

Editorials & Comments

The Paradox Of Blackness

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

Last week we printed an editorial from The Call And Post (Cleveland, Ohio) in which Benjamin Hooks, the new executive director of the NAACP, was quoted as saying that one way to revitalize the organization is to "ask for increased financial support from major businesses, corporations, and foundations." The editorial then said, and we strongly agree, "We must remember that the ones who pay the fiddler, call the tune. The NAACP should never again be in hock to white support. The cost of its operation is a black responsibility and an obligation all of us must bear."

The Charlotte Post's support of this viewpoint does not mean that white controlled institutions have no responsibility for aiding black organizations. It has in fact been the past and present policies and practices of too many white institutions that has created a need for such organizations as the NAACP, the Charlotte Area Fund and memorials to such leaders as the late Dr. Martin Luther King.

We have mentioned CAF and the King memorial in the same context with the NAACP because all three are currently faced with financial problems, problems that black Americans could very easily resolve. One less pack of cigarettes, one less six-pack of beer or bottle of booze, and-or one less night-out-on-the-town per year could provide the financial support that the NAACP, CAF and MLK Statue Fund Drive so desperately need. What we are suggesting is that it is long past time for black Americans to recognize that an over indulgence with our individual desires and the ignoring of our collective needs - economic, political and social equality - will result in a loss for us collectively and individually.

Black Income

Our point is that the NAACP, the CAF and MLK Statue Fund Drive should not have to seek any financial aid from the white community. If the black community, locally and nationally, would take just a fraction of the approximately \$70 billion annually that they have and invest a fraction of it in the civil rights movement and community improvements, major steps could be made in creating a more equal society and improving the quality of life, especially for the poor.

Furthermore, this kind of aggressive self-help will motivate the white community and white institutions to offer assistance because this is consistent with their values and beliefs. This was clearly demonstrated recently by Vernon Jordan's stirring speech at the opening session of the National Urban League's annual convention. Jordan strongly

criticized the Carter administration's delay in keeping its campaign promises to provide aid for the cities, the poor, blacks and the unemployed. He told the 4,000 delegates, and more directly the President himself, that blacks who aided Carter's election efforts last year now feel "betrayed."

When Carter attempted to discredit Jordan's remarks, the Congressional Black Caucus, civil rights leaders, white liberal congressional leaders and labor leaders joined in the criticism of Mr. Carter. Jordan's speech was an expression of self-help in that black support for Carter was in exchange for government support of their needs. Equally significant, Jordan's speech and the support he received led the President to (1) consent to a long delayed meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus, (2) sign a major jobs program bill and (3) reveal his blueprint for welfare reform. Most important in these developments is the fact that black people, personified by Mr. Jordan, spoke out for themselves in a manner that let the President know that it was time for positive steps to begin alleviating the nation's domestic ills.

Achieve Equality

In summary, if black Americans truly desire to achieve equality and justice in all aspects of American society they must recognize the major paradox that exists in their lives. That paradox is in black people's failure to clearly recognize that the value and commitment to individualism, so prevalent among white people, cannot and should not be as prevalent among blacks. Black people must often be willing to sacrifice their individual desires for the collective well-being of their nearly 22 million brothers and sisters. If we can achieve the level of maturity that will allow this kind of commitment to the needs of black people, then our civil rights leaders and others who struggled to give us the degree of equality we have, would not have to beg white people to aid our causes.

The Call And Post editorial summed it up well in these words, "The Negro must stop buying what he wants and begging for what he needs." Think about it!

Get Knowledge

Syracuse University has in its seal the words, "Knowledge Crowns Those Who Seek It." Such words are a reminder that education has value in that it can and does enable most people to achieve a little more of what is called the "good life." Thus, while education in itself is no guarantee of anything, it is a necessary first step to self-awareness, personal pride and self-help.

BLACK COMMUNITIES THAT CARE ABOUT THE BLACK FUTURE, SHOULD HELP IMPOSE ORDER WHERE NEEDED.



Stop The Fear, Trembling In The Streets

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader Finds Post Unusual

Dear Editor:

I read The Charlotte Post weekly and I find the paper very unusual, but interesting. I say unusual because it is more of a feature paper than a straight newspaper. Although features are news, I find no crime or sensationalism in the paper as in our daily's. Being a weekly and an original newspaper, I'm sure you could not (and don't care to) equate your content with that of a daily (or any other weekly).

In light of the news features in your publication, I read them to see what is happening in the Black community as well as what is happening in the Charlotte community, for I know if it is in The Charlotte Post it will be something of significance to the black people. I will admit that most of the feature news in the paper will not be found in white publications in this city, for they (white publications), do not expose the good things about our people. I see the Post in this respect as a spokesman for the people that have not been exposed in other media.

I read The Charlotte Post with a critical eye as I read all publications and view television programs. I know your publication is a growing one so complaints are not in order. I do not criticize before giving a product a chance to develop. But as I see it, The Charlotte Post is taking a step in the wrong direction or shall I say has not taken a step in the right direction.

I will express my point in regards to one news feature in your paper, The Charlotte Post's 10 Best Dressed Men. Don't get me wrong, I thought

the idea was a darn good one. However, when reading the article of the 10 Best Dressed men, I sensed prejudice in the

choosing of the men. I also read the story concerning the fact that everybody could not be chosen. I am sensible enough to know that, I know, too, that you can't please everybody. On the other hand though, when reading the articles on the men, I found that eight out of the ten were college graduates, one attended college and one did not indicate whether he attended college or not, but I'm sure he did. Another point was that most of the men said they shopped at Tate Brown, J.O. Jones, Belk, and Ivey's. Some went as far as to say they preferred certain name brands and tailor made clothes.

I am not a jealous person but I see some of the same things going on in The Post circles as I do all round the black community.

I agree that the stores the Ten Best Dressed Men shopped were highly regarded stores and if any person shopped there they more than likely paid a handsome price for their attire. I want to bring to your attention, as well as to others who are guilty of the same oversight, that the price for your clothes or the intelligence of a person does not make that person best dressed.

There are many black people in our community who have not been to college and hold labor jobs. These same people are the least likely to shop at Tate Brown, even at Easter time. They can't afford

it. I would imagine that if the category was Ten Best Dressed Women, these men's wives would have been the most likely candidates. They would probably be the ones wearing the furs, diamonds, and the ones who shop at Montaldo's, Harris and Hart, and Lucille's Vogue, to name a few. Not to mention the lady who was fortunate enough to have a Paris original. Don't get me wrong, if I had a Paris original I would be best dressed too.

But what about the men who shop at Stein's, The Badd Man, Mr. Hi Style, National Hat Shop or the National Shirt Shop? They too are best dressed. They wear their starched uniforms to the mill when all the other men are grimy. They are the best dressed at the mill. They too would be the most likely to prepare for church in a neat conservative fashion, and very up to date. Their suits however are not tailor made, but we must admit some clothes do fit to perfection even when they are not.

Let's not leave the man on welfare out, even if he buys from the Salvation Army. My mother always told me, "It's not what you wear but how you wear it." I agree.

Need I go on? Keep in mind that the poor people are the majority of the community that The Charlotte Post informs. You tell us that your paper is about the people we know. Speaking of the Tate Browns, I don't know about anybody else, but I don't know those people.

Charlotte Maddox

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Black, Poor, Look For Signal

The speech I made to the National Urban League's Annual Conference analyzing the Administration's domestic policies and expressing black disappointment with the record to date was based on my talks and travels all over the country, and much of what I said has been said by others as well.

The President appeared before the same Annual Conference the next morning and gave an effective defense of his Administration, as did a number of Cabinet officers and other key figures in Washington.

That kind of public dialogue is an important phenomenon. It put some neglected issues back into the field of public discussion, where they belong. And it informed the Administration that a significant part of its constituency is unhappy with its performance to date.

When the dust had cleared and all sides made their case, the situation facing black people was unchanged and the analysis I made of the Administration's first six months was unaltered.

The basic outline of that analysis is this: The Carter Administration was elected largely through capturing solid black votes. Those votes were given on the assumption that campaign promises of full employment and urban revitalization would be fulfilled. To date, despite some significant steps in HUD's block grant program, in youth employment, and other areas, black expectations have not been fulfilled.

A basic reason for this may be that priorities are askew. Instead of full employment, balancing the budget by 1981 has become the top priority. Energy, controlling inflation, and government reorganization have all been given greater urgency than a national urban policy, national health insurance and other basic human needs programs.

A case may be made for the importance of the items the Administration has chosen to make its priorities, but to the degree that emphasis on balanced budgets restricts its ability to inaugurate needed social reforms, the hopes of poor people will be frustrated. I understand the need for balanced budgets, but human needs must have priority.

And if the price of balanced budgets is continued joblessness, poverty and urban deterioration, then we're only laying the groundwork for possibly insoluble social problems in the 1980s.

The positive changes that took place in the 1960s were arrested for much of this decade. To some degree those gains have helped foster expectations on the part of minorities and the poor that must now be satisfied.

When Nixon and Ford occupied the White House many people realized that little could be expected in the way of social reforms, but that situation changed in November. A new President was elected by a coalition of labor, blacks, minorities, poor people, and others who renewed their faith in the political system in backing a candidate who promised jobs and reform.

The President has proved adept at signal-sending. By emphasizing human rights, he's sent signals to the world's dictators to shape up. By selling the Presidential yacht and other symbolic moves, he's signalled his countrymen that the Imperial Presidency is at an end.

as i see it

Mandatory Retirement: Yes Or No?

By Gerald O. Johnson

Should a person be required to retire once he's reached a designated age? This question has become an issue recently. To get the answer to this question older people have formed a lobby group to place pressure on governmental officials. This lobby group is saying that mandatory retirement is unconstitutional because of age discrimination.

A very complex issue, but one that is easily soluble once both sides are aired. Therefore, this week I have chosen to give both sides of the argument and in conclusion give the practical solution to the problem as I see it.

Let us start by taking the older people's view point. It is felt and, rightfully so, that to designate an age when all people will be forced to retire is discriminatory. Since we are all individuals a set age seem ridiculous. One man at age 65 may be senile while another is as sharp and witty as he ever was. Why then must one man who still has productive years left be forced

to retire? Moreover, the retiree has nothing to say about it. He can not choose if he wants to retire or not, the choice is made for him.

Taking this one step further, it seems ridiculous to place an able bodied individual on relief programs when he is capable of running a few more miles. If age makes one wiser then we are placing a lot of wisdom out to pasture.

On the other hand, the arguments for mandatory retirement are headed by the old "getting the young into the work force" idea. Young families (especially minorities) are faced with unemployment because of jobs that are currently being held by older people. This idea has two prongs both of which are true and deserve attention.

The truth is, a company can save money by bringing in inexperienced young personnel to replace the older personnel with seniority. This seniority affords one higher wages, longer leave periods, and many other fringe benefits that the new personnel will not receive. Thus, if the young personnel can be



Gerald O. Johnson

trained in a reasonable length of time he will undoubtedly save the company money once they oust the senior citizens.

Finally, the truth is, by allowing senior citizens to hold jobs that could be filled by younger personnel, you would possibly stifle the growth of the country. A senior citizen being employed generally is not a case of survival, but rather one of ego. The senior citizen has more often than not only himself and possibly a mate to support. The children

have gone, the mortgage is paid, and the bills are less in comparison than that of the younger families getting started. The younger families are in a more desperate need for jobs than the older families. Moreover, the cost for having the older family on relief is far less than that of having a younger family on relief.

Another problem a lot of companies feel will occur if mandatory retirement is lifted is the discrimination involved in choosing who stays after 65, how long, etc.

If there is no designated age that means somebody has to be able to tell elderly employees when their time is up. Obviously, if they felt that they were not ready for retirement at 65 then they probably won't be ready at age 70. So then, how is one going to be told that his services are no longer needed? Even more importantly, what distinguishing characteristics or guidelines will be used to tell one person that he need not retire at age 65 while telling another he must retire at 65? This type of decision making will surely open pandora's

box to all sorts of discrimination charges.

Finally, with age comes a closed mind. Because of the years put into doing things a certain way, it is difficult to succumb to change. Yet our business society is based on innovative ideas that are constantly changing the way we do things. Consequently, getting younger more up-to-date minds contributes to the continuing well being of the business structure.

As I see it the arguments are strong on both sides. But in careful analysis of this situation the issue boils down to emotionalism vs. rationalism. Consequently, I am in favor of mandatory retirement at age 65.

I don't think that age discrimination in this case is discriminatory at all. Unlike being born black or white, male or female, where we will remain in this state until death; age or growing old is one bridge we will all cross if we are lucky. Hence, we will all go through the same type of discrimination if we live long enough. This is why it is so important that we plan for the

latter years while we are in our former years.

Also, I think that more often than not individuals not wanting to retire at age 65 are ego tripping. I don't mean this in a derogatory sense but I do think that the stigma of retirement is a ever haunting reminder that we are growing old. Most of us can not except this fact gracefully and graciously. We cling on tenaciously to the one thing we love for so much as life itself; youth. Believe it or not this issue is one that has been spearheaded by those who feel this lust for youth and vitality. Unfortunately, this vitality could give this country a serious jolt if mandatory retirement is lifted.

Because this issue is one that faces us all and one that we all should take a personal interest in, I would like to hear your comments on this issue. Write your comments to "Letter To The Editor" in care of this newspaper.

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