

Editorials & Comments

Liquor By The Drink

Will It Make A Difference?

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Over most of the last ten days the media has inundated us with news about developments leading to the N.C. General Assembly's passage of a local option liquor-by-the drink bill last week.

The new law gives any county or city which currently has an ABC system the right to have an election to let the voters decide whether their local government should allow certain licensed businesses the opportunity to serve liquor-by-the drink. The bill does not create drinking places such as open bars or lounges. What it does is simply allow local elections to be held to decide the issue.

In spite of that simple but important fact, many people are already assuming a major economic boom in new and huge profits from the expansion and creation of new restaurants, hotels and increased convention business. Others appear to anticipate open bars with liquor and money following in the streets of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. In addition, leaders in the Airport bond campaign have attributed at least 10 percent of their two-to-one margin of victory on Tuesday to passage of the mixed drink bill.

The liquor bill has created political vibrations too. The Rev. Coy Privette and his anti-liquor forces accused Gov. Jim Hunt of failing to help defeat the liquor bill while professing to oppose it. At the same time, the bill has been credited with the making of a new political leader - Parks Helms. Helms, as one news story so aptly stated, "was credited by his colleagues for guiding the bill through the House with tireless effort, skillful parliamentary maneuvering and quiet persuasion." Finally, and in spite of opposition to

premature action expressed by some state lawmakers, the Mecklenburg County Commissioners agreed in one of its few unanimous decisions to allow voters to express themselves on the issue in early September.

The emotional upheaval reflected in these developments appear to indicate we have become intoxicated by the very thought of liquor-by-the-drink. Therefore, come late-September we may all go on a drinking binge to celebrate our new freedom, even if it kills us.

The sobering realities that may keep us from this drunk orgy are seen in a number of largely ignored but significant factors. First, its possible for the anti-liquor forces to win in a local mixed drink vote. Ironically, it is liquor drinkers - brown-baggers - who may help defeat a local mixed drink vote because of their opposition to higher priced mixed drinks.

Secondly, a Charlotte Chamber of Commerce official has reportedly said mixed drink revenues in many places have not come up to expectations. Thirdly, some restaurant and night club owners don't think mixed drinks will significantly change Charlotte. One well known owner said it would be five or more years before any distinct change would be evident.

Lastly, exactly how liquor-by-the drink will affect Charlotte-Mecklenburg will depend largely upon how the state ABC board writes the rules. Indications are they will be strict.

Therefore, in spite of the hoopla over liquor-by-the drink there may be little change, little difference, little interruption in the pace and pattern of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's lifestyle. That, we believe, might be a blessing we are not even now sober enough to appreciate.

Do We Need An Urban League?

On June 30, Vernon E. Jordan Jr., executive director of the National Urban League will visit Charlotte to discuss ways in which a Charlotte-based affiliate of the League might be able to serve the interests of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Underlying Mr. Jordan's visit is a concern about high levels of black unemployment and low levels of quality housing in the city of Charlotte. While these problems are evident, there exists in Charlotte a number of agencies and organizations that are at least partly concerned with aiding in the pursuit of solutions. The organizations we are referring to are the Black Political Caucus, the NAACP, the Black Women's Caucus, three or more ministerial organizations, numerous neighborhood organizations, fraternal and religious groups and the Charlotte Area Fund.

With all of these organizations, we might ask, will one more organization make a difference. Can the Urban League find solution to these problems when others have not? We believe in this case the answer is yes.

Our response in the affirmative is based on our belief that a Charlotte Urban League affiliate might and should direct its energies exclusively to the problems of housing and unemployment. None of the existing agencies have that charge. Therefore, we believe the Urban League will and can make a difference in the progress of blacks in Charlotte.

However, this difference, in the final analysis will depend on our willingness to learn and our willingness to help the Urban League help us to be what we want to be. Will you do your part?

BLACK COMMUNITY SELF HELP - MUTUAL AID - SELF IMPROVEMENT - COOPERATION



Black's Destiny In Own Hands

Price Tags On Workers

By Bayard Rustin
Special To The Post
American workers have once again become the first casualties in the renewed "war on inflation." Caught between the crossfire of problem and solution, workers are steadily bombarded by rapidly rising prices while simultaneously confronted with corporate and government attempts to impose wage "restraint" and "moderation." The prospects for victory - even stalemate - seem dim. But for 800,000 workers in the cotton industry, many of them black, the battle is even more dangerous.

While thousands of workers toiled at their daily tasks in the textile and cotton mills, two of President Carter's top economic advisors - Charles Schultz and Barry Bosworth - solemnly pondered the "economic impact" of long awaited regulations to protect cotton workers from byssinosis, a serious disease more commonly known as "Brown Lung."

Numerous medical studies have shown that a significant number of cotton workers, perhaps as many as 20 percent of the total work force, eventually contract "Brown Lung" in one form or breath. As the disease progresses, workers experience more advanced and painful breathing difficulties leading to total disability and eventually a premature death.

Writing to some obscure governmental body known as the Regulatory Analysis Review Group, Charles Schultz - once known as a liberal - warned "it is important to insure that any new regula-

tions (to protect the health of cotton workers) do not impose unnecessary or uneconomic costs on American industry."

In effect, Schultz was saying that the health - even the very lives - of American workers has a price tag. In this particular instance, Bosworth's economists as the Council on Wage and Price Stability calculated the cost of saving one life at \$440,000, a figure deemed highly "uneconomic."

Perhaps I am naive or old-fashioned, but the thought of producing "economic impact statements" about the biological organs of human beings leaves me cold - and dismayed. If modern economists have become so sophisticated that they can now "accurately" calculate the monetary worth of each human breath, and each drop of human blood without looking into a worker's pitiful eyes, I fear they have lost touch with the human values that motivated the generous, and far-sighted economic policies which characterized most of the post-war era, especially during Democratic Administrations.

While the Carter Administration's handling of the cotton dust affair leaves me deeply disappointed and shocked, the role of Labor Secretary Ray Marshall fills me with genuine hope. Indeed, the labor secretary seems to be the Administration's only economic advisor with compassion and an informed understanding of the needs and aspirations of America's working people. As the New York Times

reported, Secretary Marshall strongly and quickly protested

Schultz's callous disregard for health and safety of cotton workers. In a memorandum to President Carter, Marshall opposed any delay in implementing anti-Brown Lung measures in America's cotton mills.

Moreover, Marshall personally appealed to the President on behalf of America's cotton workers. Unfortunately, the Administration's econometric technicians, who have difficulty discerning the difference between a living human being and a pile of machinery, prevailed on President Carter.

To a very large extent, the cotton dust affair illustrates some disturbing aspects of President Carter's approach to controlling inflation. Like his conservative Republican predecessors - men who at least never pretended to be friends of working people - President Carter and his economic advisors have pushed American workers into the frontlines of the "war on inflation."

While workers have their wages suppressed and their jobs threatened, the real causes of inflation - exorbitant interest rates, fat salaries for corporate executives, lawyers and doctors, and high fuel and food prices - slip by virtually unchallenged.

If the President persists in his largely ineffective and misguided anti-inflation strategy, we can rest assured that the 150,000 victims of Brown Lung will be the first of many helpless people sacrificed in the name of "price stability."

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

TO BE EQUAL



Voting Rights For D. C.

The Congress is considering a proposed constitutional amendment that would finally give full Congressional representation to Washington, D.C.

Such a move is long overdue. There can be no justification for depriving the people of the District of so basic a right. A nation whose founding revolution based on the principle of no taxation without representation can no longer refuse representation to citizens of its capital.

Along with the overriding philosophical principle of representation, there are important arguments supporting an amendment that would end the colonization of Washington, D.C.

Its size is one. Home to 760,000 people, the District is already more populous than ten states. Its people pay well over a billion dollars in taxes - more than was returned from 19 states. Its per capita tax payments were higher than all but three states.

So the argument that giving the District two Senators and a voting representative would be unfair to the states, whose voting power in Congress would be diluted slightly, is meaningless. States with smaller populations and states generating fewer tax revenues have been admitted to the Union and received their share of two Senate seats and one or two Representatives.

The District has always been treated like a political colony. It has not had a voting representative in Congress since 1800. Since 1970 it has had only a single non-voting Representative. It wasn't until 1964 that District citizens had the right to vote for Presidential and Vice Presidential electors. For a hundred years, until 1974, its local government was appointed.

That's a disgraceful record, made the more disgraceful by the continued disenfranchisement of its citizens who are taxed but have no say in how their taxes are used.

The blatant unfairness of this situation makes voting rights for the District a major civil rights question. And that aspect is heightened by the District's large black population - about 70 percent of the total. Thirteen years after passage of the Voting Rights Act, black and white - Washingtonians are still deprived of basic electoral rights.

Some may fear that the District's two Senators will be black and liberal. But such an objective is too base even to surface into the open. Simple fairness demands change, and blacks and liberals have never objected to the right of representation for areas that are all white or predominately conservative.

The House of Representatives has already passed a resolution calling for granting the District two Senators, House members and Presidential electors based on population, and participation in the ratification of Constitutional amendments. The Senate is considering a slightly different measure, but both agree on the substance of Congressional representation for the District.

It is important that an amendment draft be passed for consideration by the states. Three-fourths of the states have to back it for the measure to become part of the Constitution, making voting rights for the District effective.

THE CHARLOTTE POST
"THE PEOPLES NEWSPAPER"
Established 1918
Published Every Thursday
By The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.
1524 West Blvd., Charlotte, N.C. 28208
Telephones (704) 376-0496, 376-0497
Circulation, 9,915

60 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

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Second Class Postage No. 965500 Paid At
Charlotte, N.C. under the Act of March 3, 1878

Member National Newspaper Publishers
Association

North Carolina Black Publishers Association

Deadline for all news copy and photos is 5 p.m.
Monday. All photos and copy submitted becomes
the property of the POST, and will not be returned.

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.

45 W. 5th Suite 1403 2400 S. Michigan Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10036 Chicago, Ill. 60616
(212) 489-1220 Calumet 5-0200

as i see it

Proposition 13 Passes

By Gerald Johnson
The citizens of California have shown that the primary indifference by voters towards Government stems from the fact that we have too much of it. Citizens of California turned out in record numbers to demonstrate their concern about too much Government.

In an overwhelming victory Proposition 13 has found its way into California law books. The victory has caused widespread concern nationwide. Politicians everywhere are worried that this type of situation can happen in their vicinities.

To see what Proposition 13 means to the taxpayers of California, let's take an example. A taxpayer owning a \$50,000 home would pay \$1,250 a year in property taxes before Proposition 13. After the passage of Proposition 13 the same home owner will have to pay a modest \$500.

Before going into the pros and cons of Prop 13, let me say that property taxes are unfair. Unlike income taxes property taxes are based on accumulation rather than earning power. A quick example will demonstrate the point. Assume a person on an \$8,000

annual income inherits some land. If this person wanted to keep the deduction he would receive on his income tax for paying property tax is worthless, since his income tax was negligible anyway. Or we could take an older couple who is receiving social security as their only source of income. If this couple had accumulated property in their younger days, then they wouldn't be able to keep it because of the taxes. Apartment dwellers can get by without paying property taxes. The owner of the dwelling has to pay taxes. But everybody enjoys the parks, public schools, and ambulance services, and whatever at the expense of property owners. The only reason property owners bear the burden of taxes is simply because property owners are controllable. To own property you must go through yards and yards of red tape and filling out forms. This information is kept on file downtown where it is readily accessible to tax collectors. On the other hand apartment dwellers don't go through this humdrum ritual. Moreover, apartment dwellers can afford to move at a drop of hat since it



only requires grabbing up belongings and spitting. This causes another headache for city tax collectors. Consequently, homeowners must bear the burden.

Back to Prop 13. With a massive cut in Government Revenue, Government will be forced to cut back on spending. A lot of people will dislike this, but I think it is good. I can't talk about California and its cutbacks because I'm not familiar with their spending. But it goes without question that there are massive ways to cut back without losing that much. For example, here in Charlotte if the situation

occurred we could cutback without much loss in efficiency in Government.

"Snoopy" the Police helicopter is nice but it is not worth its expense. The crap in the school system with option this option that would go. The Government purchased ambulance service could be scrapped. And because most minority geared government funded programs are not worth the paper they are written on, they could be scrapped.

The point here is after balancing cost over need many programs can be scrapped. Those programs felt to be worthwhile will be picked up by the private sector.

Currently we, despite the Government for overspending and underthinking. But because taxpayers request most of the stupid programs in existence, they only spend what we ask them to. This has caused a lot of people to use the Government as a crutch. Anything somebody wants the government can deliver at the taxpayers expense of course. The private sector plays little or no role in social programs

and the Government is footing the bill and the burden of promoting socialism, and they do it inefficiently.

It is past time that Churches and Social Clubs, Fraternities and Sororities, Communities and the like, take a more positive role in providing social programs. Proposition 13 will force this on their shoulders.

The massive layoffs and cut backs currently going on in California are exaggerated. As hap-hazardly as they spend it, the California Government

is cutting back. No planning, no study to find the fat in the budget, just straight cutbacks. I don't think this is necessary.

But there will be some suffering as a result of Proposition 13. But this is necessary in order to reverse our current course.

If the tax revolt continues then in 10 years we might be able to balance the budget. As the heading in the observer neatly put it: How do Americans spell relief: T-A-X-C-U-T.

Handicapped Driver's Mobility Guide

Handicapped drivers can now find the resources they need for mobility with a new Carolina Motor Club directory. "The Handicapped Driver's Mobility Guide."

The 78page directory lists and describes more than 500 transportation services for handicapped drivers, including driving schools, manufacturers of handicapped driving aids, and resource publications.

Copies of the directory are available for \$1 including postage. Those interested in re-

ceiving a copy should write "Mobility Guide," c/o Carolina Motor Club, P.O. Box 600, Charlotte, N.C. 28230.

