

Editorials & Comments

Criticism Of Carter Is Questionable

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

Many black leaders, congressional liberals and organizations -- including Jesse Jackson, Vernon Jordan, Senator George McGovern and the Congressional Black Caucus -- have begun to express growing dissatisfaction with President Carter's domestic economic policies. While many of the black political leaders are said to be reluctant to publicly criticize Carter, a member of the Black Caucus reportedly has said, "The administration has given us no clear signal that it has a solid commitment to real solutions to the problems plaguing blacks, other minorities and the less advantaged among us."

While the critics have applauded Carter for restoring reductions in some employment programs made by President Ford, they are disturbed that the administration has abandoned social welfare needs in favor of controlling inflation and creating a balanced budget.

In more specific terms, the Congressional Black Caucus has become disenchanted with Carter delays in welfare reform and national health insurance, abandoning the \$50 tax rebate and the proposed minimum wage increase to \$2.50 per hour instead of \$3.

The POST shares these concerns however, we believe that much of the criticism of President Carter's policies is unfounded for at least three reasons. First, government policies and programs are no panacea for resolving all the nation's ills. Jesse Jackson himself noted this in a recent MESSAGE magazine article where he said, "many black and white leaders demand Federal aid as the only solution. More federal aid is certainly needed, but money alone...will not significantly change the welfare system...build enough new houses, improve education...A multitude of federal anti-poverty and urban-renewal programs should have proved that by now."

Policy Priorities

Secondly, changing conditions require changes in policy priorities even when such changes are not the most politically expedient thing to do. For example, President Carter dropped his \$50 rebate plan with the argument that the economy did not need any help since all indicators were on the plus side except the stock market. Furthermore, the President's decision to delay welfare reform in the face of a mounting energy crisis makes more sense when viewed in the context of past efforts and future plans. Past efforts to bring about meaningful welfare reform have been quick, poorly planned blue prints designed to pacify the immediate demands for "reform" and

allow the administration in Washington to remain popular with the poor. On the other hand, at the risk of losing considerable political support, but out of a concern for more than piece-meal changes, President Carter is trying to resolve the energy crisis in a manner that will aid the long-range welfare reform plans. Briefly stated, federal revenue from Carter's energy policies could generate as much as \$75 billion a year by the early 1980's. "Such sums," the WALL STREET JOURNAL noted recently, "could prove essential as the President seeks to deliver his promised welfare and tax revisions while at the same time achieving a balanced budget by 1981."

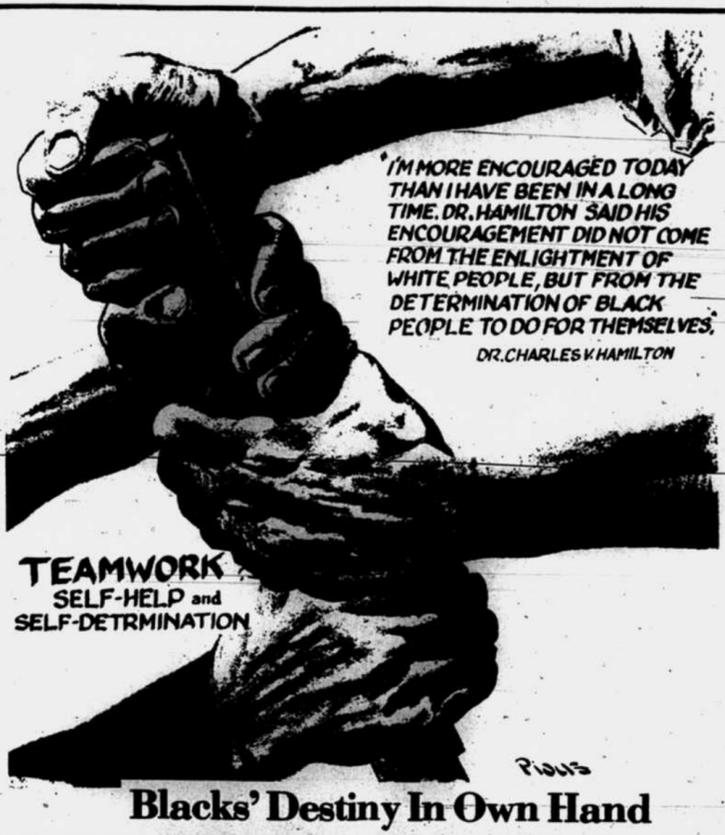
Lastly, the POST believes many of the Carter's critics have failed to look around to see what is really taking place in the nation. The President's shifting of priorities from unemployment to inflation is at least partly consistent with a recent New York Times-CBS News poll which shows that inflation has gained considerable headway as an economic concern of Americans who generally think only of the fears of unemployment. For example, two months before the presidential election, blacks ranked unemployment as the number-one economic problem by a 3-1 margin. Five months after the election (April), unemployment was still first but by only a 2-1 margin. Nearly similar results were evident among other lower income groups.

Furthermore, in spite of the strong opposition to Carter's proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$2.50 instead of \$3, there are thousands of youth -- those most affected by the vote -- who naturally desire more income but strongly believe that a higher rate might cost them their jobs.

Economic Indicators

Finally, economic indicators over the past two months (March and April) show a small but important movement toward price stability and a slight drop in unemployment rates. While such a trend must last through 90 days to be considered significant, it is nevertheless a movement in the right direction.

The POST believes therefore that much of the criticism directed toward Mr. Carter's first four months in the oval office is questionable to say the least. He has demonstrated that he is a man of character, good judgment and determination. Furthermore, he has shown the courage to be president and has not become intimidated by political pressure or the instant popular demand for change, when such a change will not be in the long-term best interest of the American people. What more can we ask of any man?



"I'M MORE ENCOURAGED TODAY THAN I HAVE BEEN IN A LONG TIME. DR. HAMILTON SAID HIS ENCOURAGEMENT DID NOT COME FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF WHITE PEOPLE, BUT FROM THE DETERMINATION OF BLACK PEOPLE TO DO FOR THEMSELVES."
DR. CHARLES K. HAMILTON

TEAMWORK
SELF-HELP and
SELF-DETERMINATION

Blacks' Destiny In Own Hand

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Devoted User Of Clorox

June 3, 1977

Dear Readers,
For the past 33 years which have been all of my married life, I have been a devoted user of Clorox. I have been watching their TV commercials and they have completely been turned off by them. Why would they pay a white woman \$100 for a pair of cheap socks and a Black woman only \$40 for a more expensive pair of jeans? I am appalled at their lack of sensitivity and it seems perfectly obvious that they are prejudiced against Blacks who have helped to make their company the success that it is today. I will never use Clorox again and am using my influence with other Blacks until Clorox corrects their obvious biased treatment that they show other blacks. I sincerely hope that Blacks will discontinue their use of this product. I sent the Clorox Co. a copy of this letter also.

Yours truly,
Audrey G. Wall

Discredits Chavis

May 29, 1977

The Editor
Wilmington Morning Star
P.O. Box 840
Wilmington, N.C. 28401

Dear Sir:

I found the letter written to you by Mr. Jim Jordan making light of Rev. Ben Chavis' religious title a very sick attempt to discredit a sincerely dedicated man of the church. The fact that you would print the letter rather than forward his questions to those with the answer was equally sick.

Let me set the record straight!!! Ben Chavis, principal defendant in the Wilmington 10 case was duly ordained in the Black Christian Nationalist faith by Rev. Albin Cleage, founder of that religion and leader of the Shrine of the Black Madonna complex based in Atlanta, Ga. with other churches in Detroit, Michigan, Washington, D.C. and several cities throughout this country. Rev. Chavis is also currently enrolled as a Masters Degree student in the School of Religion at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Rev. Chavis comes from a deeply religious family and has been associated with the church since boyhood. His faith and leadership in the Christian church is unquestioned. His ordination is as legitimate as the Pope's in Rome.

As for your readers, might I suggest that they spend more time in church developing a keener sense of justice for all mankind. A true Christian should recognize these 10 people to be political prisoners as was Christ himself in his time.

Very truly yours,

Mrs. Imani Kazana
National Coordinator
National Wilmington 10
Defense Committee
Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.
McCain Prison
McCain, N.C. 28361
June 1, 1977

President Jimmy Carter

The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Because of the continued immoral and unjust imprisonments of the Wilmington Ten I find it absolutely necessary to write to you a second time in regards to the gross violations

of our human rights.

For six long years we have suffered from the chronic disease of American racism and Jim Crow injustice of the old "New South."

Since my last letter to you dated March 4, 1977, our situation has not changed. We are still ten innocent victims of a racist and political prosecution. We are still political prisoners. We are still prisoners of conscience. We remain in prison for a collective total of 282 years not because of criminal conduct but as a direct result of our participation in the civil rights movement in the United States.

Despite the overwhelming facts and evidence now revealed documenting that we are innocent, despite the three state's witnesses; despite the U.S. Justice Department and federal grand jury investigations; and despite the constant pleas of millions of people from around the world calling for our release, the torture and persecution of the Wilmington Ten continues in North Carolina unabated.

Our nation can never stand before the world community as a beacon light of democracy and human rights as long as the Wilmington Ten, Charlotte Three, Georgia Five, and hundreds of other citizens of the United States are behind bars because of our race, creed, and/or political activism.

Therefore, Mr. President, I renew my appeal to you to establish a national priority of freeing all U.S. Political Prisoners.

How long we remain in prison will ultimately be determined by your executive action.

Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

The Poverty Numbers Game

There's a delusion abroad in the land that poverty doesn't affect many people, and that delusion is being fed by absurd arguments that social welfare benefits have removed almost all poor people from poverty.

But the facts are that some 26 million people -- two thirds of them white -- live in families whose income is below the federal poverty line, while another 11 million people are within only \$1,400 of the poverty level.

That's a lot of people. And they're living in terrible conditions most middle class people cannot imagine.

But that's only part of it. That so-called "poverty line" is itself a false and misleading standard.

The "poverty line" is currently set at about \$5,500 for an urban family of four, as if such a family isn't poor if it earns \$6,000, \$7,000, or even \$8,000.

How is that figure arrived at? The poverty line goes back to the 1960s, when the government, for convenience sake, had to determine some poverty limit to use as a guideline in the now defunct War on Poverty.

The figure itself was derived from Agriculture Department estimates of emergency diet food budgets -- how much families would need to get by for a limited period.

Since then, the figure has been frozen into a benchmark for determining poverty in general -- as a permanent condition. And it's got absolutely nothing to do with measuring minimum living standards. For that, you've got to go to the Department of Labor, which publishes annual estimated budgets for living standards.

Last month, the Department published its finding that an "austere" living standard for an urban family of four requires \$10,000 per year. That's the real poverty line, for it includes only the most basic necessities -- food, rent and other essentials, not including entertainment and vacations.

Instead of abandoning that old "poverty line" figure and replacing it with the "austere" budget level, some claim that neither is adequate since the cash value of various social welfare benefits should be included. Thus, food stamps, Medicaid, the value of subsidized housing, and other benefits should have cash value attached to them and added on to real income.

The result? Presto -- only nine million poor people. That shows you can do anything with mathematics, even obscure social reality, if you want to.

So despite claims that poverty is vanishing, it is still with us. The recent recession was a Depression for the poor, and they're still in a deep economic Depression while the rest of the nation is climbing back out of the recession. That's something for Administration officials to ponder as they continue to delay the sweeping changes poor people need in return for the conservative budget-balancing assurances well-off people want.

THE VIEW FROM HERE

Black Women In Forefront Of Struggle For Freedom

By Gary Gregg
Post Staff Writer

Black women have always been at the forefront of the struggle for freedom from oppression.

They have more often than not had to contend with, not only the racism of white America, but also the insecurity of black men.

It hasn't been an easy row to hoe, but black women nationwide must be commended because they made sure the next generation got born. Say what you must about illegitimacy, about welfare chislers and all the rest but if those wonderful women hadn't continued to have those babies, none of us would be here today in the relative peace of 1977 having philosophical discussions about the hell they lived through.

It is time black women assume their natural leadership role in this scheme of things that will mean freedom for all of us.

Last week I said it is time that blacks shake the messiah syndrome, looking for that charismatic black leader who will lead up to freedom's promise land.

It is time that each of us assume the role as leader.

first of ourselves, and then of our families.

Here black women must have definite input.

One of the first things I recommend that black women do, is drive for personal independence.

While the roles of wife and mother are laudable, in today's economic uncertainty those two specialties are impractical. So black women, all black women, should be developing salable skills. I don't mean maids, waitresses or cooks, though these jobs are honorable. But women must not limit themselves. Strive to be businesswomen in the grand tradition of so many other black women. Enter any of the so-called non-traditional fields which interest you. Be secretaries, accountants, file clerks, executives and doctors, lawyers, professors and technicians. But also be bus drivers, mechanics, engineers and sales persons; anything that men aspire to. In other words, be economically solvent first.

At the same time, black women must fight for a position beside their men, not two steps to the rear. I'm not talking about competition, but about viable teamwork. To do this, you must over-



Vickie Clives

come some, and I kid you not, it won't be easy.

There are many black men who will feel threatened by your mind, believing it to be some alien force which guards your body. But insist that he learn to appreciate the fact that you can think, make decisions and function well in this fast-paced society in which we live.

Prepare to be lonely some, if that is necessary. But like a friend of mine Vickie Clives said recently, "you won't be lonely if you like yourself." This process of economic solvency, of mental and psy-

chological development is an educational process. And while there is a lot for black women to learn, there is also a great deal they must unlearn.

Erase from your mind the almost pathological distrust and disrespect for black men. This doesn't apply to all black women, of course, but there are many out there who know what I'm talking about.

Black men aren't dogs. Take time to discover the subtle sides of black men, the secret hopes and desires, the ambitions and aspirations. Learn what they are and add your strength to the drive to achieve them.

If none of that is present and if you contend irrevocably that all black men are dogs, then what are all black women?

Black men aren't all non-thinking brutes who can't appreciate you, respect you or protect you from the vagaries of this hectic life. Appreciation and respect must be earned. They must also be mutual.

So you must learn to appreciate black men, the problems they must face daily, insecurities and all. And if those who don't cop out and go hang out on the corner have something

worth appreciating. If they struggle against the odds, doing what they can and hoping constantly for something better, then they're worthy of respect.

Black women have to unlearn that sense of competition which seems to preclude most relationships with black men. That's all right in the business and professional worlds, because that is what those worlds are based upon. But in the personal realm, competition has no place.

Having unlearned these negative things which keep black men and women from their rightful places as personal black leaders, there are other things that black women must learn.

I've already discussed learning to be independent, financially solvent and mentally and psychologically stimulating. Finally, black women must learn to be emotionally objective.

This isn't to imply that black women aren't emotionally strong, they are. But we all must learn to view emotions as objectively as we view all other things.

For example, black women must learn that pain is inescapable and that as often as

they suffer pain, they also dish out pain. They must learn to strive for perfection, but temper that drive with the understanding that to err is human. They must not condone wrong, but they must be able to understand wrong and forgive it when the culprit is truly sorry.

In conclusion, it's my opinion that second only to black children, black women are our greatest assets. And as they strive to assume an individual leadership role, black men should be encouraging, helpful and understanding of their needs.

As much as humanly possible, black men must provide those needs, whatever they are, with tenderness and eagerness. In other words, we must applaud black women's development.

As black men develop a sense and purpose of individual leadership and as black women do the same thing, then the only thing left to do is put that all together.

Next week in this column, I'll discuss putting it altogether. Our goal should be a dynamic duo of well-developed, self-sustaining black men and well-developed self-sustaining black women.

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