

Editorials & Comments

Vote "No" For At Large Council

The opponents of district representation have used the unjustifiable argument that districting would lead to corrupt ward politics, less qualified candidates and lengthy conflict-oriented Council sessions. None of these fears have proven to be true.

These opponents also argue that the citizenry-at-large does not have the opportunity to vote for the majority of the Council members. This is a narrow-minded view of government, practical and consistent only for a town with a few hundred people. American democracy in any city of substantial size, and certainly at the state and national government levels, the citizenry at large does not vote for the majority of the elected bodies. The Congress of the United States is composed of 100 Senators, two elected from each of the 50 states. It is also composed of 498 Representatives, elected on a district proportional representation, population basis from within the same 50 states. Most of the 50 state governments have a similar lawmaking body composed of people elected from the state's district or counties.

Significantly, the districting concept at the national, state, county and city levels is designed to provide Mr. Average Citizen with a greater voice in his government either as a candidate for office or as a voter for a candidate who now, understands and can respond to the voters' concerns.

We need to be reminded that in the 1979 elections the real winner was district representation. While we had heated and spirited campaigns in Districts 4 and 5 with the incumbents as winners, three of the seven district representatives were unopposed in their reelection bids and the other four incumbents captured 58, 63, 71 and 79 percent of the

votes in their respective districts. This is significant, too, in that it proves the voters rejected the charge of some that districting has led to chaos in government with districting overshadowing the broader needs of the city.

These facts should remind the citizenry that districting is working and that they have demonstrated their faith in the system by their votes.

Finally, on April 28, you, the voters will be asked to vote on whether you want to return to a seven-member at-large City Council. This is an indirect way of expressing support for or against district representation. It means, too, that you must vote NO on the ballot in order to support district representation. The NO vote is important because of the way the ballot is worded which is as follows:

"Shall the petition proposing that the Charlotte City Council consist of seven members, and that all candidates for the Council be nominated and elected by all the qualified voters of the city be approved?"

Districting is not a black-white issue as some have attempted to say. It is, however, an economic issue because more potential candidates can qualify and afford the cost of seeking public office. Equally important, district Council members are certainly more responsive to electorate and more aware of their concerns.

Therefore, districting is a system that will continue to allow EACH VOTER to vote for four at-large Council members and one district candidate. A NO vote on April 28 will contribute to continuing the present 7-4 makeup of City Council which has given us good government.

Vote "NO" in order to retain our district representation system. You need good government, help let it continue.

Vote "Yes" For Bonds

In addition to the district representation issue, the April 28 referendum calls for the voters to decide on \$53.9 million in general obligation bonds for improvements in our city.

While there has been comparatively little said about the bond request, we feel it is important that citizens be knowledgeable about what they are being asked to support and why.

The bond request is designed to make a good Charlotte a better Charlotte. In more specific terms this means a better transit system, improvements in our streets, more sidewalks, more school zones, sewer and water improvements, an uptown parking garage, land purchases for a Performing Arts Center and a new coliseum, and additional museum facilities.

Undoubtedly, one of the more

exciting parts of the bond package is in the proposed new transit mall to be located on Tryon Street stretching from Stonewall Street on the south to Eighth Street on the north. Sidewalks will be widened, bus transfer points will be relocated and more shelters, landscaping and benches to make the areas more comfortable and attractive for bus patrons, will become a part of the uptown scene. Considering the thousands of daily bus riders, many of whom are black, this mall will be a pleasing addition to uptown Charlotte. Furthermore, 50 new buses will be included in the bond package for use on the mall.

This should give you some idea of one bond issue item you are being asked to support.

Next week more on other bond proposals.

TEAMWORK CAN STOP DIS-INTEGRATION OF THE BLACK COMMUNITIES



"While the rising incidence of crime has been a source of embarrassment to many black leaders, far too many have remained ambivalent toward the problem. Perhaps through fear of providing comfort to racists masquerading behind a mask of law and order, I recognize these risks. But I also recognize an even greater risk that blacks themselves may confuse the right of black people to protest their unsatisfactory condition in the United States with the opportunity for criminals to prey on exposed citizens."

-Dr. Andrew E. Brimmer

Like it really is

Ways To Achieve World Peace

Some folks have written to express shockingly, similar sentiments: That I please not dwell so much on unpleasant subjects such as war and global annihilation. Others have said I "pick on" Acting President Ray-gun too much, and one went so far as to bluntly state that Reagan "hasn't started one single war."

Well, he hasn't not on the international plane...not yet.

And finally, one fellow wrote in last week to say that I'm just an alarmist. An alarmist? Let me quickly relieve you of the notion that it would give me any kind of pleasure to be vindicated as this man dodges radioactive fallout.

I wonder if Noah felt this way when he delivered his final weather forecast from the Ark? As for those Reaganites who think I pick on the acting president, I guess I'm just forced to realize that there are those who worship the ground Reagan has his head buried in.

As if I wasn't feeling irritated enough after reading this batch of mail, I got a long distance call from my brother, a sergeant in the Army for more years than I can remember, who unfailingly raises my fighting spirit when he indulges his Army fighting spirit conversation. He's only a drill instructor, but he's been around.

He revealed no secrets, of course, but I know my expression must have become increasingly grim as he told me of "our" complex and elaborate defense program, our early warning system, our lines of communication, and our enormously ingenious means of anticipating a sudden nuclear attack. Nothing secret, nothing in detail, just a broad outline and its vast ramifications.

Talking with him of such things never makes me feel very safe, but plenty sorry. The contrast is so appallingly great between our

technical ingenuity and our lack of machinery for keeping--and holding--the peace.

++++

If one-fiftieth of the brains and funds and time and energy the nations of the world put into devising ways to kill would be put into devising ways to achieve world peace, we would all be well on the way to a solution of current international difficulties. Why ought so much of our intelligence and cunning and resources go toward creating a war apparatus, and so little toward the common problems that face the race: food and shelter and disease and population explosions and economic justice?

It's not enough to blame the Soviets for this current impasse, as Alexander Haig keeps trying to do. Long before Communism was even a word, nations behaved in the same manner. Exactly the same manner, but with different manners. Nuclear manners today, y'all.

The difference in these times - the dismal and depressing difference - is that we now have the scientific and technological ability to provide a means of decent habitation, and subsistence, for most of the rest of the world. Imagine what tens of billions spent for arms could mean in terms of productivity in every corner of the globe!

The problem extends far beyond mere politics. It's the central moral problem of humanity, of survival itself. You have no doubt seen the television and newspaper coverage of the survivalist groups cropping up all over the country. Have they given up?

++++

Are we to perish wholly, because we mobilized our vast resources for annihilation and not for creation: Is it the ultimate irony of the human race that we deliberately use our wealth and skill and

intelligence for mutual destruction?

And this problem, cannot be solved at the political level; it can only be solved at the moral and spiritual level, only when enough people stand up as individuals to protest against this lunatic betrayal of the human race.

How can we invest such magnificent machines, devise such brilliant technical systems, cooperate in such magnanimous scientific ventures, and yet fail to use any of our God-given reason to construct a world order that is sane, just, and truly civilized?

There have always been paradoxes. We're conditioned to laugh at those thought of as "the backward nations."

We snicker at the African who beats a drum to ward off evil spirits, while Americans blow a horn to break up a traffic jam. When Native Americans and Africans wear paint on their

Africans wear paint on their faces, some of us laugh; but not at the American woman with her face all painted like a Dali mural, and isn't she dressed to kill? No savage has ever dropped an atomic bomb on anybody.

Our means are miracles of ingenuity, and our ends are barbarous remnants of prehistoric times. We are now living in the most crushing paradox of history.

And it may be the last one.

Urban Designer

Kevin Lynch, renowned urban designer, will be in Charlotte in early May to study the built environment of this City.

He will make a public presentation at McKnight Hall on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) on May 7, at 8 p.m.

For further information, contact the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission at 332-2726.

From Capitol Hill

Reagan's African Policy Empediment To Black Liberation

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post
President Reagan is asking Congress to repeal the Clarke Amendment, which prevents the President from taking any military action in Angola without consent of Congress. When White House Press Secretary Jim Brady was asked

if Mr. Reagan is planning to support the forces of South African-baked UNITA that are trying to overthrow the Angolan government, the response was that no African policy has been formulated, but the President just wanted his hands untied by the Clarke Amendment.

Recently four South African military officials came to the United States. However, the State Department which had to grant them visas, denied having any knowledge that they were officials and it was reported that there was no meeting with them. Yet, it has been learned that United Nations ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick met with some of them. The Congressional Black Caucus is calling for



Alfreda L. Madison

her dismissal. These recent events make the House African Affairs committee's hearings that are presently being held, very timely.

The committee is concentrating on a specific phase of the African situation, each day of the several days' hearings. The hearings began with the refugee problem. Representative Wolpe, the chairman, stated that public officials and the media have focused greatly on the Indo-Chinese refugees, Haitian boat people and Afghanistans refugees, but very little

attention has been given to the African refugees. According to the United Nations report, just about half of all the world's refugees are in Africa. Civil strife and drought in the various African countries are the main causes of the huge refugee population. Notwithstanding, the tremendous number of African refugees as compared with Asian refugee problems in fiscal 1981, the United States government requested only \$54 million for Africans and \$324 million for Asian refugees. This is approximately \$28 per African capita and an excess of \$300 per capita for Asians.

Several witnesses who have visited the countries that make up the Horn of Africa reported on the homeless, ill from malnutrition, and starving men, women and children. These witnesses stated that, even in the midst of these deplorable conditions, the African people moved about with dignity, and created and sang inspirational songs. It was strongly emphasized

that a deep concern for humanity will alleviate world hunger. A year ago American attention was focused on starvation in Cambodia, the people mobilized and dispelled hunger there. The nation's attention on East Africa's condition can be alleviated by the same method.

The Reagan Administration's aid to African countries has been pronounced by Secretary of State Haig who said the United States' national security is the determining factor. This security is based upon the Administration's perception of Soviet and Cuban participation in African affairs.

Administration authorities stated that the President cut appropriations to Africa in the budget cutting process. Some African countries that requested aid have been refused because the Administration has determined that their policy situation is not conducive to American aid.

The committee said that request for repeal of Clarke Amendment, at this time,

Affirmative Action

Black Political Power?

For those concerned about the political future of Blacks, these are clearly times that try souls. First of all, there are the statistics that chronicle the continuing underrepresentation. A recent study by the Joint Center for Political Studies shows that Blacks while constituting an estimated 12 percent of the population hold only 1 percent of the elected posts. Moreover, most of these posts were not high in the corridors of power but mostly at the municipal level; indeed, nearly half are at this level.

That this lack of political power has manifold consequences has long been known to many. Take such a basic issue as tax assessments of property. In Philadelphia, for example, it has been an open scandal for some time now that the Board of Revision of Taxes (BRT) tends to tax property in "certain neighborhoods" higher than others. Property owners, unable to pay soaring tax bills, sell their homes for a song often to those with close connections to the BRT, who then re-sell it at a dramatic profit -- often to young white professionals trying to beat the cost of commuting by moving back to the inner city. So goes the process of "gentrification" so familiar in many large cities, which is creating a new class of "Black nomads." But the point is that lack of political power is at the root of this problem.

The same holds true for mass transit. While inner city buses, street cars, subways, etc., often are filthy, breakdown frequently and have less room than cattle do in cattle-cars, commuter trains that run from the suburbs to the downtown area are spic-and-span, uncrowded and generally the antithesis of inner city transportation. Prof. John Pucher of the Department of Urban Planning at Rutgers University in a recent study has confirmed this notion. His figures demonstrate that riders of inner city transportation receive an average of subsidy of 78 cents per ride from government subsidies, while mostly white commuters received a hefty \$1.53 subsidy per ride. Again, one sees lack of political power at the root of this problem.

Further, there are ominous signs on the horizon that do not auger well for the growth of Black political power. The census, which is taken every year, is used to determine apportionment of the House of Representatives and state legislatures. A suit had been brought to delay the release of the figures; it had been maintained, inter alia, that Blacks and other minorities had been "undercounted." Justice Thurgood Marshall of the United States Supreme Court agreed, stating that minorities would suffer an "irreparable injury" if the figures were released. But his prescient words were overridden as the Court ruled 7-1 that population figures should be released. Already there is talk about how the seats of the Congressional Black Caucus members, e.g., William Clay, Charles Rangel, et. al., may now be in jeopardy because of a decline in the Black population of their districts. Gerrymandering, or the deliberate drawing of districts to dilute the power of some and maximize that of others, has long been a familiar tool in this country and is expected to become even more prevalent during the 1980s.

The outline of the dream of Thurgood and Company is apparent -- a return to the bleak post-plantation days where none are "bound to respect" Black rights.

Administration's sending of arms to Morocco immediately after Algeria had arranged the release of the hostages was a slap in the face to Algeria. Especially since it was unnecessary for the United States to remind Algeria that its help is resolving the Iran crisis gained it nothing by way of change in U.S. policy on the Western Sahara.

Former Ambassador Uric Hayes said that arms sales to Morocco should be restricted against use in Western Sahara. U.S. should support organizations that call for a peaceful solution and that the Polisario should be included in any negotiations. Since the Algerians support the Polisario movement, Representative Crockett is commenting on the State Department's maintaining that it is neutral in the Moroccan situation said, "The Department is not using common sense when it is selling arms to one side and trying to give the impression that it is a friend to both sides."

THE CHARLOTTE POST
Second Class Postage No. 965500
"THE PEOPLE'S NEWSPAPER"
Established 1918
Published Every Thursday
by The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.
1524 West Blvd., Charlotte, N.C. 28208
Telephone (704) 376-0496
Circulation 9,200

62 Years of Continuous Service

Bill Johnson...Editor, Publisher
Bernard Reeves...General Manager
Fran Farrer...Advertising Director
Wayne Long...Circulation Manager
Dannette Gaither...Office Manager

Second Class Postage No. 96550 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 become the property of the POST
and will not be returned.

National Advertising
Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
2400 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, Ill. 60616 Calumet 5-0200
45 W. 45th St., Suite 1493 New York, N.Y. 10036 (212) 489-1220