

EDITORIALS & COMMENTS

Our Priorities Need To Be Reset

Twenty years ago, massive peaceful marching demonstrations were an effective technique blacks used to dramatize to white America the many injustices imposed on the nation's largest minority group. The marches were often interrupted by angry white mobs that physically attacked the marchers while white policemen often looked on and did little to stop the bloodshed.

Embarrassed by such scenes flashed on television screens across America and around the world, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson set in motion a series of laws and ordinances dealing with housing, jobs, and judicial equality that brought about new laws and government programs to help the nation's poor, most of whom were black. As the new laws and programs accelerated, demonstration marches all but disappeared as a civil rights technique.

It was in fact the marches inspired initially by the Montgomery (Ala.) bus boycott on behalf of Ms. Rosa Parks and the massive March on Washington in 1964, both spearheaded by the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that led to marches becoming a major civil rights strategy. Continued through the late 1960s, the marches pierced the moral consciousness of white Americans and, along with new and revised laws, came an all-important change in attitudes both toward and between blacks and whites.

People In Streets

Included on the agenda of the recent annual meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference held in Charlotte were two marches, neither of which appeared to be more than symbolic in nature. In commenting on the marches, SCLC member, The Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, said, "People in the streets - that's what makes changes, not talking."

As the NAACP was approaching its plans to picket Food Lion stores, we reflected on The Rev. Shuttlesworth's comment and began to wonder whether marches and picketing as civil rights strategies or techniques have lost their value and impact. Our concern arises from two aspects. First, if Food Lion stores have not complied with the NAACP's request for increased minority hiring and promotions and greater business with minority suppliers following two years of talks, it appears quite doubtful that pickets are an adequate substitute, especially in this age of rapid communication. Quite to the contrary, efforts should be to renew the talks or the issue might better be abandoned in order to focus the energies of the NAACP and similar organizations on the issue of today, not 20 years ago.

This, of course, relates to our second point, that is, the need for organizations like SCLC and the NAACP to redirect their concerns to the somewhat new issues that

confront black Americans. Of course, jobs, better housing and equal justice in the courts continue to be issues of vital concern. However, in the 1980s there are new issues

confronting black Americans that are more basic than even overt racial discrimination. These issues strike at the very heart of the foundation of black society, culture and the survival of the black family as an institution are the ever increasing number of female-headed households, black teenage out-of-wedlock pregnancy rates, out-of-wedlock births of well over 50 percent of all black babies since 1980, drug abuse, high black youth crime rates, the relatively poor state of the health of blacks, and the apparent continuing low level of self esteem that far too many black men have of themselves.

Contributing Factors

There is no doubt that racial discrimination within the larger American white society is a contributing factor to some of these issues confronting black Americans. However, black births out-of-wedlock and drug abuse are certainly not caused by nor the result of racial discrimination. Thus, while black organizations are selectively picketing against

business firms that allegedly are discriminating in their hiring and promoting practices and not doing business with black firms or suppliers, basic needs of blacks

that could hinder their accepting jobs or promoting are not being adequately addressed. For example, teenage pregnancies, youth crime problems, and drug abuse would prevent many younger blacks from even getting the educational preparation needed to accept jobs or promotions or from having the incentive to go into business for themselves.

Therefore, we believe that marching and picketing in that absence of dialogue are useless and unproductive. More importantly, we believe that the black middle class that heads up organizations like SCLC and the NAACP need to reassess the basic issues and needs of black Americans and then refocus their time and their talent - white firms like Food Lion may need to be dealt with to advance the cause of economic justice. Direct confrontation with such firms on an individual basis appears to be a misuse of priorities in terms of the needs of the larger black American community.

Thus, let us broaden our focus and use our energies to begin finding solutions to those problems that threaten the very existence of black America. Failure to do so will prevent blacks from being able to respond to any opportunities that a Food Lion or similar firm might make available to blacks. More talk and less marching might be a better solution.

From Capitol Hill

Court Moving From Protecting Individual Freedom

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

The Reagan-Nixon Supreme Court, in one year's time, has sapped the individual American citizen of many of his freedoms. If Ronald Reagan is reelected, the present trend will most likely continue, and by 1989, individual freedom will be completely obliterated. While this Administration extols the evils of communism which places the state above the individual, it is rapidly moving this country in the same direction, under the guise of promoting democratic principles.

The American Civil Liberties Union recently made a critical analysis of the Supreme Court's decision for the past year which shows that Americans are far less free today than they were a year ago.

ACLU stated that in case after case a majority of the Supreme Court has chosen to resolve conflicts between the individual and the government in favor of the state. It says, "Although many will be tempted to characterize the Court's decisions as conservative, it is far more accurate to describe them as statist." If this trend continues there will be a fundamental alteration in the relationship of the individual and the state. ACLU says, "Under our system - at least until very recently - a vigilant judiciary is our only formal guarantee of individual freedom. When as has occurred this term, the Supreme Court functions, not as a vigorous guardian of the individual but as a cheerleader for the government."

This past Supreme Court's decisions make it very easy to believe that First Amendment protection depends on the size of your pocket-



Alfreda L. Madison

book. As proof of this, the Union cited several cases. The Court reversed the lower courts and voted to uphold a ban on placing election posters on public poles because the posters created "visual clutter." Poor and disadvantaged use this means as an effective way to participate in the electoral process, since they are unable to gain access to expensive forms of political speech making. The Court reversed a lower court decision permitting homeless persons to conduct a "sleep-in" in Lafayette Park across from the White House to dramatize the fact that they had no where else to sleep. Justice Marshall writing a dissenting opinion, chastized the Court for failing to take seriously the attempt by the weakest among us to express themselves effectively. In further First Amendment destruction, the Court prohibits the reproducing of a color picture of United States currency. This permitted the currency to be depicted in a newsworthy setting. The Court forbade the distinction between the content based discrimination newsworthy and non newsworthy, and instead

BE A PART OF THE NEW AWARENESS
WE SHALL OVERCOME



Minorities With A Minority!

Scenario: A room full of well dressed, articulate and self assured middle class people. Icy cocktails flow freely and imported foods are plentiful. It is a welcoming party at the Hyatt regency Hotel in Dallas during the Republican Convention. There is only one difference, instead of these people being white they are black: black Republicans. "Ain't that nothing!"

In this nation most black voters are overwhelmingly Democrats. However, black Republicans are a political minority within a minority group.

Black Republicans made up less than four percent of the delegates at the Republican National Convention, and under one million voters nationally.

This group of special people are more conservative than many blacks, they oppose government job subsidies and favor military spending over domestic social programs.

Despite their small number and limited influence, black Republicans have been warmly and well received.

Black Republicans are sending out a strong mes-



sage. The message being sent is a "hand up instead of a handout." Millions of blacks are unemployed and thousands of young people are stressing self-help.

The basic philosophy of the Party members is that black folks have to stop being allergic to making "real big bucks." Handouts over the years have ruined black minds - blacks must convene like the Jews and other whites - we must make money - big money to survive and make a strong point.

"Blacks must learn that we can earn for ourselves." A phrase used often by black Republicans. No longer can blacks let people give, the Democrats have given out this rhetoric - and this has left blacks in the same

position - missing the boat. There is an important need for blacks to become wage earners.

The one major concern of some Republicans-black and white - is that some black Republicans are ignoring social issues such as civil rights. The main worry on this point is that if Reagan is reelected he can fill as many as five seats on the Supreme Court with political conservatives - that could put blacks 15 to 20 years back into the past. Although there are a great many Republicans fighting to get political liberals on the Supreme Court, blacks do not constitute enough in numbers and power to sufficiently and substantially influence decisions made on the matter.

On the flip side of the black Republican philosophy - not all Republicans believe whole heartedly in Reagan and his methods of running the government. For example, not all black or white Republicans believe in deficit spending. In fact, many Republicans, black and white, admit to voting for Democratic candidates due to their campaign proposals and plans to implement the proposals.

Black Republicans are not trying to be white, they are merely exercising their constitutional rights. Just because one is black does not mean he can only be active in the Democratic Party. Party choices are individualized, personal and professional. Party selection should be based on what works best for one and what feels most comfortable.

Yes, the Democrats have done a few things for America; however, limiting one's self to one idea without exploring other avenues is child like. Take a look, evaluate and make a wise decision.

Blacks are a rare bird in the Republican Party. Perhaps now is the time to become active in either party or concentrate on gaining Republican strength and changing Reagan politics. A new leader is not always the solution but Party saturation and internal pressure can be the solution. Making a Party decision is a personal one - but remember there is more than one Party.

Graves Warns: Blacks

Continued From Page 1A kept intact, and parents must take an active role in their children's education. Two articles in the September issue of Black Enterprise focus on these key issues.

"We can get what we want," Graves assures. "We can get what we need."

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