



We see the world through Black eyes

## Ford bad influence

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hit President Ford for his attempt to restrict court-ordered busing. "Such efforts undermine the desegregation process and jeopardize the rights of minority students. Furthermore, these attempts contribute to the position of some individuals that desegregation can be avoided," the report states.

The commission, which is headed by Arthur S. Flemming, former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and President of the University of Oregon, found that support of local school officials and other local leaders strongly influences the outcome of desegregation programs. "The public generally follows the lead of officials who are responsible for school desegregation" and national leaders set the tone for local leaders.

It is obvious that President Ford, with his long term attempts to avoid desegregation through constitutional amendment or through interference with the courts, has not provided that leadership. His blatant defense of segregation has lent inspiration to those who attempt to avoid the law.

Although the President has made some belated attempts to talk to Black educators and businessmen, this has the aura of politics rather than genuine interest. We have yet to see the results of a real concern for Black citizens.

## Amnesty needed now

Jimmy Carter's pledge to give pardon to draft evaders has upset the American Legion Convention in Seattle where he spoke Monday, and undoubtedly upsets others as well.

The fate of those who chose not to serve in the Vietnam war because of conscience still has not been decided. Many thousands of men are still abroad, unwilling to come home to face imprisonment or substitute service and unwilling to admit guilt. Out of our 113,000 draft evaders and deserters, only 21,729 were willing to apply for President Ford's brand of pardon, which required an admission of breaking the law.

Jimmy Carter offers pardon, not amnesty. He explains that amnesty implies the action was right, where pardon makes no judgement. We have always advocated amnesty -- in fact we have advocated honor for those who were willing to stand for what they believed to be right even though it meant leaving their country -- and their families and friends -- or going to jail.

We believe these men deserve more than pardon or amnesty -- they deserve the same financial benefits as those who did chose to serve. Now that the nation has recognized its error, these men should deserve the same educational and financial benefits as those who participated in the war. Those who served time in jail or in public service should be compensated financially for time spent.

The fundamental issue is not, as many would make us believe, whether a citizen has the right to decide in which wars he will fight. The issue is whether the citizen has the right to disobey an unjust and illegal command. Throughout our history we have determined that he has. If individual citizens had not been willing to break unjust laws, we would have slavery today.

The Vietnam war was an illegal and immoral war. We can no longer permit the young men who understood this before their leaders did to suffer. Whether it is amnesty or pardon, it must come quickly.

## Another Point of View

DRAMATIC CONVENTION

From The Afro-American

That was no ordinary convention the Democrats held in the Big Apple to formally award Jimmy Carter the presidential nomination he had won and to provide him his chosen running mate, Senator Walter Mondale.

Despite all you hear about its dullness, this was one of the more dramatic and significant national political conventions in history.

With a unity mood prevailing, the South peacefully came back into the Union in spirit as well as legally and that region's first modern-day candidate for the presidency is vowing to bring Blacks and other minorities into the mainstream.

This time it does not seem to be just more of the same rhetoric.

Jimmy Carter displays glints of steel when he flashes his vote-getting smile, and there is real commitment in his voice when he vows to do something then adds, "You can depend on it."

Better still, Jimmy Carter is showing already that he has a commitment by having Blacks like Representative Andrew Young in his braintrust. Other Blacks are playing key roles in the campaign.

The Black Caucus of Democrats looked Jimmy Carter in the eye during the Democratic convention and told him they were not giving him their support for nothing, in other words, not for peanuts.

In a way, we expect they wanted to see close-up how this southern presidential nominee would react when independent-minded Blacks called his head. By and large, they were satisfied.

Those who were not completely satisfied found Carter so much a better alternative to either President Ford or Ronald Reagan that they are ready to work to see that neither of these Republicans are in the White House after January.

To be sure, the Republicans are going to test the Carter theory and that of the Democratic leadership which concludes that America is ready to reconcile differences built around race and region.

Both Ford and Reagan are capable of playing the racial game in the upcoming campaign -- and will.

Carter-Mondale's big election campaign task is to hold together the elements supporting their progressive views and to see that their people get to the polls in November.

## Postcard Registration

by Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Copley News Service

It is reported that 4.5 million persons in California are eligible to vote but are not registered. How many times have we talked to neighbors and friends who are frustrated and angry when they can't vote because they are not registered?

In every presidential election the percentage of voting-age population that does not vote grows larger. The magnitude of the number of nonvoters is dramatically illustrated by a report from the National Municipal League. It said that for every vote separating the two major candidates in the 1968 presidential election, there were 108 people who did not vote.

Congress presently is pressing for postcard voter registration, a process which would break down many traditional barriers. Ideally, postcards would be mailed to every American household. Registration by mail will be a milestone of greater significance than many of us are aware.

At present, the practice of personal registration is considered a major cause of our dismal voting records. In almost all states a citizen must appear in person sometime before election day and declare his or her eligibility to vote. This personal act combined with historic registration roadblocks has worked to deny the vote to millions of Americans.

Traditional deterrents have been re-

mote registration locations, short and inconvenient office hours, understaffing and long registration lines, complex registration forms, uncooperative election officials, restrictive residency requirements and deadlines far removed from elections.

Those who are excluded from voting by these restrictions are most often the young, the urban poor, Blacks, American Indians and Mexican-Americans. If the democratic system is to function effectively, we must find a way that everyone eligible can register easily and simply.

In Canada reports show that 98 per cent of all eligible voters are actually registered. In Canada "enumerators" go to each household in each election district in urban areas to register voters. Canvassing takes place over a six-day period before each parliamentary election.

In contrast, registration in the United States, with our personal registration system, was 55 per cent in 1972.

The prospects of passing federal postcard registration this year are slim. The provision for mailing the postcards to every household was eliminated before the bill passed the House. It is expected to be vetoed by President Ford after being passed by the Senate late in August.

If strength in Congress can be mustered to override the presidential veto, postcards will have to reach potential voters in time for them to be returned by October 4th, a month before the presidential election.

However, in California postcard registration became law on July 1st. Potential voters may register by mail for the November general election. Unfortunately, postcards will not be sent to each household.

But they will be available to individual citizens' groups, political parties, candidates and organizations.

What happens in Los Angeles County will be a test of national significance. In Los Angeles alone, there are 1.75 million eligible voters who are not registered. The county registrar has printed 2.25 million postcard registration forms. The question now is how to get the job done.

For those of us in public life, it will be a test of how well we can make the system work. The unregistered voters are those hardest to reach. They must be contacted and assured of the value and validity of filling out and returning the postcard. Since the deadline to register for the November election is October 4th, the month of September is the critical time.

The possibility still exists that this year the traditional registration roadblocks nationwide will give way, at least for federal elections. New problems of reaching voters, of fraud and of coordinating federal registration with state registration are ones with which most of us will willingly work.

To eliminate that election day lament of those who wanted to vote, but had not been able to register, will strengthen our government, something we all strive to do.

## To Be Equal

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

Years ago Ralph Ellison wrote a novel, "The Invisible Man", that remains one of the classics of American literature. His hero, a Black man, was "invisible" in the sense that the larger society totally ignores Black people, doesn't see them as human beings, doesn't care about their problems, and doesn't acknowledge their existence.

Blacks became "visible" in the sixties but the policy of "benign neglect" heralded a new era of invisibility, one that continues today. But today's invisible Black is young -- hundreds of thousands of Black young people simply don't exist in the official statistics.

About a quarter of Black youth between ages of 18 and 21 are out of school and out of work. They're not in the educational statistics since they are no longer in school. They're not counted in the employment statistics since they're not working. And the government doesn't even count them among the unemployed since many have just given up looking for jobs that aren't there.

Back in 1960, two out of three Black teenage men were in the labor force; today only about two out of five are working or looking for work. The rest have been pushed into invisibility. Except that they aren't really invisible; they're on the streets, facing an aimless

present and a grimmer future. No jobs, no training, no skills, no work experience all add up to prospects for lifetimes of dependence and poverty.

Even those who haven't yet been totally pushed out of our schools and our economy are in bad trouble. The government admits to a 40 per cent unemployment rate among Black teenagers, and the true rate is about 67 per cent.

Among Black young people between the ages of 20 and 24, one out of three are jobless according to the understated official figures. And a third of young Black Vietnam veterans, men who laid their lives on the line in a war no one wanted, can't find work.

This awful situation can't be laid to the recession. All the other economic statistics seem to be improving, but youth unemployment is rising. And it's been rising steadily -- for Blacks and for whites -- over the past twenty years or so.

This is an insane situation. Our country is simply throwing millions of its young people onto a rubbish heap, denying them the training and the jobs that would not only equip them for productive futures, but also ensure the full use of America's human resources.

It is clear that the situation demands speedy and effective action to get our young people back onto the track that will lead to responsible adulthood, and it's also clear that this national problem demands national solutions in the form of a

National Youth Employment Program.

Such a program would start off by establishing the right of all young people to the education and job-training experiences to equip them for productive work.

Since most current proposals for full employment don't include young people, there ought to be a Youth Employment Agency in Washington to deal with youth job problems and to provide opportunities for young people.

The prime opportunity ought to come in the form of a massive public service program that creates public service jobs -- full time and part time -- for young people. Back in the 1930's the Civilian Conservation Corps put youngsters to work on our forests and streams. In the 70's, an Urban Conservation Corps could revive urban housing, parks and public services while providing young people with training, skills and work experience.

The private sector should also be encouraged to do more about creating part-time work opportunities in school-work programs, and in getting rid of the excessive credentials that bar youngsters from jobs they used to get years ago. Federal subsidies could encourage greater youth hiring, too.

And law, executive orders and court cases are needed to stop job discrimination based on age.

America can't just write off a whole generation; it can't stumble into its third century at war with its own future.

## Democratic Party platform

(Continued from p. 1 col. 6)

The Platform does call for enforcing the law and the Constitution so as to bring about school desegregation and recognizes the need for pupil transportation as "a judicial tool of last resort," and it encourages a variety of other measures for school desegregation such as strong fair housing enforcement. The concern of the CBD about civil rights enforcement with respect to hiring and promotion in school systems is also expressed in the Platform.

In higher education, the Platform again follows the thrust of the CBD agenda, particularly with respect to financial assistance for students from low and moderate income families. The Platform gives direct support for continued support for predominantly Black colleges.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**  
In a Civil and Political Rights plank within the Government and Human Needs section, and in other sections throughout the Platform, strong support is given for equal opportunity and affirmative action for all Americans. This includes the specific areas of equal job opportunity, equal education opportunity, voting rights, and equal housing opportunity. The Civil Rights Plank calls not only for equal opportunity, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, age, language or national origin, but also for vigorous federal programs and policies of compensatory opportunity to remedy the generations of injustice and deprivation. The Platform also calls for full funding of programs to secure the implementation and enforcement of civil rights.

In addition, the democratic Platform calls for the declaration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a national holiday.

**INCOME SECURITY -- FOOD STAMPS -- TAX REFORM**  
The Democratic Party Platform calls for fundamental welfare reform, as does the CBD. The Platform adopts several basic points in the Charlotte document including an income floor and federal financing, but it hedges on the federal role by speaking of a system of income maintenance "substantially" financed by the federal government, and a "phased

reduction in the states' share of welfare costs." The detailed plan offered by the CBD to combine the tax system and the welfare system under a Credit Income Tax is not in the Platform. The Platform contains a provision saying that "those persons who are physically able to work should be required to accept appropriate available jobs or job training." This provision excludes mothers with dependent children and requires that appropriate available jobs or training opportunities "be provided" for such persons.

The Platform mentions the Food Stamp Program several times, but does not discuss it in the detail of the CBD agenda. However, with respect to tax reform, the Platform takes an equally vigorous and more detailed position in favor of tax reform than the Charlotte document.

**FOREIGN POLICY**

The major recommendations of the Caucus of Black Democrats with respect to foreign policy concerned Africa. The Party Platform expressed the CBD's primary concerns on Africa. These include a recognition that the U.S. has been indifferent to the needs of Black Africa while cooperating with racist regimes, that we must formulate a rational African policy based on mutual interests rather than on U.S.-Soviet power politics, that we must concretely support majority rule in southern Africa and increase bilateral and multi-lateral assistance. The Platform specifically calls for an end to the relaxation of the arms embargo against South Africa, prohibit granting U.S. tax credits for companies doing business in Namibia and paying taxes to South Africa, and calls for repeal of the Byrd Amendment which permits importation of Rhodesian chrome to the U.S.

**MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The Caucus of Black Democrats spelled out fourteen detailed proposals with respect to minority business enterprise. The Democratic Platform has a short section on small businesses generally, with a specific reference to the needs of minority business: "efforts should be made to strengthen minority business programs, and increase minority oppor-

tunities for business ownership." The general principles with respect to small business parallels some of the CBD positions with respect to minority businesses, including making efforts to assure the availability of loans and direct government loans. It does not speak to such matters as a moratorium on loan repayments by the federal government, set-asides and creation of a Minority Business Investment Corporation or support for the Minority Enterprise Act of 1978.

**RURAL AND SMALL TOWN DEVELOPMENT**  
The Party Platform expresses the basic concerns of CBD such as rural housing, water and sewer facilities, better program administration and full funding of the Rural Development Act. There is concern expressed about the loss of family farms generally, but not about Black land loss specifically. There is no parallel to the CBD call for establishment of a cabinet-level rural affairs agency.

**ENERGY**

The Platform contains strong positions with respect to energy policy, which are similar to many CBD issues. It calls for a rate structure reform without specifically asking for "lifeline rates" or "energy stamps". It makes energy conservation a primary goal of energy policy, and calls for programs to provide energy-saving materials for existing housing. The Platform calls for an examination of utilities' advertising costs, as does the CBD, and for transferring such costs to influence public policy to stockholders rather than to consumers. There is no position in favor of a publicly-owned gas and oil company.

The Party Platform goes beyond the CBD issue endorsing horizontal divestiture (prohibition of ownership of competing forms of energy) in the energy field, and in asking for an examination of and action on vertical ownership in the oil industry.

The energy section is deficient in not speaking directly of the need for protecting lower-income persons against the increase in energy costs and in not speaking directly to the need for democratic control of and Black involvement in energy development.



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