

Editorials

We Need Instruments Of Power!

Many Charlotteans have been celebrating since last Saturday Juneteenth, or Black Independence Day, June 19, which marked the true end of slavery in 1865 in the state of Texas. Held in communities all across the nation, the Juneteenth celebration also marks Senate passage of the omnibus Civil Rights Bill on June 19, 1964.

While such celebrations are good and serve a purpose, what appears to us to be of greater significance is what have we done or accomplished with what black Americans believe these historic dates mean? Stated another way, we might ask what opportunities have black Americans taken advantage of since June 19, 1865 and 1964 that we can feel some sense of pride about?

There are at least two areas of life wherein black Americans should have made great strides since these and other historic dates that granted them new opportunities. These areas, or in Theodore Cross' words, these "instruments of power" have been only marginally harnessed by blacks for the benefit of blacks. One of these instruments, political power, has resulted in a steady increase in black elected officials at the local, state and national levels in spite of not having achieved a proportionate number of such officials to date.

The second such area is "economic power," that is, "the forces governing human wealth and well-being," says Mr. Cross. Writing in his latest book, "The Black Imperative," Cross adds, "For all groups in a given society, the prospect for improved incomes, greater holdings of property, and more favorable life chances generally is profoundly influenced by the group's relationship to the instruments of power. Acquiring and holding power have indeed become strategic principles well adapted to preserving life and protecting people from its perils. As a group, blacks... have done poorly."

In this column last week we raised questions about the lack of black investors on the Beatties Ford Road commercial strip between I-85 and LaSalle Street. Separately but consistent with our general thought we commented that blacks are their own worst enemy because of how they treat each other.

Enormous Self-Hate

Similarly, "Tony Brown's Journal" in the Post last week echoed a like theme. Mr. Brown quoted liberally from a letter he received from a poet and writer identified only as Ms. E.O.B. As Tony Brown explained it, she expressed concern about the "enormous self-hatred she sees expressed among blacks and the exploitation of the black underclass by those who make it." Brown quotes the poet as saying "this is the reason I will walk two and a half blocks from where I live and purchase products from a non-black store."

"The black businesses have unfair prices; they have no community concerns and 70 percent of the time, the store isn't

clean enough. They have very little respect for their customers and to show courtesy seems to be a sin." Sad to say, there is a great deal of truth in this statement about black retail establishments. Sad to say, but such poor business practices arise from an attitude that blacks should support black-owned businesses with their \$170 billion in annual purchasing power simply because they are black.

Purchasing Power

It has been this kind of business attitude and mentality that has prevented the securing of an instrument of economic power to enhance black America's quality of life and improved instruments for political power. Undoubtedly, too, this kind of black business mentality and psychological thinking arises from the white business community's attitude of encouraging and feeling less threatened by black businesses that seek primarily black consumers.

The publisher of black-oriented literature such as Ebony Magazine, and the manufacturers of certain hair and beauty products, some types of music and some clothing styles have no competition from white manufacturers. However, many of the black retail merchants who sell such products are those with the poor business attitudes toward their customers.

Thus, the "instruments of power" so vital to an improved quality of life for black Americans continues to be an illusive force that prevents blacks from making the kind of economic, political and social progress that they should have, considering the increasing number of dates we celebrate for milestones in opening new doors of opportunity.

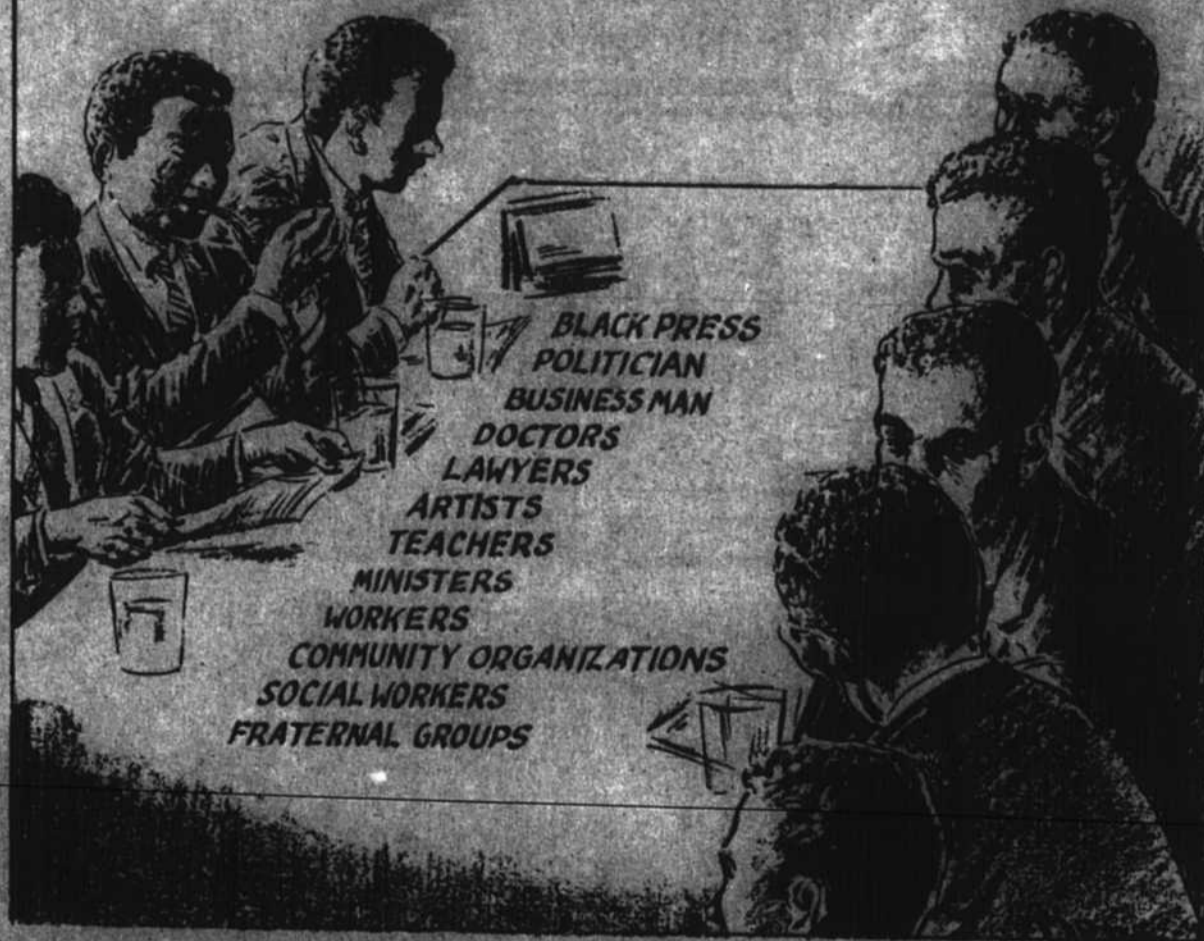
Unfortunately, our failure to capture these instruments of power relates in a deeper way to the fact that while black people have achieved physical and legal freedom from slavery and discrimination some, too many in fact, are or continue to be enslaved psychologically. This undoubtedly has its root cause in our history and some continued racism. However, in a larger sense the problem arises from a dependent mentality of government assistance and little or no initiative to rise above one's circumstances no matter what the road block.

Therefore, Juneteenth or another celebration date of black achievement should be viewed in large measure by what has in fact been signs of progress since that date. For it is only then that there is really something to celebrate.

We as blacks, whether merchants, consumers, professionals or laborers, have long past the time for the development of a black agenda for achieving the progress that many lesser minority groups have earned. In the final analysis, it will only be when we stop being our own worst enemy that we as blacks can harness the instruments of power for progress and prosperity.

STOP DAILY FLIGHTS OF BLACK CAPITAL FROM BLACK COMMUNITIES

WHITES APPEAR DETERMINED TO FORFEIT THE CITIES TO BLACKS AND IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO THROUGH FORCED SLAVE LABOR BUILT THIS COUNTRY FOR OTHERS, CANNOT NOW WILLINGLY UNITE TO REBUILD OUR COMMUNITIES FOR OURSELVES.



Being A Princess Has Its Advantages

Belle turned Yankee or Yankee turned Belle? Which one? Who knows? Anyway, here's the story. Many years ago there was a little girl born. Born in the beautiful Southern city of Charlotte - the Queen City of the South as they call it. Well as this little girl grew her family treated her in the most feminine of manner: dolls, lace, ribbon dresses and white gloves. In a nut shell a typical Southern little girl - commonly known as a little princess. Being a cute little princess this young lady could get away with incredible mischief. Especially on the paternal side of the family; being the first born grandchild born to the oldest son.

What kinds of mischief? Things like spraying granddad with the water hose while trying to "help" wash his car. Refusing to eat something simply because it "looked funny." And, of course, choosing to be most unsociable with visiting children - why? because they would "upset" my kingdom. And being a princess also had its advantages. For in-



Sabrina

stance, being a "model" student in school meant that the teachers loved you and did everything they could to help you. The principals viewed a princess as one to know and know her family - which most did. But the best part was when trouble came about the princess was the last if at all to be blamed. Pretty sneaky.

The pre-teen and early teen years are a princess' glory. Mommy then allows her to wear a French bun but keeps the ribbon. It is also the time that ribbon dresses

are put away and jumpers, skirts and blouses are acquired. Crossing the age group into teenager on one's 13th birthday is marked by all sorts of wonderful things: a signet pin, a bracelet with a "13" charm on it and, of course, lots of tears from mommy. But let us not forget the birthday party at 6:30 to 8:30 with boys! By the way because this little girl was born in the late fall mommy suited her in a navy blue velvet skirt and white blouse for the occasion with a French bun and velvet ribbon. Bliss, sheer bliss - dancing with a boy to the tunes of Earth, Wind & Fire, the Bee-Gees, Chicago, Ohio Players and the Commodores.

A few weeks after the milestone mommy takes princess "up North." Princess being reared in a Southern atmosphere knew very little about the North. The first day in public school in the North was an experience - to say the least. Mommy took princess to enroll upon the completion of the move - dressed in a glen plaid skirt, white oxfords, navy sweater and loafers and knee socks. Don't forget the bun! Walking through the school everyone looked at princess as though she beamed down from Mars. Every student that was seen was dressed in jeans, sneakers and oversized sweaters. They looked like they were going to play rather than school. The clothes they could handle - it was the manner in which the Southern Belle spoke that tickled their funny bones. Instead of "Hi, what's goin' on?" the Belle said, "Hey, how y'all doin'." Definitely not cool.

After the initial orientation things smoothed out, except for the fact that the Belle did not date until she was 15 if not 16. Guys do not take too kindly to that but that was expected. All it boiled down to was that the Belle's hormones were not ready for a different relationship with boys (kissing and holding hands seemed disgusting). So high school was high school.

College was a real experience. Mommy cried, grandmoms bragged and granddad tried to remain unconcerned but deep down he was a ball of nerves. The Belle looked at it as a chance to be something different. A different she became; opinionated, curious, demanding, committed, willing to learn but still lovable.

From Capitol Hill

President's 1981 Tax Reform Has Been Disastrous

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

In presenting his tax reform proposal to the nation, the President characterized the present system as "complicated, unfair, cluttered with gobbledygook and loopholes designed for those with the power and influence to hire high-priced legal and tax advisors." He stated that our tax system is un-American.

Commenting on the President's tax proposal, Representative Bill Clay of Missouri said, "It was Reagan's own changes in the tax code enacted in 1981 that more than anything else shifted tax burdens to the poor and middle class while granting huge breaks to corporations and the rich, this is a remarkable admission." Mr. Reagan, in his national televised address, said the tax system must be changed to "make it fairer. It must promote opportunity, lift up the weak, strengthen the family, and perhaps most importantly, it must be rooted in that unique American quality, our special commitment to fairness." The President's special fairness commitment in his '81 tax policy and his civil rights policy are abysmal. The tax system instituted by him made the rich richer and the poor poorer by being jobless, tax burdened, and less able to educate their children, coupled with his complete assault on civil rights.

While the President is going around the country, selling his tax reform program, the people are for a tax change, but Mr. Reagan isn't telling the public the specific details and he is not letting the press ask him any questions about it, neither is he holding a press conference, so the public will become more familiar with the entire package.



Alfreda

The American people are frustrated and outraged when they have realized that the low income and middle income people have borne the country's tax burden while the very rich and those above \$100,000 bracket have paid no taxes. General Dynamics, General Electric and many other corporations have taken refuge in the any loopholes that the '81 tax policy created. Knowing all of this, has caused the American public to lose confidence in both the Administration and Congress to enact a tax code that is fair.

The Reagan present tax proposal gives relief to the very poor. It raises the tax entry for a family of four from \$7,670 to \$12,000. This translates into no taxes on the first \$12,000. This tax relief will provide work incentive for those on the welfare rolls. Much of the working poor's liability tax would be eliminated through increase and expansion of the earned income tax credit which is an actual tax credit to working families with children. The current credit of \$550 would be increased to \$731.

The President's proposal treats the working poor very well. Yet, it

favors the very rich at the expense of the middle income people. The average individual tax cut is seven percent, the cut distribution is highly inequitable. Individuals earning over \$100,000 receive a tax cut of 10.7, while those earning \$30,000 to \$50,000 receive only 4.2 percent cut. Expressed another way, those earning \$40,000 would get \$205.92 cut, \$50,000 \$197.00 cut, \$70,000 a \$276.36 cut, \$100,000 a \$541 cut but those earning \$200,000 would receive a cut of \$4,496. This proves that this Reagan proposal, like his '81 tax plan, provides that the very wealthy share proportionately advantageous in the tax cuts.

Maintenance of exemptions for charitable contributions, will allow charitable organizations to continue to provide needed social services. In preserving some fringe benefits, such as: employer provided life insurance, legal service and educational assistance. Yet, there are many objections to the proposed tax on the first \$25 a month for a family, \$10 for individuals of employer provided health care. This tax will have a detrimental effect on those who need health care the most. It does not keep health care down, but, in fact, it contributes to health care cost increase by letting the high end dollars to escape taxation.

There is a large outcry against the elimination of tax exemption for state and local taxes. The localities will have to assume a greater share of the social services burdens, since the President is recommending eradication of some of these programs and severe cuts to others. While cutting these programs, Mr. Reagan is giving special advantageous treatment to the oil industry, research, and development, capital gains

corporate dividends, and depreciation for equipment - all of which benefits the extremely wealthy in our society. State and local tax exemption elimination will cause many business to leave these localities, which will increase unemployment.

Noted economist, Allen Greenspan, says that an increase in tax revenue is needed to reach the desirable goal of cutting the deficit to two percent of the GNP by 1988 and reaching a balanced budget by early in the next decade. He criticized the proposed personal exemption increase from \$1,080 to \$2,000 would cause a huge \$40 billion annual revenue loss and would disproportionately benefit higher income groups, which would discourage work effort. About 38 percent of the \$40 billion tax cut would benefit 17 of the top taxpayers. He suggested that the President's proposal of \$2,000 exemption for those in the 15 percent bracket, those in the 25 percent with incomes between \$29,000 and \$70,000 should be \$1,200, incomes over \$70,000 should be \$1,000.

Representative Jack Kemp, author of Kemp-Kasten, agrees with the President's tax reform concept, but he feels that the tax exemption for the very poor should be raised, and the tax exemption for the top income should be lowered. These changes should be made in the President's proposal.

While everyone on Capitol Hill, cheers Mr. Reagan's tax reform concept, there are many differences with many of his specifics. Some feel that a tax reform is highly possible, considering the present tax system that the President imposed in '81, it is impossible to have a worse system of taxation.

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