty out of the realm of the arbitrary and make it reasonable. But this seems to me very inconsistent.

In 1972 the death penalty was struck down because poor people and black people were executed while offenders who were white and affluent got lesser sentences. It's pretty obvious that under the state laws the Court now finds constitutional, the same pattern will emerge. A poor black man in Texas defended by a public defender is going to be looked on by a jury as one likely to commit a crime in the future and get the death penalty, while an affluent white person defended by an expensive criminal lawyer will get a lesser sentence. Just watch!

The Court is really straining here. It wants to avoid the blatant capriciousness of the old ways in which the penalty was applied and so it has talked itself into believing that judges and juries will be completely objective and avoid race and class judgments. In this it is deceiving itself.

The answer then, if there is no objective way to determine who is to die for murder and who is to live, might be mandatory death penalties for everyone convicted of the crime.

Fortunately, the Court rejected this inhuman notion in cases involving such mandatory death penalty laws in North Carolina and Louisiana. By a narrow 5-4 decision it ruled that such laws, by their "Lack of focus on the circumstances of the particular offense and the character of the offender" violate the Constitution and don't comply with contemporary standards of decency.

Some 16 states have laws similar to those struck down by the decision, so 145 people on their death rows now will escape death.

The death penalty cases show a Court wriggling in confusion, uncertainly facing the moral dilemma of sanctioning state-imposed death while not wanting to buck the hard-line law and order trend that grips our society.

## as i see it

### The Black Rip Off

By Gerald O. Johnson,  
Post Staff Writer

Believe it or not but a lot of people are getting rich from Your being Black. This elite group of get rich fast people are using Black people to either get grants, private donations, lyceum fees, and the works.

Probably the biggest Black rip off is the lyceum program found on college campuses. The lyceum, usually operated by the student union on most campuses, is responsible for getting well known people to come and speak to the students on topics of interest to the student. Unfortunately, these days most lyceum speakers are professional lyceum speakers talking loud and saying nothing. This is especially profound on Black campuses. Blacks are very susceptible to Black rhetoric. Consequently, people like Angela Davis, Julian Bond, Dick Gregory, and many others are ripping the Black community off.

The argument here is not whether or not these people are sincere in their motives. The point is the benefit they provide is negligible. After

they give their little talks and get paid from anywhere between \$500 and \$3000, they are gone. The problems which existed before they talked exist when they leave.

The reason college campuses are so vulnerable is because college kids are so naive. They freak out behind people saying what they want to hear. Since most college kids are seeking an ideology to rally behind, they will back anyone saying anything.

Therefore, the speakers come in, say anything get paid, and leave. If you don't believe me try to get a speaker for just expenses. Tell him you believe in the cause but that you are broke. You will not get a single speaker. This should be evidence enough that the only cause these speakers have is "self" cause.

Another rip off of the Black community is the minority business groups designed to aid Black businesses. This service aids in nothing more than getting those individuals working with the service rich. Again the argument here is not one of the intention of the



service but rather on the benefit.

The federal government pours billions on top of billions to the minority service companies so that they can help promote new minority businesses, assist on-going businesses, and provide consulting services.

The problem with minority services is that they are not comprehensive enough, they lack depth, and they are not diverse enough.

Minority services do a pretty fair job at getting businesses started. However, due to a

lack of comprehending problems a minority business will encounter, they usually start a minority business off on the wrong foot. The wrong foot almost always includes a high overhead based on inflated projected sales figures.

To the service a Black business merely represents a statistics, but to the Black businessman a Black business is his life.

The minority services lack the qualified businessmen capable of handling a multitude of business problems. Moreover, they lack the qualified businessmen capable of going into detail on any aspect of a business.

Consequently, most minority businesses fail. Here again a lot of money is being wasted in the name of Black people. A more subtle community rip off is found at what used to be the community pillar, the Church.

This form of rip off is quite similar to the lyceum rip off. Blacks pour money into churches for reasons I haven't yet figured out.

But I have seen church financial reports and you

wouldn't believe the amount of money churches have tied up in expenditures that do not help the community. Most churches feel that a new

church is much more important than people.

Most Blacks are hung up on what they pay the ministers, how much they raised to send the choir to Timbuktu or the like. But none seem to be busying themselves with improving conditions in the Black community on the whole.

Hence, we have a lot of money going into the churches from the Black community but little going out to the Black community.

Again ministers are paid like lyceum speakers. That is they are paid to say what people want to hear. Of course when they run out of things to say, they shout.

The rip off doesn't stop here. There are Black caucuses, Black social groups, Black educational groups, and many, many more.

The point is that when most

Blacks need help they resort to the white man. But, as you can see, we need not look any further than our own neighborhood.

If Golden Frinks spent more time raising funds rather than resorting to the old marching and protesting, then maybe a

decent lawyer could have been hired to put Mrs. Dupree away.

If more money was given to Black institutions to upgrade faculty and staff, then Blacks could achieve a standard of education which would prepare them adequately for the job market.

If Churches banded together and used their money to help Black businesses help themselves, then Black businesses could in turn help ease the Black unemployment figure.

Yes, we are our biggest problem. Yet we can be our biggest salvation.

We are letting both Blacks and Whites get an upper hand on us for selfish purposes while we go around with our hands out for a handout.

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