

# EDITORIALS

## Why Blacks Are Still Angry

For the 31 percent of African-Americans who live in poverty, the roots of rage aren't hard to fathom, they are the sources of the grim and, by now familiar litany of "Black Statistics." That one quarter of all African-American men, who are in jail or on probation or parole; that more than 60 percent of all black children born to mothers without husbands; that almost 40 percent of black males who dropout of high school and can't find jobs.

Much of this underclass lives all but pinned up in projects and deteriorating ghettos—"Our Brand Of Apartheid"—without any realistic prospect of escaping. All these blacks can look forward to is a life of inferior schools and menial jobs (if they can get them at all), where the only real prospect for enrichment lies in crime and dealing drugs.

It's not hard to see how their plight feeds the alarmingly widespread view that whites are plotting "genocide" against blacks, or creates support for the anti-white messages of Farrakhan and Sharpton.

Working class and professional blacks view the ghetto with mixed emotions. Anger that the government won't do more to help them, but also eagerness to steer clear of that dangerous and depressing world. Yet few blacks can completely escape white fears and prejudices fed by images of the underclass. When any black man watches the tape of the Rodney King beating in L.A.; he has to wonder if that could happen to him. Chicago political scientist Gary Orfield says numerous studies show that whites don't differentiate among blacks very well... If an upper-middle class black man puts on old clothes and heads for the hardware store in a mostly white neighborhood, he's likely to be seen as a threat! Johnnie Roberts, a Wall Street reporter, was accused of shoplifting after he brought a \$600 Hugo Boss suit at the elegant Barney's Men's Clothing Store in New York City. After Roberts produced a receipt, store officials apologized, but insisted their suspicions were "understandable."

## N. C. Should Regain Mass Transit Momentum

BY DAVID BONK

(Guest Editorial)

Public transportation in North Carolina has taken a back seat to the attention and resources poured into the state's roadbuilding program. The passage of the \$9 billion Highway Trust Fund by the General Assembly in 1989 represented a massive commitment to building new roads. Of the total appropriated through the Trust Fund only \$5 million was earmarked for "public transit." As it turned out, that money has been spent to subsidize the operations of the Carolinian Amtrak service between Charlotte and Raleigh and for the purchase of abandoned railway corridors—not to support ongoing statewide public transit services.

Despite the emphasis on road construction over the past 50 years, North Carolina does have a history of commitment to public transportation. During the early decades of this century, the major cities in the state, including Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte, and Greensboro, had extensive streetcar systems. In 1910 the capital city of Raleigh boasted 10½ miles of streetcar lines. It is interesting to note that public transportation, in the form of streetcars, played a pivotal role in the development of North Carolina's urban centers. It was the streetcar systems that opened up land around the fringes of the existing center city for development.

In 1990, there were 16 publicly operated transit systems in the state, carrying approximately 28.7 million riders. These systems ranged in size from Charlotte, with 10.5 million annual boardings, to Hickory, with 171,000. Overall, transit ridership was up 7.2 percent over the previous year. In the period between 1986 and 1990, statewide transit ridership rose more than 10 percent.

The federal government provides the great bulk of capital and operating funds for public transit in North Carolina. The state provides no operating funds and only 10 percent of any capital construction projects or equipment purchases. Unlike the state's road-building program, public transit in North Carolina requires substantial local investment for its operation. Fortunately, legislation currently under consideration in Congress may increase the availability of federal funds for mass transit projects.

The impacts of public transportation go beyond the immediate impacts of reducing congestion and air pollution. A comprehensive system of public transportation can provide a powerful engine for economic development. The business community has recognized that

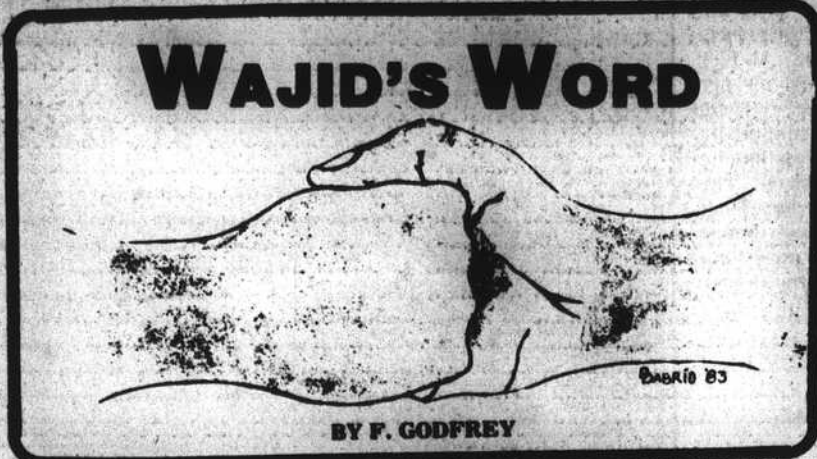
public transit services can provide access for a wide range of potential workers, particularly in lower-paying production jobs. In addition, an efficient public transit system could expand opportunities for home ownership by providing alternatives to the dependency on the automobile.

As the larger urban areas mature, there has been an increased interest in developing fixed guideway public transit systems, such as light rail. These systems have been seen as public works investments that can spur development and solve traffic congestion. They are also being hailed as demonstrations of progressive planning and civic responsibility. It is interesting that at the turn of the century, streetcars were also said to be examples of progressive government and were used by cities to promote development and attract new businesses.

Although these systems are not inexpensive, they can provide the urban areas of North Carolina with alternatives to the suburban sprawl of the past 30 years. The Raleigh Outer Loop is estimated to cost \$500 million and service a small part of the Research Triangle region, principally northern Wake County. This investment of \$500 million could construct 40 to 50 miles of light rail, easily connecting Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, and Cary with the Research Triangle Park and RDU Airport.

Perhaps the dilemma of public transit in North Carolina is best illustrated by the pitfalls facing the newly created Triangle Transit Authority. In 1990, the Legislature authorized the creation of the authority to serve Wake, Durham, and Orange counties but did not give it any means of raising operating funds. It was only after a long fight during the 1991 session that the authority was allowed, with the agreement of the three counties, to impose a \$5 vehicle registration fee in the region. The funds from this fee will not be available to the authority until at least the spring of 1992 and the Legislature limited the amount that could be spent on administration to just two percent of the anticipated \$2.5 million raised. This limit will require the authority to ask local governments for about \$100,000 in additional funds.

The future of public transportation in North Carolina during the 1990s will depend on the ability and willingness of state and local leadership to respond to changing social, economic, and environmental conditions. The growth in public transit ridership will continue across the state, requiring additional local funding and demanding that the state become much more involved in supporting transit services.



The following facts are noteworthy for the week of Oct. 20-26:

Oct. 20: North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co. organized in Durham, 1898.

Oct. 25: Benjamin O. Davis became the first black general in the U.S. Army, 1940.

Oct. 26: Mahalia Jackson, gospel singer, 1911-1972.

Here we go again! It has finally been revealed that Israel has some 300 nuclear weapons, armed and ready to destroy various countries in the Middle East and the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, the United States and its arrogant allies from Europe virtually destroyed tiny Iraq with one of the reasons given for the assault being tied to Iraq's imminent threat of being able to produce a nuclear bomb within the next 10 years. Once again, we are given a clear example of the double standard being applied by the United States and other European countries towards countries of people of color and countries of people of non-African descent.

A similar situation exists in South Africa where blacks are not allowed to purchase or own guns while every white person is required by law to learn how to shoot a gun!

While UN inspectors seized various blueprints for production of nuclear weapons in Iraq, Israel's arsenal is not subject to inspection or destruction. I have suggested in earlier articles that I strongly feel that Israel is a mere watchdog for the United States and other industrialized nations who depend on Middle Eastern oil to enhance and secure their positions of power in the "new world order."

It appears quite obvious where most of the \$3-4 billion of U.S. taxpayer money

which are given to Israel annually is going. While 30 million Americans, according to a recent study, are without any form of health insurance, our government continues to literally "pour" billions of dollars into weapons of destruction. This takes place directly through defense spending and indirectly through support for countries like Israel and South Africa.

It is obvious that these strategies are being utilized to keep the African in his place throughout the world. While the African in America is allowed to purchase guns, it is common knowledge who owns the real arsenals. In addition, as long as blacks continue to use their weapons on their own kind, they are perceived as being more of a benefit than a threat.

We will not place any demands on Israel to disarm. We do not want to harm the "peace process." Isn't it ironic that the U.S. and UN seem unconcerned about bringing peace to various parts of Africa and other parts of the world? Why are we so concerned about the Middle East? Is it oil? Is it Israel? Why didn't we attempt to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Iraq and Iran? Did the United States hope that they would kill each other off just as blacks are doing in the streets all across America?

Just about anything that happens to any people of color anywhere in the world has serious implications for what is happening to people of color all over the world. The frightening and sad thing is that too many people of color fail to recognize their connectedness to one another and hence, they pose no real threat to changing the status quo. Ironically, many people of color tend to enhance the status quo. Oh! My people! Peace!

## DIFFERENT VOICE

BY DOROTHY SHAW-THOMSON

IS THERE A HEART IN THE HOUSE?

I invite all of you to rent the newly released movie, "The Five Heartbeats," to recapture a positive reminder of the talent, indomitable will and most importantly, the basic good nature that lies in the spirit of us all as African-Americans. Especially note the instance when the five young boys entered a talent show believing that their talent, the rules of the contest and the ability of the audience to recognize talent would give them a fair chance and perhaps a win. This scene, and the song they sang, is stamped on my heart and in my opinion needs to be sung with courage and fervor by all of us. You see, what they didn't know when they went to the talent show was that the pianist had been paid to discredit their song and members of the audience were set to boo them no matter what they did.

Joyce Fennell and I had a similar experience this week. We attempted to facilitate a conference with a principal, teacher and student at Enloe High School, believing that the rightness of our mission, the rules and our intelligence would effect positive communication. We hoped that we could alter a situation potentially damaging to a young person's view of the rightness of assertiveness, creativity of ideas and the ultimate fairness of adults. This was not an instance where a board policy had been broken, nor had student violated a rule that would result in suspension or expulsion, nor was this a question of grades. The student, a good, decent, bright girl, wanted an opportunity to be heard, to have her ideas respected and to forge a positive relationship between herself and a teacher.

The parent had heard that being involved is important; that Enloe seeks to better human and race relations and that the school has an open-door policy that encourages parents to come in and get involved. As a friend, who had also worked at Enloe as a home-school coordinator, as a counselor who has attended many conferences in that position, as well as a parent and as an advocate, I believed I could be helpful and agreed to attend. For our beliefs we were given a new picture, new rules, a different audience than I have ever been a part of and a new experience,

hopefully never to be repeated at Enloe. The principal, after scheduling a conference with the parent at a time when I was with her, presented her with a policy (No. 6520, Due Process—Student Grievance Step No. 4), which did not apply to the situation, telling her that he would see her, but he would not allow (little old, silent, nice, intelligent, assertive but not aggressive) me to attend. The parent, believing that she had rights, asserted that she would see him and she would see him today. Remember, now, Rosa Parks—"my feet are tired... I will not move to the back of the bus."

History does repeat itself, because the POLICE were called. The charge was disrupting the school process and refusing to leave, i.e., trespassing, on school property. Not only was the parent to be arrested, but so was I, who had not said one word to this principal, who had not moved from my seat, who had not even been afforded the courtesy of an introduction or a hello, who had not been asked by anybody to leave—I was to be arrested as well.

What was also our experience was that "There was no heart in that house at this time either." I'm hoping that that audience had not also been stacked. Yes, there were others in that office but there was not one who was willing to say, "Sir, these people are my people. I believe you can listen to them. This child could be my child. I'll sit in, we can do this calmly." It scares me to think that this plan was known ahead of time, but nobody called to say don't come. It scares me to believe that others agreed with what happened. It scares me to believe that if this is the attitude that is allowed and maybe even encouraged in regards to adults, what is the atmosphere as it pertains to children, students, teachers, etc.

In the movie, "The Five Heartbeats," Robert Townsend moves the pianist off the bench and plays his own music. The lead singer and the group are encouraged by a familiar rendition of their song, the frightened group member takes courage from the group committee and sings away. The leader sets the pace, captures the audience, even those who have been paid

# TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL

BY TONY BROWN

IN SPITE OF BLACK LEADERS, BLACKS SAVED THOMAS

In all my years on this Earth, I don't remember being so proud of being black and of black people, not black leaders, however.

Justice of the United States Supreme Court Clarence Thomas was found innocent of the most vicious charges that can be made about a fellow human being. Anita Hill, his accuser, according to opinion polls, was seen for what she is by a 2-to-1 margin.

USA Today reported that 57 percent of men and 53 percent of women wanted him confirmed after Hill's raunchy story and that 47 percent of all Americans believed that Thomas was telling the truth. Only 24 percent believed the bizarre tales of pornography and lewd offers told by Anita Hill.

Support for his confirmation among blacks was an astonishing 70 percent, the highest of any group in the country.

And when the Democratic senators with the large black voting blocs in the South saw that figure, it made it much easier to believe Thomas. Their votes secured his confirmation.

I'm proudest of the 70 percent of the black population that rejected the vicious attacks of the Congressional Black (Democratic) Caucus, the directors of the national NAACP, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and opportunistic black liberals who issued the lynching license for white-liberal fascists.

Acting on this license to kill were the People for the American Way, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Ted Kennedy and his staffer Ricki Seidman, a People for the American Way confederate. Along with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, they are all strong suspects for leaking Hill's allegations to anti-Thomas press sources.

Fortunately for Thomas, the public saw through them. And just as fortunate was Thomas' decision to call their process "a high-tech lynching."

A Mack truck could have driven through the holes in Hill's story. But the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee conveniently ignored them.

They didn't, however, ignore Thomas' apparent anger when he nailed them for being racists, and told them where they could put their Supreme Court job.

One of the brightest politicians in the country is state Rep. Calvin Smyre, a Democrat from Georgia. Smyre said he was particularly afraid that the defeat of the Thomas nomination would have resulted in significant black defections from the Democratic Party.

"Watching these Democrats taking a black man through this type of process," he said, upset many black people. One of those people is Ms. P.F. from Yonkers, N.Y.

"Watching the performance of the Senate, especially Kennedy, I became ashamed of the fact that I consider myself a Democrat," she wrote in her letter congratulating me on becoming a Republican and defending Thomas on the "Phil Donahue Show."

I have to be careful when I criticize Democrats because some blacks equate black and white liberals and Democrats with God. I am also careful because I

Democrats with God. I am also careful because I'm a Republican. And you see what happened to Clarence Thomas for leaving the plantation and defying the black thought police and their white bosses.

The Texas Times, a black weekly in Fort Worth, Texas, warned its readers in an "Editor's Note" below my picture:

"You may have been as baffled as we were by Tony Brown's column last week urging blacks to support

(See TONY BROWN, P. 8)

## MIND'S EYE

by Agatha E. Carroo

NURTURING SPECIAL GIFTS

Parenting requires a special relationship with our children. One of the often forgotten parental responsibilities is identifying, nurturing and reinforcing their special gifts and talents.

As I recently examined one of the perfumed birthday cards that I received from my 14-year-old daughter when she was five or six, I can remember my thoughts: "How cute." Phrases such as, "Love is a shove of tender loving super love," or "love is a hard candy, giving treats," did not exactly strike my fancy.

Yet, I remember giving warm praises and many hugs. The cards kept coming along with a continuous stream of poetic writings over the years.

Her elementary school teachers for the most part seems

Her elementary school teachers for the most part seemed rather oblivious to any special talents as they placed a check mark at the top of her poetic meanderings. Over time, I began to see a God-given talent blossoming and growing. I began to save her poems and all of her writings.

It is too often the case that parents tend to ignore or devalue special talents and abilities of their children. In some households and neighborhoods, a quiet, creative young boy, perhaps a budding writer, might be labeled a "slay." Yet, unknown to the teasers, he may be the next James Baldwin or Alex Haley.

A child who paints or draws might be told of all the financial pitfalls of choosing a career as an artist. Hopefully, the guardians of Romare Bearden were not so predisposed.

Musical talent seems much more valued in our community, resulting in a continuous stream of brilliant young singers. In our school systems, particularly in the non-magnet programs, creative talent and gifts should be recognized and promoted through talent contests, class presentations and activities.

Community programs should also include a recognition of our children's God-given gifts. However, the larger burden should rest with parents and guardians who are witnesses to the early budding of special talents. They must be the shepherds who watch over their growth and development.

To continue my story... My daughter has now written a book of poetry titled "Ancestral Rhythms," consisting of more than 50 poems. Her early poetic meanderings have developed into profound, symbolic representations of life and our heritage, with such titles as "African Wine," "Even Thunderstorms Must Die," "Möfrier Earth's Cry," "Imagination" and "Mother Stands."

As a parent, guardian and teacher, we must support our children's God-given gifts. You truly may be grooming the next Maya Angelou or the president of the United States.