

EDITORIALS & COMMENTS

Reagan Is Not The Answer

Rewritten From
The Carolina Times

According to news reports last week, about 30 so-called black leaders met in the Atlanta airport to discuss development of a national strategy to defeat President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

An effort to develop a national political strategy for black America appears commendable on its face, but we think black people can fall into a rather naive trap if this strategy is palmed off as a panacea.

Reagan is not the problem in black America. Defeating Reagan in 1984 will not be the answer.

We do not contend, however, that Reagan is a good President. We think that by and large he has not served this country well. Though much of what he says about domestic spending is somewhat correct, his views of international policy, and his approach to developing fiscal responsibility are somewhat parochial.

But these problems of the Reagan Administration affect black America to the same extent that they affect all Americans.

The special problems that blacks have as a people grow not from Reagan but from the national mood that he represents.

Economist Andrew Brimmer put his finger on the pulse of the matter in a 1981 column in "Black Enterprise Magazine" when he wrote:

"A fundamental revolution in favor of a conservative economic policy is far advanced in this country, and it will have a significantly adverse effect on blacks...unfortunately, neither the black community nor its leadership is equipped to cope with the new challenges that are emerging. To do so will require a new strategy and a set of organizational techniques completely different from those on which the Civil Rights Movement was built...the black community and its liberal allies have virtually no capacity to mount a campaign to counter the conservative thrust."

3 Major Points

We agree on all of Brimmer's three major points. They are:

+ America is turning conservative, which does not necessarily mean anti-black.

+ Black leadership, the current crop, is ill-equipped to cope with the new challenges.

+ To successfully navigate the choppy waters of this new wave, black people must develop new strategies.

In this same column, Brimmer began hammering away at a

part of the answer black people in this country need. He said:

"...Those dedicated to black advancement now need both new skills and a new approach. Black leaders must learn their way around the private sector of the economy. They must build a network of contacts with chief executives of corporations. They must gain access to the board rooms of industrial firms, banks and other financial institutions. In general, successful leadership in the years ahead will require a mastery of the facts and figures of the marketplace."

Though Brimmer stopped short of the obvious conclusion, it is clear to us that black America's current crop of "leaders" is ill-equipped to either develop or implement the new strategy that is needed. This deficiency is not a question of intelligence, or commitment, but rather a matter of viewpoint.

Current Leaders

Our current leaders, developed in the put of oppression, and crowned during the height of "peaceful resistance," are simply not "bottom-line" thinkers. Most of them, apparently, do not clearly understand the American economy, and therefore, would be the wrong people to send into this new phase of the struggle for equal opportunity in America.

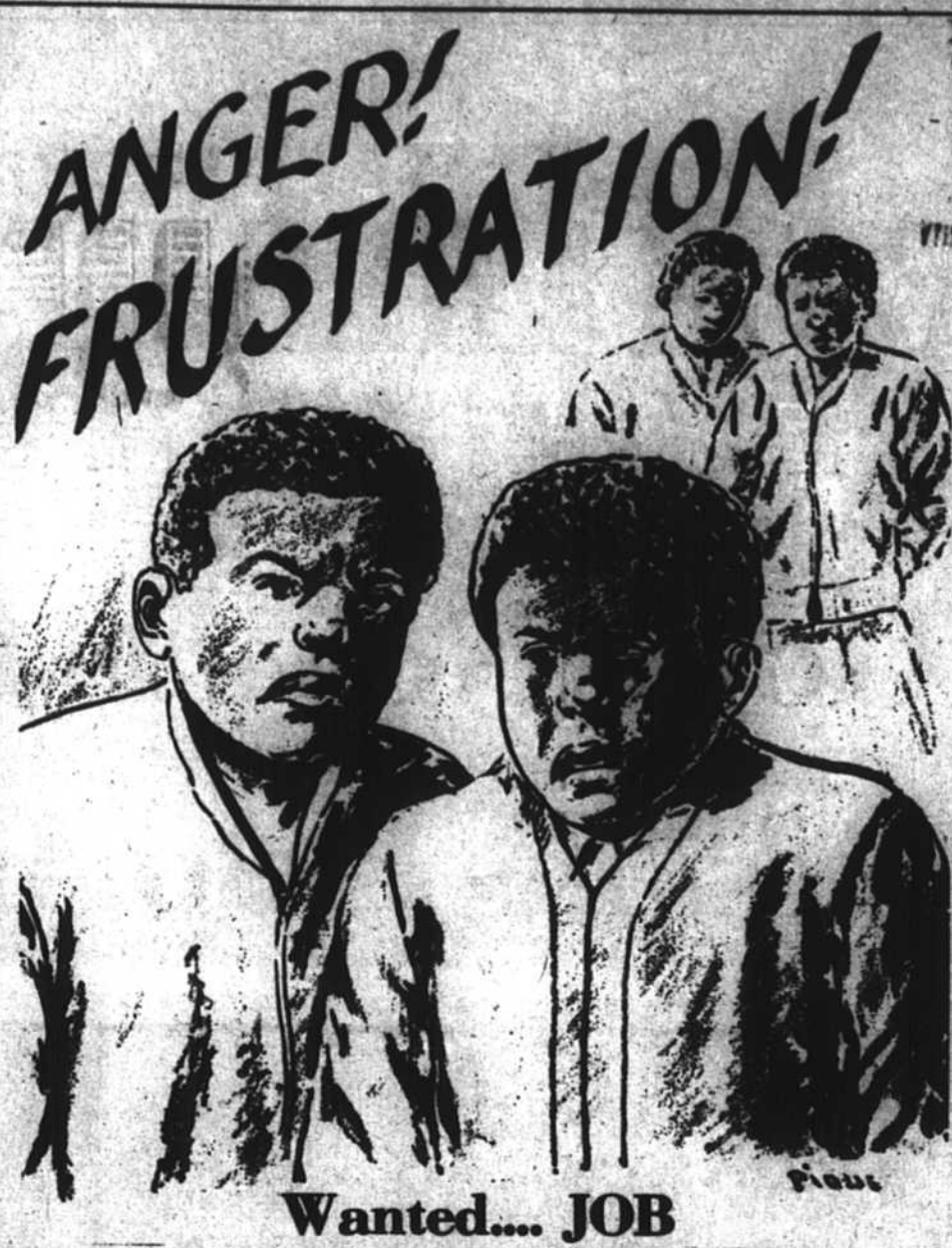
The new challenges and people with the following views:

+ The ability to see us as black people, a group of Americans with an unequal track record of commitment and dedication to this country, rather than just a minority. In its pure form, the word minority refers to a "minor entity."

+ The willingness and the skill to marshal our resources, both financial and human, into a thriving economy, rather than always bargaining on the basis of our consumer habits. Investment, not consumerism, is the cornerstone of the American economy.

+ The ability to encourage educational systems, particularly black institutions, to renew an emphasis on entrepreneurial attitudes, rather than always training people to climb onto the bottom rung of the corporate ladder and cling there for dear life.

Thus, our conclusion is that the meeting last week in Atlanta, in large measure, was a gathering of the old guard, mostly out of tune and therefore out of step with what's happening in America. Consequently it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for them to lead us into the mainstream.



Letters To The Editor:



We Need Work To Feel "Useful"

Dear Sir:

If one were to ask me what my profession is or has been, I would have to reply, "Teaching." This answer is based on two factors. First, I was trained in this area and secondly, I have spent more years doing this than any other task.

At some point in each of our lives we are faced with, however subtle, the question, "What am I about," or phrased differently, "How complete is my life or where do I fit in the scheme of things?"

As surely as we need food, clothes, shelter, a source in which to believe, we need work to feel useful, productive, and to us have a goal for each day. Without the latter, we would find ourselves in a state of existence, and eventually in a rut from which it would be difficult to pull ourselves.

I have had experience in many areas of the "work or job arena." From where I sit now has to be one of the most gratifying as well as satisfying experiences.

As a member of the black community, looking in I heard, felt, yes, and in ignorance, let my concept

of The Charlotte Post be tainted.

From this side of the desk, I see and can feel the love, dedication, strength, warmth and perseverance of a man with a very real cause. One who has a driving force that inspires his staff to feel the need to want to give it their best.

He pulls forth, with quiet mannerisms, working as a comrade rather than a "boss," to always give ultimate quality without unnecessary fear of duress.

My first experience to work in a completely black setting, as it were, from the Board of Directors to the self-trained and manually skilled laborer, and to know and share in the joy of knowing that "all people

are important, regardless of their stations in life" and that each individual talent is a rung in the ladder that aids in the climb of self fulfillment.

We do not need "whips cracked, voices raised, dictatorial authority, to produce." Only a thin thread running through each entity, of humanism, and we can be successful.

"The voice of the black community," the motto of The Charlotte Post, truly a community in itself, from where you, the reader, sits may be a different experience. But I, a staff member, enjoy and rejoice FROM THIS SIDE OF THE DESK.

J.B. Dumas

Something On Your Mind?

"Something On Your Mind" is the name of a column devoted to you - the reader - so you may share your thoughts with others.

Letters featured in this column must include your signature and address, both of which may or may not be used per request.

Some subjects that may be of special interest to you

are: Proposal 48, How You Plan To Back a Black Man For President in 1984, Police, Revolution, etc.

All letters are subject to editing for grammar, libelous content and when necessary, brevity.

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From Capitol Hill

Meese Finds It's Not Easy To Defend The President's Actions

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

While it's not easy to meet, individually, with the White House top brass, this reporter succeeded in getting an interview with White House Counsel Edwin Meese.



Alfreda

So there has been periodic meetings since that time.

Q. The Washington Post said that you addressed the group and you said the President shared their views. Walter Williams said, there, if the police can't handle crime, we should establish vigilantes and alternatives to public schools?

Meese: What I said was the President shared their views in that no group can look to the federal government for everything. The best assistance to any group comes from economic expansion and economic growth. Those were the kinds of views I was speaking of when I said the President shared their views.

Q. So the President is not for alternatives to public schools?

Meese: The President has been very supportive of

public schools when he has talked about alternatives, they've been complimentary alternatives, not supplementary alternatives. Not to exclude public schools, that's why he's felt that tuition tax credits for those parents who are sending their children to private schools is important because if we didn't have private schools there would be such a load on the public schools, they couldn't handle it.

Q. NEA, AFT and minorities are against tuition tax credit. They say it takes money from public schools. They say low income parents can't benefit from it because they don't pay income tax, or a very little, and that private schools don't have Title I programs that are special for the disadvantaged. Then, too, these parents will have to buy books and they won't get free lunch.

Meese: This is not taking any money away from public schools. Public schools still receive money, their programs still stand on their own merits, and not related to tuition tax credits. This is not a substitution. Tuition tax credit is in addition to money provided for public schools. This is to help those who want to send their children

to private schools. Many private schools do take children who are not in the affluent group. Church-related private schools do a lot of that. You're right, they do have to be paying tax to get the benefit of that. I think this is a step in the right direction, we feel. It may not be the total answer, but a parent will have to determine what school is best for his or her child and it may be the public school is best. I have a brother with a severe physical handicap who went all the way through the public school because they had types of facilities that were best for him. We had a boy who was having reading and writing problems and we took him out for one year and put him in a church school where we paid tuition, they had a smaller class size. When he caught up we put him back in the public school. This permits parents a greater range of choices, regardless of their financial conditions.

Q. Clarence Pendleton is the President of the Conservative Coalition, which is connected with the Heritage Foundation and being the Chairman of the Civil Rights Commission, isn't there a conflict in views of these two organizations?

OCSSR Offers Positive Way To Deal With First Offenders

Raleigh - At 72, Mary became a first offender. Her Social Security check was late. Her arthritis was acting up. She didn't have the money to pay for the medicine that gave her relief.

She shoplifted them and was caught. Luckily for Mary, her offense occurred in a community that has a Community Service Restitution program. She didn't go to jail. Her prosecution was deferred while the Community Service Restitution program worked out an appropriate punishment program for her.

Mary was assigned to help the local Council on Aging. Her task was to call a woman about her age everyday to make sure the woman was all right. Mary could even make the calls from home.

At the end of a year in which Mary fulfilled the terms of her tasks and had no further troubles with the law, her case was dismissed. She has no criminal record. Plus, Mary found a new friend in the woman she called everyday.

According to Heman R. Clark, secretary of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, North Carolina needs to look more and more to community service restitution programs to deal with first offenders and non-violent criminals.

"Right now there are about 17,000 inmates in our prison," he said. "It was designed to hold only 14,800. About 74 percent of the new entry inmates every year are there for nonviolent crimes. It costs the citizens of this state about \$8,000 a year to house an inmate in prison. It is neither economically, morally or socially acceptable to continue to put nonviolent, first offenders in prison."

"The Community Service Restitution program offers this state a positive, constructive way to deal with first offenders to redirect them from lives of crime to that of productive, taxpaying citizens."

"The members of the General Assembly have recognized this, and in the last session appropriated \$500,000 to expand the community service restitution program currently operating in the state. There were eight in existence then; we now have 16, and we should have 25 by July of this year," Clark said.

Ms. Alma Nesbitt, Community Service Specialist for the Governor's Crime Commission that oversees the funding of the programs, said, "Mary's case is not typical of the cases our programs deal with, but it is a good illustration of how they work."

"These programs deal mostly with first offenders between the ages of 6-20. We're trying to get to the

youngsters who have made their first mistake, had their first scrape with the law and give them a second chance; a chance to prove to themselves and to society that they can be productive, responsible citizens.

"We're talking about nonviolent offenders, we don't take murderers, rapists, muggers and other violent criminals," she said. "They are people who commit crimes such as shoplifting, writing bad checks, vandalism. They are crimes which people are sent to prison for, for which we feel there are more appropriate punishments."

Some programs in the state, such as Volunteers of the Court in Greensboro, have been in operation for a number of years. "These older programs have been so successful with young, first offenders," Ms. Nesbitt said, "that we are now beginning to see second- and even third-time offenders being brought into the program. They are, of course, very carefully screened."

Another positive aspect of the Community Service Restitution program is that clients pay their victims or society back for the damages they cause through court-ordered restitution.

"This is part of the deal the court makes with the offenders to get into the program. They may be ordered to work in a community service organization, such as Mary did with the Council on Aging, or be ordered to directly compensate the victim of their crimes for his losses. We get nothing, however, if we send them to prison," Ms. Nesbitt said.

Clark said, "Community Service Restitution programs work. The established programs show a recidivism rate of only about two percent. These programs are turning our young people away from a life of crime and toward a productive life. We need more of them and more community support for them."

Black Executives

What does the young black executive on the way up the corporate ladder need? What are the problems and pitfalls he must face and avoid?

Join the Business Department of WSSU and the East Winston Branch Library on Wednesday, April 20, at 7 p.m. for "Black Executives Climbing The Corporate Ladder." For more information, call 727-2202.

Seminar

On April 7, 7-9 p.m. WomanReach will offer a seminar called "I was, I am, I will be," facilitated by Patricia Heard, MSW.

For more information, call 334-3614 weekdays 10-4 p.m.

appointed all members of the Commission. All of these will be eminent people as Mr. Pendleton is. As you know Mr. Pendleton's background is he was Director of the Urban League.

Q. Thomas Atkins, General Counsel of the NAACP, said the President is carrying out a campaign promise to the Heritage Foundation to remove civil rights departments from government agencies and place them under the Justice Department and to appoint an Attorney General who would implement these views. Is this true?

Meese: First of all the President never made any promise to the Heritage Foundation. Secondly, the President is by no means weakening Civil Rights Commission. In fact the eminent people he is placing on the Commission will be among the finest people who've ever been there in its history. The President has no intention, whatsoever, of weakening enforcement of civil rights in this country.

