

# Editorials & Comments

## Blueprint For Black Elderly Survivor

(Reprint from The Philadelphia Tribune)  
They refused to move to the back of the bus, they marched in Selma and they joined the Great Man who said, "I have a dream."

They supported their schools and churches and protected their families through the ravages of the Great Depression, and took pride when their heavyweight champion and Olympic Gold Medal winner reduced the super race minions to worldwide derision. And they went off to work in the shipyards and factories, to fight and die on the battlefields and islands to defeat fascism on two continents.

They were the poets, artists, writers, philosophers, historians, musicians, scholars, doctors, scientists and theologians. They acted, taught, sang and created, and then went off to fight and die in the War to End All Wars. And they returned to a country of roaring laughter, outlawed liquor, the Charleston and the Ku Klux Klan.

Some remember the bitter years when "Free At Last" changed to "Separate But Equal," but all remember the joys, the sadness, the struggles and the achievements.

They are the living legacy of Black history - the four million Black elderly. They have been called the strength and the pillar, the wisdom and the steady hand through troubled times. They are also the poorest among us.

The most recent census figures show that two out of every five Blacks over the age of 65 lived in dire poverty in 1980. This is the highest number of poor older Blacks since the government started keeping poverty figures. Worse, the percentage of poor elderly Blacks is increasing, up five percent in the past two years.

## Popular Myths

Contrary to the popular myths about the Black extended family, more than 74 percent of all Black elderly live alone, or are the heads of households, although they can no longer sustain or obtain regular or full-time employment.

More than 50 percent of Black elderly housing is substandard. In rural areas, where 45 percent of the Black elderly reside, 85 percent of the housing is substandard. Another 30 to 40 percent of the Black elderly reside in urban, substandard housing.

The Black elderly suffer illnesses and die earlier than do their white counterparts. Life expectancy for Black males is but 64.7 years, not long enough to collect social security. Black females have a life expectancy of 72 years. For white males and

females, life expectancy is 72 and 77 years, respectively.

More than 40 percent of elderly Blacks have unmet health care needs. Chronic illnesses that especially plague older Blacks, such as arthritis, diabetes and hypertension, are not covered by Medicare.

Crime is the number one fear of the Black elderly. They are victims of theft, mugging and abuse. More than 35 percent of victims of Black-on-Black crime are Black elderly, often in their own homes. In addition, Black elderly are special targets for terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party.

Social services for the Black elderly are underused and poorly delivered. Less than 50 percent of all those Black older persons eligible for programs such as food stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, housing assistance or emergency energy assistance actually use them.

To add to these woes is the current national policy of retrenchment which will reduce even further the meager services available to these, the most frail, the most vulnerable among us.

This is not the first time in our history that Black Americans have faced the harsh realities of cutbacks, of suffering what Dr. Benjamin Hooks calls "taking from the needy and giving to the greedy."

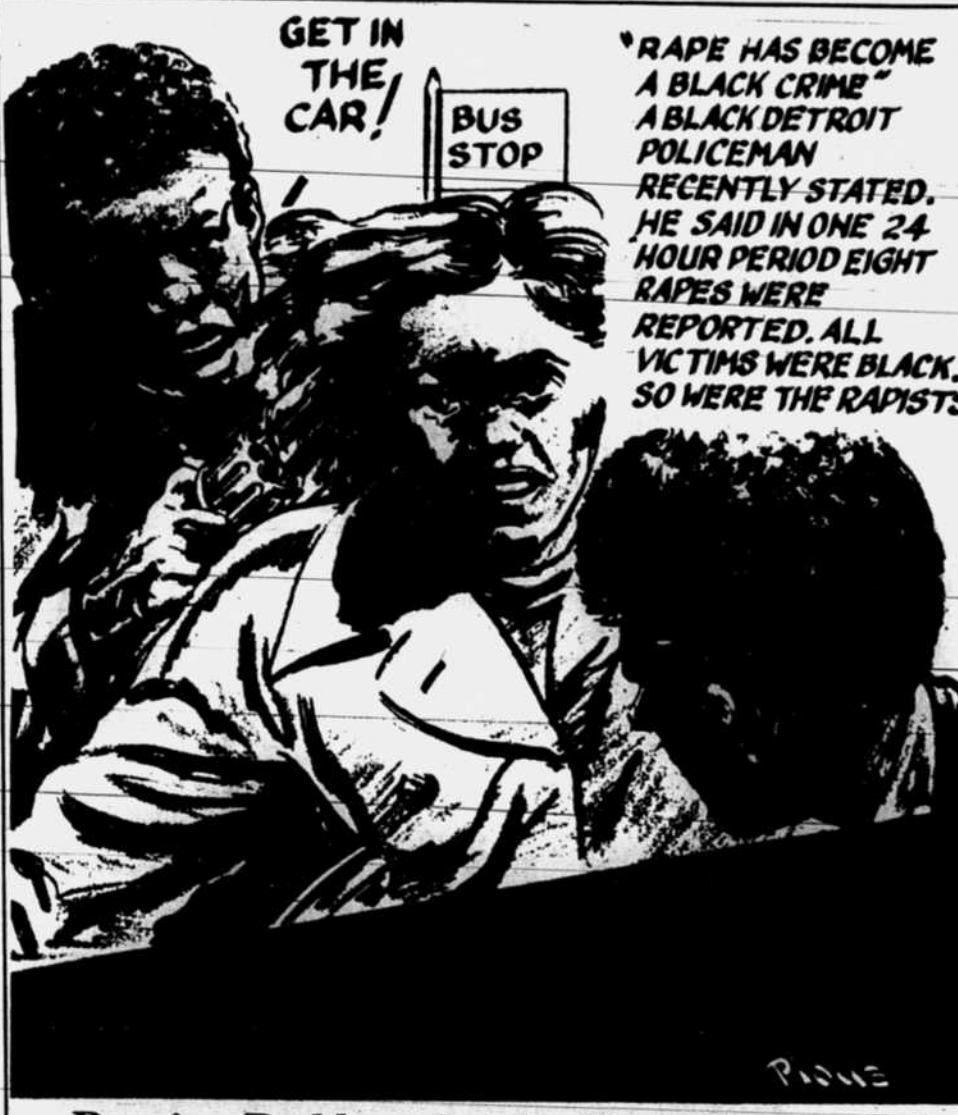
## Help Our Own

As we have done in the past, we will do again - help our own. For the past 10 years since it was founded by the late Hobart C. Jackson Sr., the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged (NCBA) has been the only Black aging organization in the forefront of the struggle for adequate services, legislation, recognition and protection of the rights and entitlements of all older Americans, and continues to deliver programs to the Black elderly.

NCBA conducts research and designs, develops and implements demonstration models for improving services to the Black elderly. NCBA specializes in various types of housing, employment, health, physical security and social service programs for the elderly.

NCBA provides skills, management and training for staffs of local organizations, and provides assistance in establishing and upgrading gerontological training programs in historically Black colleges.

NCBA has a blueprint for survival for older Blacks, but without people and their organizations, without hard work and struggle, without commitment and unity, the "least among us" will perish.



Pressing Problems In The Black Community

"RAPE HAS BECOME A BLACK CRIME" A BLACK DETROIT POLICEMAN RECENTLY STATED. HE SAID IN ONE 24 HOUR PERIOD EIGHT RAPES WERE REPORTED. ALL VICTIMS WERE BLACK. SO WERE THE RAPISTS



## Tony Brown's Comments

## Another Look At Black Self-Help

I'm sure it's safe to say that there are not many poor blacks who are looking forward to Reaganomics or its effects. But short of denying reality, strict budget cuts will hit the nation's poor the hardest - most of whom are black - and the upcoming economic setbacks will have to be dealt with by those affected.

Solutions to the economic problems of Afro-Americans should come from a philosophy that is, first, sensitive to the needs of the black community. One such came to my attention while preparing to film one of my documentaries.

Mr. Robert Clemons is senior economist for an organization called Economic Solutions. He is now in the process of publishing a booklet entitled "Black Reaganomics," a well-written report which has, as a bottom line remedy to black economic survival, self-help. Mr. Clemons is also a resource person for the Assembly Republican Task Force on Enterprise Zones and former lecturer at Brooklyn College.

In his booklet, Mr. Clemons points out the fact that the effects of President Reagan's policy on Blacks will, perhaps, be greater than they should be and that the administration has made it clear that Blacks can no longer look at their problems as separate from the rest of the nation.

In identifying these problems, he refers to com-

ments the President made about the black community's inability to turn over the dollar five or six times before it goes into the general economy. This statement, Clemons says, points a finger at everyone from the white suppliers to the black consumers.

However, he feels that part of the problem stems from an attitude among blacks. "I believe that black consumers actually demand a touch of whiteness and white affluence in their households. They try to produce a climate of so-called white culture by their household production functions. What black people need is demand management to make sure black suppliers survive. Then, supply management provided by the administration will help black Americans approach equilibrium. We would be able to put that 140B dollars of consumption to economic development uses." What this means in everyday language is that because of self-hatred, blacks shy away from the services of black lawyers, black doctors, black accountants, black dentists, etc.

Clemons' report goes on to stress the need for a balanced bi-partisanship, politically and philosophically, among blacks. In other words, his ideal would see blacks as 50 percent Democrat and 50 percent Republican, and in each party, 50 percent Liberal and 50 percent Conservative. This, he says,

By Rev. John Perkins

## Walk Your Talk

## Restoring Dignity

In the 60s we were tearing down laws. A revolution was needed to overthrow the laws that for decades had dehumanized a dignified race of people.

Our people were enslaved; we were made plantation people. We were taught that we were inferior. Then we were forced to live in dehumanizing, segregated ghettos. Our lack of worth was enforced by the laws of the land.

The worst thing is that we came to believe that we actually were inferior. This psychological damage caused us to turn against one another and see our people as worthless.

I remember the tragedy of the 60s: that as we struggled to overthrow dehumanizing laws, many of our people resisted. Because of their psychological damage, their inferior mentality, they failed to welcome hope.

The tragedy was passed on to the younger generation in another form. These young people grew up in the midst of revolution. They saw around them the breaking of laws, without understanding that the laws were being broken not for the sake of lawlessness but in order to bring about justice. Because they failed to understand that each person's real dignity and worth is fulfilled in obedience to Jesus Christ, they became lawless. The result has been even greater indignity for the Black community - immorality, crime, drugs, prostitution.

Now there is a desperate need for the church to reach these young people with the restoring power of Jesus Christ. We need to show them the dignity of knowing they were made in the image of God and help them become godly by acquiring a spiritual and moral base through Christ's redemption. As the Scripture says, "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." (I Corinthians 15:49).

The church also needs to help these young people gain some sort of practical education. These practical skills will translate into social and economic development for the Black community. Together with their spiritual rebirth, these young people will then be able to have a creative impact on the community.

How are we as the church going to reach these young people?

First we have to gain a new understanding of what the church is supposed to be. We have it set in our minds that what we have now is already a church. But what we call a church today is often a basically different reality than what Scripture tells us a church should be.

Scripture tells us that a church is made up of people who have joined their lives to Jesus Christ. Their love and commitment to God expresses itself in a love and commitment to one another and a desire to reach out to the needs of the people within their community.

It is this love and commitment of Christians to God and one another that creates a true church. Such a church will then be able to reach out to the needs of the young people in the Black community, offering hope, dignity and new life.

## From Capitol Hill

# Senate Sank To New Low In Civil Rights Commitment

By Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post

The Civil War is beginning all over again by Senate strippers. They are so bent on a set back to civil rights and, in a real true sense, a resurrection of legalized segregation with accommodation to the racist elements in this nation that they are willing to strip the Constitution and Federal Courts of their powers.

To have listened to the argument on the Senate floor by proponents of the Helms-Johnston school busing bill, one questions whether or not these Senators took their oath to uphold the Constitution, seriously, or just as a mere formality. The bill which was attached, extraneously, to an appropriations bill, states that children cannot be forced to ride a bus past a neighborhood school for a distance beyond five miles or a fifteen minute period of time. It also requires school systems which have already instituted their remedies for equal education opportunities, and where the system is working well, to change their



Alfreda L. Madison

schools to fit this new law. It prohibits the Federal Courts from enforcing the Constitution on school busing.

Senator Bennett Johnston of Louisiana one of the authors of the amendment stated that the majority of whites and blacks are against forced busing. He overlooked the fact that the Supreme Court in the Mecklenburg County, North Carolina case decided that school busing could be used as a remedy. His and Jesse Helms' bills ignore the Supreme Court's remedy. Everyone knows that the busing remedy in Mecklenburg County is working, marvelously.

Senator Johnston spoke of two studies; Armour

Study and the Coleman Study as undisputed proof for dismantling this civil rights remedy. Senator Weicker called his attention to the fact that there are studies that show just the opposite.

Even though the American Bar Association and State Supreme Court judges from all 50 states denounce this Senate action as unconstitutional, along with many outstanding constitutional lawyers and civil rights organizations; all were ignored by the Senate civil rights strippers.

Lengthy arguments pursued between Senator Johnston one of the bill's authors and Senators Weicker and Levin its opponents, over lack of a preponderance of evidence which proves the ineffectiveness of busing. Senator Weicker spoke of this busing bill, the attempt to water down the Voting Rights Act, reduced funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the firing of Civil Rights Director Arthur Fleming as an absolute route taken by the Senate to turn back civil rights.

In a conversation with Senator Johnston, he stated that his knowledge of the majority of people against busing was taken from an NBC poll. When he was asked about the Harris poll which stated just the opposite, he said he didn't give much credence to that. The Senator emphasized his very strong commitment to civil rights and that he is one of the sponsors of the Voting Rights Act. Yet, being committed to civil rights and against methods that accomplish these rights, really have no civil rights value. If he is for extending the Voting Rights Act as it came out of the House, that's one civil rights measure that he endorses, but Mr. Johnston must realize that one ingredient doesn't make a cake.

The argument that the Helms-Johnston bills are unconstitutional was clearly stated and argued by Senators Weicker and Levin. They presented an abundance of evidence to prove how the bills will undermine the Federal Court's ability to decide cases and that it constitutes a diminution of the Constitution.

Congressman Conyers said concerning the bills, "The 14th Amendment does not grant Congress the power to exercise power in the other direction and to enact statutes so as in effect to dilute the equal protection and due process decision of the Supreme Court. This bill has the effect of eliminating the federal nature of our government." It seems clear that the Senators who voted for the bills want to alter ways of changing the Constitution, which can only be changed by amendments voted on by both House of Congress and ratified by two-thirds of the states.

Representative Harold Washington in speaking for the Congressional Black Caucus said: "The measures are constitutionally defective. They place a restriction on the independence of the Courts and limits their ability to fashion remedies where segregation had been and where reasonable busing was the only workable remedy. I am confident that this law which is different from the law passed by the House will never become law. Willingness of

the Senate to vote on this bill without debate or hearings is irresponsible and it represents the depth to which Congress has sunk in its commitment to civil rights and equal justice to all Americans. This test in civil rights cannot be taken in isolation. What we have is a wholesale rush against the advancements blacks and other minorities have made over three decades. People are writing laws and advocating policies to set the civil rights clock back thirty years without trying to understand the implications of their actions. When you challenge these people to defend their policies on civil rights, voting rights, women's rights and social issues, they get indignant and say they don't have a racist bone in their bodies. I'm sick of hearing about their bones. I want to know where their heads and hearts are."



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