

Editorials & Comments

Blacks Need Economic Control

by Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.
Post Staff Writer

Black business may be doomed because it has failed to fully understand the range and scope of minority economic development. We make this observation after concluding that one of major weaknesses of blacks in their struggle for political and economic equality is their lack for control, that is, little decision-making authority in financial and business institutions.

Black Charlotteans have made some progress in securing public office and public jobs and they are getting better positions in business and industry. Furthermore, more and more black youths are graduating from high school and college and considerable advances have been made in the professions of law, education, medicine and real estate.

However, in the words of the PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE, "the dominating influence in...any major American city, is business. Those who control the business call the shots. Contractors, big industrialists...chain store operators...make the big money and control the political machines which elect presidents, senators, governors, mayors and judges."

All other ethnic groups which have suffered prejudice in the past have somehow overcome such adversity to a greater extent than blacks. Cubans in Miami, Puerto Ricans in New York City, and even the relative newcomers, the Vietnamese, in other cities have overcome economic prejudice to a much greater degree than Blacks. Furthermore, while recognizing that these and other ethnic groups-Catholics, Italians and the Irish-suffered far less from prejudice than did Blacks, they nevertheless used a common denominator to scale the barriers of prejudice.

The common denominator these groups used is money, along with the presumed advantage that some have with white skin. Yet, it has been only in relatively recent years that Americans were unbaisted enough to elect a Catholic as president of the U.S., a Jew as a senator and an Italian as a mayor.

Blacks too have been elected to public office as a U.S. Senate (one), mayors, city councilmen, commis-

ioners, many state level offices and some have received cabinet appointments.

Nearly all of these minority groups except Blacks, appear to control substantial business interests. For example, government estimates indicate that the nation's 11 percent black population controls not more than one percent of the nation's business. (Other non-white minority groups comprise six percent of the population and control three percent of the nation's business). Furthermore, millions of dollars have been spent in Charlotte (and other cities) for new shopping malls, motels, highways, schools and other needs, yet few of these dollars have gone into the bank accounts of Black business people. Why? The answer in part is in the fact that there are not more than one or two black contractors with sufficient capital to compete and perform the work required. How many local contractors, for example, will be fully prepared to bid successfully on contracts for the \$47 million airport terminal project that Charlotte is about to begin?

We believe it is time for Blacks to awaken and establish contracting business to sufficient size through joint venture programs so that they can benefit by the many public projects our local government spend money on. It is part time for Black businesses to broaden their economies and become more competitive. Restricting themselves to the Black consumers' needs or competing for only the small contracting jobs limits potential and curtails Black economic development. The goals of Black business should be a bigger slice of the economic pie each year now.

In this some regard The CHARLOTTE POST is endeavoring to expand its new coverage to cover all aspects of the news. However, while expanding, The Post will continue its mission and responsibility to the Black community. That is, The Post shall continue its commitment to serve as a medium discrimination that oppresses Blacks and other minorities. Yet, the success of this effort will depend on the rate and progress of black economic development. Support Black business and support yourself.

Competency Tests In Perspective

In a Post story last week the Coalition for Quality Education denounced the proposed teacher competency test plan as detrimental to education in North Carolina. This assumption is compatible to many of the charges that similar tests will be harmful to youth and especially Black youth.

Because of the emotional reactions that competency test are generating, we are beginning to wonder whether the issue is being placed in

perspective before condemning its usefulness as an educational tool.

The use of such tests is, in our view relevant as a questionable educational tool only to the extent that they do not accurately measure what students have been exposed to, taught and have learned.

Therefore, the Post believes that efforts should be made to assure all concerned about quality education that competency test are a true and fair measure of what has been taught.



Political Junk Food

By Bayard Rustin
Special To The Post

Confusion rather than accurate information is the product of most modern advertising. If you plan to market a non-nutritious breakfast cereal, you simply emphasize that each morsel is sugar-coated, shaped like personal zodiac signs and enjoyed worldwide by Olympic athletes. By stressing these inconsequential points, attention is cleverly diverted from the most pertinent fact—the cereal is worthless junk.

Just as corporations have successfully marketed junk foods, junk cars, and other junk products, some business-supported groups are now selling junk political ideas. Foremost among these Cracker Jack proposals are the so-called "right-to-work" laws, the original political junk food. While appearing to offer job security and full employment, "right-to-work" laws offer neither. Instead, they are intentionally designed to weaken unions, lower wages, and keep workers in their place. All this is accomplished by imposing a compulsory "open shop," even when a majority of workers democratically opt for union representation.

Essentially, the open shop arrangement—favored by employers since trade unions emerged over a century ago—allows a few workers—the free riders—to enjoy all the benefits of collective bargaining without paying a cent toward the upkeep of their union. Such an unfair system necessarily militates against the development of strong unions, and provides the employer with numerous advantages. By deliberately and repeatedly confusing the issues, "right-to-work" forces have scored some key victories during the last two years.

In Arkansas, for instance, they successfully blocked a spirited attempt to repeal that state's compulsory open shop law. And in Louisiana they passed legislation outlawing all forms of union security clauses. Now, the business-supported National Right-To-Work Committee has opened shop in Missouri with the hope of selling its sugar-coated, but hazardous proposals. Fortunately, many key black leaders in Missouri and across the country fully understand that a victory for "right-to-work" could very well spell disaster for the black community, economically as well as politically.

For black people, the economic consequences are especially clear. As numerous studies have shown, black union members earn substantially more than non-union blacks. In 1974, for example, the median weekly income of black union members was \$169, while non-union blacks received only \$124—a difference of more than a third. By weakening unions through compulsory open shop laws, the economic security of thousands upon thousands of black union members will be jeopardized.

To sweeten the bitter economic impact of "right-to-work" laws, their leading proponents assert that "union free" states and localities quickly attract business investment which creates more jobs. The facts, however, tell a different story. A few years ago, the former Governor of Kansas—one of the 20 "right-to-work" states—claimed that such laws actually discourage industrial development. Furthermore Professor Daniel H. Pollitt of the University of North Carolina concluded that a variety of studies "indicate

that right-to-work states have not received more than their proportionate share of a new industry, and that the enactment of right-to-work laws is in no way responsible for the increase in non-farm employment."

While business groups supporting "right-to-work" efforts claim to be solely concerned with "protecting the freedom of their employees," they are, in reality seeking to protect their own freedom—to fire workers at will, to pay low wages and to keep fringe benefits minimal. Moreover, they also seek to neutralize labor as a political force by weakening unions in the shops.

At the political level, then, "right-to-work" is also a challenge to the black community. If these deceptive proposals—favorites of the New Right—win approval in Missouri or any other state we can expect a lengthy parade of other conservative measures, such as cuts in school budgets, reductions in desperately needed social services, and "tax reforms" that aid the rich. In short, another "right-to-work" victory, especially this year, will further encourage the peddlers of political junk food.

Black Mayor

The National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. (NCBM) is the recipient of an Action grant, according to Michelle D. Kourouma, executive director.

The grant of \$18,595 will enable the organization to conduct a four-month Rural Intern Program, that will have an impact on five rural municipalities in five states where administrative staff capability is lacking.

The organization's national office is located in Atlanta, Ga.

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

TO BE EQUAL

Housing Counseling

One of the gaps in the Administration's urban policy is the lack of adequate provision for housing counseling.

Housing programs are too often seen only as bricks and mortar affairs. Inadequate thought is given to the needs of families and the necessity to make information and counseling available to them.

This has been a major cause of the failure of many federal housing programs. Several years ago, for example, the government launched a massive program to enable low-income families to buy homes. Because housing counseling was not built into that program, it failed.

People with inadequate information were led into commitments they were unprepared for by unscrupulous speculators who made fortunes while the government had to swallow billions of dollars worth of mortgage defaults and poor people had their dreams of home ownership destroyed.

There has always been a gap between the intent of federal programs and the delivery of their services to the people who need them. Where social programs have been successful they have been characterized by involvement of community organizations and the provision of counseling.

But that experience has largely been ignored in the housing component of the urban policy. Federal job programs rely heavily on counseling services. Recruiting and training programs in the urban policy have strong counseling elements.

But housing counseling services are not considered integral to federal housing assistance programs or to private housing benefits stimulated by federal community development activities.

That's a mistake, and it may wind up hurting the success of those programs. It would be unfortunate if, in trying to save the small amounts a housing services component would cost, a massive program fails to accomplish its ends.

The experience with the massive mortgage defaults of the early 1970s has led to a program of counseling defaulted mortgagors of federally insured home loans. The government rightly concluded that the cost of such counseling would be far less than the costs to the government of foreclosing such loan.

But that lesson has not been applied to other housing programs. The government can build on the proven positive experience of the more than 500 housing counseling agencies in the nation. They've developed techniques of comprehensive housing counseling services that work with people to deal with their basic concerns about housing and employment opportunities.

Those neighborhood agencies are recognized and supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Neighborhoods, Voluntary Associations and Consumer Protection. So the machinery, both federal and local, is in place. Its up to the government to use it properly.

The government should meet the demand for comprehensive housing counseling services and make it an integral part of federal housing policies.

Our New Day Begun

Farber's Day In Court

After spending 27 days in jail for refusing to obey a judge's blanket order to turn over his notes to the court, Myron Farber finally got his day in court along with his employer, the New York Times, which had paid a total of \$110,000 in fines.

True. Ample examples exist of cases where the poor unfortunate accused have had to serve time before a hearing or trial. Thousands of poor people who have been unable to post bail find themselves frequently in predicaments somewhat similar to Farber's dilemma.

At the heart of the Farber case is the right of a reporter or publication to protect news sources. Without news sources, a reporter's ability to ferret out news and conduct the type of investigations that Farber was involved in would be seriously damaged. It is hardly likely that there would have been the revelations of Watergate or of other actions of gross misconducts by public officials were those being investigated able to demand to see the reporter's notes before now.

But there is an important difference. Far from avoiding the issue of ordinary criminal detention, we feel that the

question involved in the Farber case needs to be examined closely in a different light. For one involves the right of due process and prolonged incarceration without the right of habeas corpus, while the other involves First Amendment violations of free speech as well as similar imprisonment without a hearing.

The American public should therefore be very alarmed over the growing trend of courts and prosecutors to seek out sources of information or to use journalists to conduct the type of investigations that Farber was involved in to conduct their criminal investigation for them.

Only last May the U.S. Supreme Court, in effect, sanctioned this trend. It ruled five to three that policemen with warrants can make unannounced searches of newsrooms to gather criminal evidence. In the opinion of the Court, Justice Byron R. White wrote, "The critical element in a reasonable search is not that the owner of the property is suspected of crime but that here is reasonable cause to believe that specific 'things' to be searched for and seized are located on the property."



Given this type of blanket license, it was really not surprising that New Jersey Supreme Court Judge Theodore Trautwein indefinitely sentenced Farber to the Bergen County jail and fined The Times for not turning over the reporter's notes to a lower court judge. Farber's investigative reporting into a series of mysterious deaths in 1965 and 1966 at the Oradell, N.J. hospital had led prosecutors to reopen their investigation.

As a result, Dr. Mario Jascalevich was indicted for allegedly injecting patients with lethal doses of the muscle relaxant curare. His lawyers subpoenaed Farber's notes, claiming that they might con-

tain information useful to his client's defense.

The reporter and newspaper, however, refused the order of trial Judge William Arnold to turn over these documents to him so that he might decide whether any of the notes were relevant to the defense. What many people found especially troubling about this order was that it did not specify what documents were needed.

Our Knowledge Of Medicine Has Increased

Our knowledge of medicine, and all of science for that matter, has increased greatly in the last century. But there are times when we take this information explosion for granted and assume that we have always known these things. Sometimes it is interesting to look back at medical folklore to see how far we really have come.

While some of this medical folklore is amusing and quaint some of it was remarkably accurate. For example, the Indians of South America used to chew fever-curing Peruvian bark to treat malaria. Today we use refined quinine derived from the same source. For heart trouble, the English brewed a tea made of the leaves and flower of the fox-

glove. Today, we use digitalis refined from this plant. There is, perhaps, no more fertile area of folklore than pregnancy and child-birth. Mothers used to be prohibited from painting and decorating while pregnant. This was a real and useful warning because paint in those days contained a great deal of white lead and turpentine. The lead was truly dangerous and turpentine was nauseating unpleasant.

Paints today contain very little of either white lead or turpentine to the expectant mother can paint all she wants, even the walls. Contrary to general belief, there is no danger to her in stretching. Nor is there any danger of her causing twists of knots in a

shield law protect the confidentiality of the reporter's news source.

Significantly New Jersey Attorney General John Degnan agreed and urged the State Supreme Court to take jurisdiction of the case.

This the court did, and in a seven to zero decision which should be applauded, released Farber and stayed the fines earlier this month.

A popular treatment for whooping cough consisted of passing the patient through a horse collar three times.



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