

Editorials & Comments

Standup And Be Counted

If there ever was a time in our lives when Black Americans should stand up and be counted - that time is right now!

It's both fitting and timely that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Pilgrimage stops in Charlotte this weekend. In public support of the federal Voting Rights Act, the Pilgrimage more than anything else should make Blacks more aware of the privilege to exercise their right to vote.

Voter participation is vitally important to all Americans. We believe it's more so to Black Americans, mainly because there are some among us who feel that simply because they have been elected in the past, they represent the interest and feeling of the Black community.

Early indications are that the primary here June 29 will result in a rather low turnout. The lower the turnout, the better for the politicians who believe they have "it made," and that getting re-elected is a "sure thing."

It's incumbent upon Black voters to make certain such is not the case. The Post believes the only way Blacks can make believers out of these elected officials is to go to the polls en masse, not only during the June 29 election, but for every single election until we elect the people who have the interest of our community at heart and soul.

The Post herewith calls upon Blacks to stand up and be counted - at the polls June 29! Blacks will have to make it crystal clear that they want to preserve the principles of Black unity, survival and progress. This lesson should be taught first to the Black politicians.

Because a Black elected official has served many terms in office does not automatically mean that official has the interest of the Black community at the top of his or her agenda. It is, therefore, very important for each candidate to be thoroughly examined by each voter before going to the polls on June 29 to cast a ballot.

Bold-Faced Lies

Down through the years, Blacks have allowed politicians to sell them bold-faced lies, and, as a community, have not generated enough courage to punish those individuals. The Charlotte Black community has not, in our opinion, demonstrated enough political sophistication to repeatedly bring politicians, both black and white, back into line when they clearly step outside the realms of their campaign promises.

Our community is in desperate need of such a vehicle. It's high

time we make those who aspire to be our leaders (though we have not had the opportunity to lend our voice to the selection) accountable for their actions.

The Black community should immediately begin to stop looking up to those people. They should be questioned and held responsible for their promises if they are indeed our leaders, they should assume leadership responsibilities to the Black community by supporting increased awareness in the Black community of its domestic problems. These so-called leaders should be made aware that they can no longer sit idly while crime continues to soar in our community.

Speak Out Loudly

They ought to be made aware that they must speak out loudly and consistently on the unemployment crisis that exists in our community, especially with our youth. They should be told that if we're going to vote for them they must take primary responsibility for developing and articulating public policy positions that promote progress for Black people. In doing this, they must be made to consistently consult and work with Black persons and organizations operating at the grassroots level on problems affecting the social, economic and political well-being of Blacks.

The Black politicians must also become a role model for young Blacks who aspire to or assume public office. Additionally, they must teach how best to handle the challenges, pressures and opportunities of the offices they have entered.

The Post herewith calls upon these leaders to become genuine leaders in the effort to maximize the participation of Black people in the American political system at all levels of government, and to provide leadership in developing, advocating, and insuring the implementation of public policies that support the needs, aspirations, and progress of Black people.

Let's stand up and make certain that politicians, Black and white, are well assured that our votes are not "in the bag." ...That attending out church services, fish fries and other outings is not enough.

This time around we're looking for jobs and other opportunities! We're looking for those politicians, Black and white, who are issue oriented and are willing to state their positions on each issue.

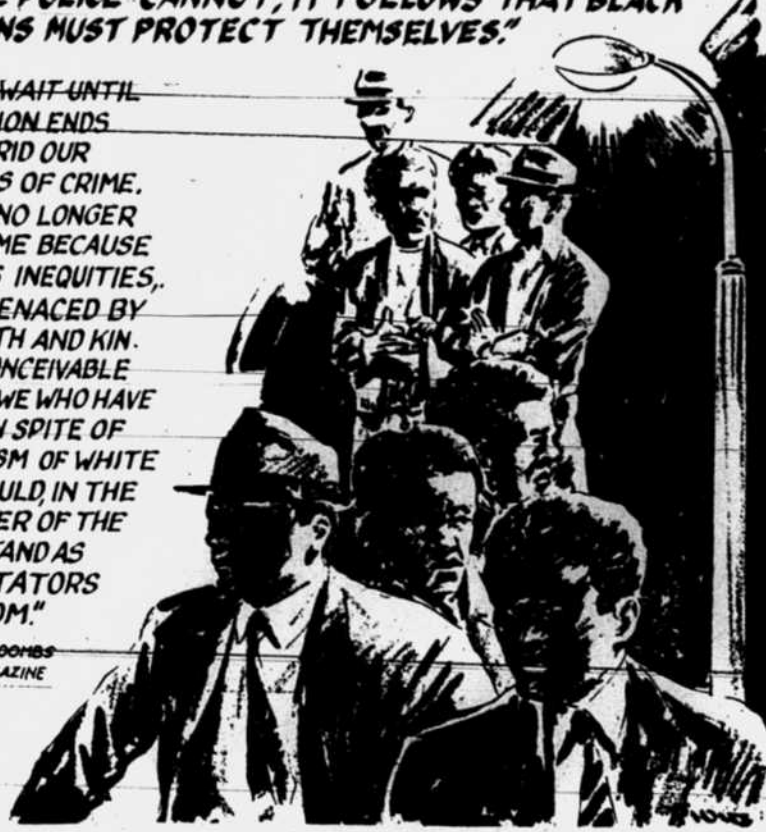
And, if they expect to receive our votes June 29, they are going to have to join the bandwagon for progress.

SOMETHING BLACKS CAN DO NOW - FOR THEMSELVES...

'IF THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT PROTECT US AND IF THE POLICE CANNOT, IT FOLLOWS THAT BLACK CITIZENS MUST PROTECT THEMSELVES.'

'WE CANNOT WAIT UNTIL DISCRIMINATION ENDS BEFORE WE RID OUR COMMUNITIES OF CRIME. WE CAN NO LONGER EXCUSE CRIME BECAUSE OF SOCIETY'S INEQUITIES. WE STAND MENACED BY OUR OWN KITH AND KIN. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE TO ME THAT WE WHO HAVE PREVAILED IN SPITE OF THE BARBARISM OF WHITE PEOPLE SHOULD, IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE CENTURY, STAND AS MUTE SPECTATORS TO OUR DOOM.'

ORDE COOMBS
N.Y. MAGAZINE



Something Blacks Can Do NOW - For Themselves

Tony Brown's Comments

US Military Might Depend On Blacks?

A strong military is vital to a country's security and the military prowess of a country obviously determines its position as a world power. In this context Black Americans have played a significant role in securing the nation's future as a world leader. But not without a long, controversial struggle.

Although the word "democracy" hasn't held the same meaning for blacks, they have historically clung to the hope that the nation would eventually embrace them as an equal partner. Afro-Americans have traditionally believed that answering their nation's call to arms would afford them full American citizenship and give them a degree of self-respect not available in civilian life.

On the other hand, the country historically, up until World War II, resisted the recruitment of blacks in the armed services. It was thought unwise to train blacks in the art of warfare. It was feared that men who waded through blood to victory would become more militant.

This attitude has also prevented an adequate and accurate presentation of the combat performance of black military units and their contributions to America's security. But the all-volunteer Army, largely black, has changed much of that. The country's military establishment has had to eventually come to the realization, after two turbulent centuries, that black manpower is vital to America's defense and survival.

The nation has accepted this begrudgingly. And one consequence has been that the rumor of cowardice and

failure has consistently followed the black soldier into battle. The 368th Infantry Regiment of the all-black 92nd Division reportedly became demoralized in an attack in the Argonne during World War I. Black incompetence was cited as the reason. Reasons such as inadequate training, inferior officers and a lack of firepower were forgotten.

During World War II, the 92nd Division fell victim to charges of cowardice and ineptitude. The 92nd Division would eventually receive one Distinguished Service Medal, two Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legion of Merits, 82 Silver Stars and 540 Bronze Stars for outstanding valor and heroism in the face of danger. However, the gallant record and contributions of the 92nd were overshadowed by prejudice, controversy and a belief that blacks were not physically or mentally capable of becoming efficient combat troops.

The same thing happened to the black 24th Infantry. The 24th Infantry was the only black regiment in the Korean War. Desegregation of the armed services had dispersed most black units into larger white ones. While the North Koreans were moving southward, the regiment took Yechon, the first town recaptured by American forces.

But once again, familiar stories of ineptness began to surface. The unit was inactivated in October 1951 under a cloud of bitter and controversial rumors. Most would forget, however, that two soldiers in the regiment, after their deaths, received the Congressional

Medal of Honor for the first time since the Spanish-American War.

Since the beginning of the nation's history, the descendants of African slaves have exhibited a willingness to die for the rights denied them in American society. They have fought in every American military conflict. They helped to secure the nation's freedom during the Revolutionary War and battled the British during the War of 1812.

Blacks were a key factor in the North's victory during the Civil War. The "Buffalo Soldier," a prestigious name given to the black fighting man by the Native-American, helped to pacify the West and expand American civilization throughout the continent.

Afro-Americans were, without questioning America's loyalty to them, victorious on the battlefields during the Spanish-American War and were among the first to fight and die overseas during World War I. Black men and women made the world safe for democracy during the Second World War.

In Korea, the black soldier fought in integrated units for the first time. But in America's most controversial conflict, the Vietnam War, the black soldier became a reflection of the racial animosities found in the civilian society.

"Tony Brown's Journal," the television series, can be seen on public television Sundays on Channel 30 at 2:30 p.m. It can also be seen on Channels 42, 58 on Saturdays at 8 p.m., Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 6 p.m., respectively. Please consult listings.

By Rev. John Perkins

Walk Your Talk



Rev. Perkins

Church Is A Positive Force

The large cities of our nation are decaying, and the social programs of the 60s that were meant to bring hope and change are now decaying too. People are recognizing that the programs of the government and non-church organizations cannot bring significant change to the lives of people in the black community.

Now people are returning in theory to the idea that the church should be the most basic organization in the black community. They are beginning to at least talk about the church being an instrument of real change.

In one sense that's good. But in another sense it may not be good.

I'm afraid that when people talk about the church becoming a force for change in the black community, they are not thinking about God's idea of the church as revealed in the Bible. Instead they mean an organization that leaders can manipulate for their own economic, political, or social gain. When leaders use the church in this way, they make the church a tool of the culture, of the society, of the race. Then it becomes not a force for positive change but a force to manipulate and oppress people.

This is not what God means for His church to be. The Bible tells us that the church should get as the prophetic voice of God, calling for justice and righteousness.

The church has not always succeeded in carrying out this role, often because people don't understand what its real role is supposed to be.

As I was growing up in rural New Hebron, Mississippi, I did not see the church as being relevant to my economic, political and social life. I did not see the church as a very positive force in society.

It wasn't until 1957 when I wanted to know Jesus Christ that I took another look at the church. Because Christ had transformed my life, I went to the church with excitement, expecting to find substance and direction for my life. I wanted to know what the church in its fullest potential could be. I went to the Bible, the Word of God, to find out.

The church of Jesus Christ is meant to be a very positive force in society. The Bible says that Christ's church should be the body of Christ—a means for God's presence and love to be channelled out into the community.

The Apostle Paul tells us that "you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (I Corinthians 12:27). Both as the church and as individuals, then, we are responsible to live our lives out here and now as though we were Christ's physical presence on earth, loving people who are in need and speaking out for justice and righteousness.

A truly faithful body of believers would be a powerful force for change in our community and in our society.

Next week we'll look in depth at what the Bible says the church should be in order to act as a transforming power in this world.

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From Capitol Hill

Voting Rights Act Survives Diehard Racists' Opposition

By Alfreda L. Madison

Special To The Post

After a hard fought battle by Senate anti black justice factions, to weaken the House passed Voting Rights Act, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted out a ten year extension of the Voting Rights Act, which maintains the major strength of the House bill with some minor changes. While the House bill placed no limit on the bailout period, the Dole compromise places a 25 year cap on pre-clearance and it requires Congress to review the need for pre-clearance after fifteen years.

The Senate opponents want the aggrieved parties to prove that localities are guilty of voting rights violations by intent of purpose, rather than rely on the results test. Opposition, including the Reagan Administration, insisted that test results, instead of intent would lead to proportional election of minorities. The Dole compromise retains the result standard. However, it clarifies the standard that has been used, which was the con-



Alfreda L. Madison

trolling precedent, before the Mobile vs. Bolden decision where the United States Supreme Court said intent must be proved. Justice Stewart wrote the Court's opinion, in which Chief Justice Burger and Justices Powell and Rhenquist fully concurred. Justice Blackman filed a separate opinion which he concurred with the opinion but for reason of the results. Justice Stevens in an opinion, also concurred but for the Court's judgment. Justices Marshall, White and Brennan filed dissenting opinions. The Dole compromise clarifies the result standard; that the focus of voting rights suits should be on access to the

political process. It states that a court can consider the extent to which minorities have been elected under the challenged voting rights procedure as "one circumstance" but explicitly provides that the section does not establish proportional representation. This compromise was worked out by Senators Kennedy and Mathias, who were sponsors of S-1992 which was the House version, Senator Dole and civil rights leaders.

For two days the committee hearing was stopped because of Jesse Helms, invoking a very seldom used parliamentary procedure which states that any senator can object to a committee's meeting more than two hours after the senate convenes. Usually, committees meet all day, and when there is a vote on the floor, they recess for a few minutes to allow the senators to vote and then resume their committee business. Helms used this method, with the hope of causing the time to run out before the Act could be extended before August sixth. Senator Joe Biden,

the ranking minority on the committee, requested that the Judiciary hold hearings at night, because of the urgency of the bill. This was agreed to, but Jesse realized a defeat, gave up in that area.

Senator East, Helms' handpicked North Carolina senator, like his senior colleague, would like to return the country back to the pre-Civil War days. He stated that the 1965 Voting Rights Act was a temporary measure. He said the South has had a long and cherished history of the Justice Department's interference; that North Carolina is unable to hold an election this year because districts are forced to be redrawn.

East introduced ten amendments all were rejected but one, which amended the language requiring assistance in the voting booth to the handicapped, illiterates and those with language difficulties. Originally, assistance was disallowed by an employer, East called for union members being prohibited from providing assistance also. Other East amendments were: extend pre-clearance nationwide,

include women in the minority Voting Rights Act, include different religious groups and allow pre-clearance procedures to be presented to local Federal Judges, rather than the District of Columbia Courts. All of these were rejected. On almost all of the East amendments Senators Thurmond and Denton voted in the affirmative. East stated that the compromise will prove as disastrous to the South as busing has.

Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama, who certainly seems to have inherited ex-Senator Bill Scott's (of Virginia) mantle, said the South is being punished because it inherited slavery. He doesn't know that the first blacks were sold by a Dutchman to whites at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. This was the first importation of slavery. Then, of course, it became big, profitable business throughout entire Dixie. He stated that after the Civil War, his grandmother's slaves remained with her for two decades because she was good to them. He

offered as proof that there is no need for the Voting Rights Act's provision, the South has changed. His mother now lives in an integrated neighborhood and some of her best friends are black. To show his concern for black justice and rights, he said that when he was a young boy he was beaten, because he objected to whites throwing rocks at maids in their white uniforms. His statements showed that he still sees blacks as the servant class that needs and appreciates white paternalism.

Senator Orren Hatch, who will become the Voting Rights Act floor manager, was cast in his usual role of anti-black rights. He read most people to sleep with his long essay on the dangers of the compromise. He predicted as did East that it will lead to percentages and proportional representation.

