

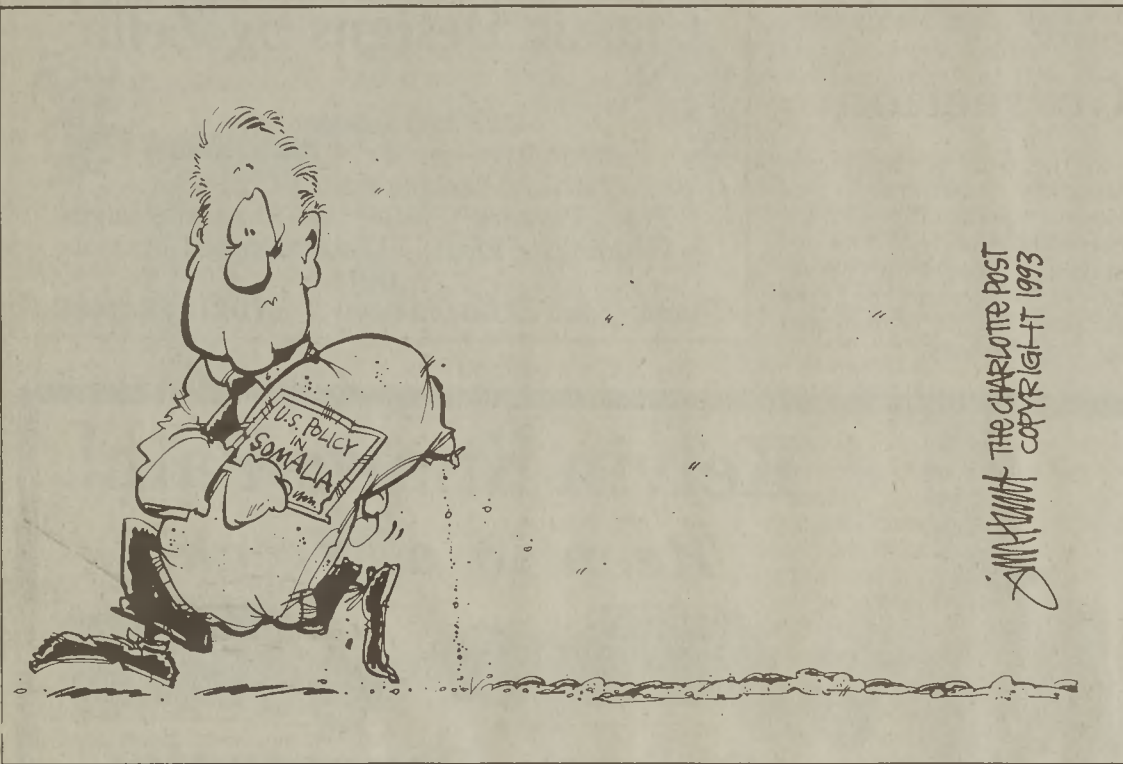
The Charlotte Post

The Voice Of The Black Community

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Decreasing Teen Pregnancy

More than 1 million American teenage girls become pregnant in any year.

This is the highest teen pregnancy rate in the industrialized world. In the black community, a teen gets pregnant every 104 seconds of every day. Dr. Joycelyn Elders, Surgeon General of the United States, recognizes the negative consequences of becoming a teen parent. A poor teenager with a baby, says Dr. Elders, "is captive to a slavery the 13th Amendment did not anticipate." The rise of adolescent pregnancy in the black community is symptomatic of the loss of hope, lack of opportunities, and poor education that is all too familiar to many black youths.

There is a proven relationship between poverty, limited school and life options, and early parenthood. Poor teens with below average basic skills are four to five times as likely as teens with average or better basic skills, who live above the poverty level, to become parents. Black children, who are more likely than their white peers to live in poverty and less likely to graduate from high school, are at-risk of becoming parents too soon. In 1989, white youths, ages 18 and under accounted for two out of three teen births. Black teens, however, accounted for more than half the births to girls younger than 15.

According to a U.S. News & World Report analysis of a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Pregnant girls 16 and under are the most likely to drop out of school, then to deliver the sickest and smallest babies. And nearly one in three gives birth to a second child within two years." We must turn around these frightening statistics and prevent too-early pregnancy and childbearing. This will require all of us to make a commitment to provide alternatives for our young people. We cannot continue to endanger the futures of two generations, the young parent and the child, through inattention or lack of commitment to our youths.

Programs such as the National Training Center for Adolescent Sexuality and Family Life Education in New York and the Summer Training and Education Program (STEP) Public Private Ventures in Philadelphia are successful examples from which we can learn. Since 1985, the National Training Center has served more than 300 teens and 110 adults at three separate sites. Counseling, academic help, self-expression, employment experience and health services, as well as family life and sex education, are all part of the five-day-a-week program. The Nation-

al Center's director, Dr. Michael Carrera, says perseverance and long-term commitment are keys to success when working with vulnerable teens.

The Public/Private Ventures similarly hopes to decrease teen pregnancy rates and decrease school drop-out rates by improving school performance and attendance; reducing summer learning loss; improving reading and math skills; motivating responsible sexual behavior; and fostering positive career, academic and



Marian Edelman

personal goals. The program provides job opportunities through the federal Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP) and tutoring services throughout the academic year to give teens the extra boost they need as they strive toward their goals.

To prevent teen pregnancy and childbearing, research suggests that we must provide teens with hope, information, opportunity and skills. We need to create a comprehensive web of community supports with the family at the center that address six basic areas: education and strong basic skills; a range of non-academic opportunities for success, including job opportunities and community service; links to caring adults who provide positive role models, values, and supports; family life education and life planning; comprehensive adolescent health services and a basic standard of living.

For more information about adolescent pregnancy prevention programs, write or call:

- The National Training Center for Adolescent Sexuality and Family Life Education, 350 East 88th St., New York, N.Y. 10128, (202) 876-9716.

- STEP Private/Public Venture, Communications Department, 399 Market St. Philadelphia, Pa. 19106, (215) 592-9099.

MARIAN EDELMAN, a native of Bennettsville, S.C., is president of the Children's Defense Fund.

Black Leadership's On The Right Track, At Last

By John Cashin
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

On the afternoon of Sept. 16, possibly the most significant event this decade in black history took place.

It was labeled a "National Town Hall Meeting" by its sponsors, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and the panelists were Congressman Kweisi Mfume, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus; Benjamin Chavis, executive director of the NAACP; Minister Louis Farrakhan, undisputed leader of the Nation of Islam and heir of Elijah Muhammad; Rev. Jesse Jackson, former U.S. presidential candidate and head of the Rainbow Coalition and congresswoman Maxine Waters from Los Angeles, probably the most outspoken black female in America.

There is no question that the distilled leadership of Black America - political, economic, and social - was present at this Thursday afternoon national Town Hall Meeting. The topic was "Race in America, Part II: The Political Perspective."

After well-chosen opening remarks, each panelist voiced their own perspective of what was wrong in America: Disunity! But then Ben Chavis fearlessly opened Pandora's Box, or at least he bit off a big chunk of formerly forbidden fruit. Rev. Chavis dared to address a subject that was on everyone's mind, but which no one else would mention: The exclusion of Farrakhan from the 30th celebration of A. Philip Randolph's August 1963 March On Washington, and Farrakhan's withering response to this insult in The Final Call, a Muslim newspaper.

The mention of Farrakhan's exclusion set off a chain reaction that led to five or six standing ovations from the non-Muslim audience of 3,000 or more - many of whom are leaders of Black America. Jackson, who had pragmatically distanced himself from Farrakhan in the face of Jewish wrath, was noticeably subdued.

An alliance between the Nation of Islam

and the NAACP was revealed and proclaimed. All other speakers pledged to meet behind closed doors to iron out differences and emerge there with unity.



Jackson

Proclaimed Farrakhan: "When we have this meeting in closed session, may we iron out whatever differences we may have and make a pledge to each other that we can say in public that we will never let somebody outside of our family determine what goes on inside of our family. And, we will tell those who wish to exclude a member of the family from participating with the family to keep their mouth out of our family business!"



Mfume



Farrakhan

Strong words! But my good friend Bill Raspberry says that Jewish support is critical for the black political-civil rights establishment, and questions whether they "can bring Farrakhan into the camp without triggering the defection of other critical allies."

Whether we like it or not, Louis Farrakhan speaks for a substantial component of an organized Black America. And he has a disciplined organization of his own that only fools will ignore. He cannot be excluded by any sensible coalition-builder, and Ben Chavis, Kweisi Mfume, Jesse Jackson, Maxine Waters, Leon Higginbotham, Cornel West, Lani Guinier, Mary Frances Berry, and the 3,000 town meeting attendees seem to be eminently sensible people.

JOHN CASHIN is an editorial writer for the National Newspaper Publishers Association who lives in Huntsville, Ala.

The Attraction Of Colin Powell

By James Alsbrook
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Colin Powell, a black man, as president of the United States?

Now that this charismatic and beloved former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has retired from the U.S. Armed Forces, various polls show that he, like Eisenhower, gained admiration so widespread that he would be a formidable candidate for the office of U.S. President. He is only 56 years old and at least 14 to 16 "good" years remaining.

Powell's political possibilities have been reported extensively in recent issues of various media, including the New York Times and U.S. News & World Report, and a very supportive book on him was published a few months ago. These white writers agree unanimously that Powell could be the first black president of the United States because people generally agree that he brought new respect for the U.S. military forces after the humiliating defeat from Vietnam.

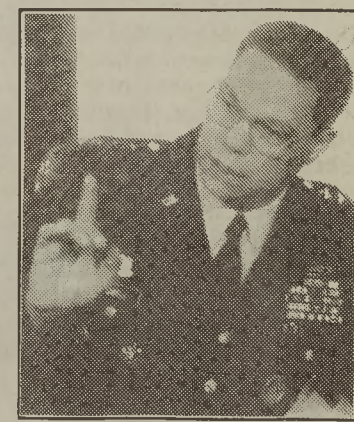
Powell is the author of military plans that were highly regarded and taught in military schools. Powell's published thinking on military tactics, strategies, and maneuvers came to the attention of top defense officials in the Reagan administration. Admiring Powell's military concepts and advanced thinking, they brought him to Washington in the Defense Department. Amid the pressures and wranglings of the Cold War, Reagan swallowed his usual anti-black policies to get the best advice from the most talented source and on Nov. 5, 1987, named Powell as his National Security Advisor. Bush named him Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Oct. 1, 1989.

When war with Iraq was definite on Jan. 23, 1991, Powell on television told the world his plans for the Iraqi army: "First, we are going to cut it off. And then we are going to kill it." This bluntness shocked people, but Powell did exactly what he said. The war was short, vicious and decisive and American military power was again rated topnotch.

If Powell has presidential

ambitions, is a Democrat and if Clinton makes no serious blunders, Powell would have no shoo-in place on the 1996 Democratic presidential ticket. Clinton clearly intends to become a candidate again in 1996 and Gore is securely fixed as his running mate. If Gore makes no major blunders, he would not step aside for Powell in 1996 because Gore wants to be President after Clinton has served two terms - in the year 2000.

JAMES ALSBROOK is a syndicated columnist.



Regardless of party, Colin Powell could be the first black U.S. president.

Black Conventions Better Off Investing In Communities

By William Reed
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

During the past summer, millions of African Americans trudged off to their annual conventions under the guise of getting together with their counterparts to solve the problems of blacks in America. In July, the NAACP took over the streets and major hotels of Indianapolis for their convention and the Urban League and Congressional Black Caucus brought tens of thousands to convene in Washington, D.C. this summer. The National Business League met at the famous Fairmont Hotel in New Orleans.

Tang Nivri, who writes for Emerge magazine, said that instead of solving black

problems, "Negroes routinely get together to eat chicken, drink vodka, chase women, play cards and make plans to do it all again next year."

For middle-income African Americans, who spend over \$15 billion a year going to reunions, conventions and conferences, such events are ritual happenings. If you profess to be "anybody" in civil rights, the church hierarchy or in a public position, you have to be on the scene and be seen.

Historians record that the first National Negro Convention was held in 1830 when Rev. Richard Allen, who founded the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, brought some 40 Negroes to discuss the establishment of a Negro colony in Canada. Since then the black convention has grown

into a billion-dollar business. What used to be annual gatherings designed to be strategic against racism have now developed into the greatest entertainment spectacle mankind could ever imagine, and has become a major financial bonanza to owners of the nation's leading Hyatts and Hiltons.

In addition to the bucks that whites are able to pocket from them, the black convention is now little more than a chance for African Americans to get together to blow a lot of hot air about "black economic development." They routinely spend everything they have so they can sleep, eat and drink in the finest hotels. Nivri points out that instead of being involved in black economic development, they are more involved in interna-

tional development. "They profile in \$1,200 Italian suits, high step in Ferragamo shoes, carry Louis Vuitton bags, parade in \$800 leather skirts, acid elevators with Anais Anais perfume, and wear long fur coats in hot weather."

With the amount of money that black associations, fraternities, sororities and civil rights groups spend annually in white hotels, they could buy, or build, their own lodging and meeting facilities. Two years ago, columnist Tony Brown suggested that major black groups not convene one year and use the funds they would have paid out to attend the convention to build their own hotels. In the meantime, hundreds of meetings have been held by us, themes of "black economic development" have been

spouted from podiums of Sheratons, Marriotts, and an occasional Four Seasons, but the number of black-owned hotels and commercial corridors has not increased.

Will blacks ever start to use their conventions, or convention monies, toward the betterment of The Race? Pity the unsuspecting and well-meaning black who comes to the convention with change on his/her mind. There seems to be very little room in the nation's finest inns for such change agents among us. The leadership of the groups that hold these conventions are held by cliques of people who want to do the same old thing in the same way, year in and year out. Instead of black improvement actions, the cur-

rent record of black conventioners trends more toward black efforts to improve the bottom line of whites in the hospitality business.

So, while the black National Bankers Association meets in Nashville's Opryland and the National Minority Supplier Development Council holds its confab at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, let's hope that their getting together there will at least solve problems of some jobs for blacks. Let's hope that at least the people making the beds in the suites and pouring the drinks will be black.

WILLIAM REED writes about urban affairs for the National Newspaper Publishers Association.