

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Organize now for 1984

Ed Leek has been elected to the House of Representatives from District 18—the district that was created to give the black community the maximum potential to elect a candidate of its choice—black or white—to the House.

Leek won a smashing victory—greatly outdistancing all of his competitors. But this victory does not demonstrate that he is representative of the community or that he is accepted by the community. This fact was evidenced by the outcry after his Primary win; we do not know of a single predominately black organization that supported his candidacy. It is also demonstrated by the number of black candidates who ran against him and the efforts of various groups to find a suitable candidate. A third signal is that Leek won with less than 50 per cent of the vote, a smaller number than those who voted against him and this does not include those who boycotted this race.

We expect Leek's voting record in the House to be very good; he represents the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. He is knowledgeable; his votes will be progressive. The opposition is based on perceived arrogance, egotism and paternalism. Leek managed to alienate nearly every black group he addressed. Some of his other efforts have been self-serving, for example his wife's attempt to bar Charles Staudamire from the Democratic Central Committee, because he was reported to have supported Kent Ford, at a time when Democrats should be encouraging black participation. This does not reflect well on a man who is elected to represent the black community.

The reason Leek could be elected is that the leadership of the black community did not select and unite behind one candidate. The BUF attempted to meet with potential candidates to begin the process, but most of the potential candidates denied they were candidates. The Front then added its candidate to the pool. The other leadership groups—the ministers, the organizations, the social clubs—remained silent.

None of those who finally surfaced in the primary were willing to withdraw in the interest of unity and the same thing happened in the General.

We have only ourselves to blame. The door was open but this community did not have the political know how to go through it. This political knowledge must be developed and developed quickly if black people are ever going to have an opportunity to participate. Factionalism must be left behind; the political system must be understood and used.

In other communities eight, ten or more candidates can run for office and may the best candidate win. The black community does not have that luxury. At least for now, it will be difficult for any black candidate to get the votes to win. Cut those available votes four or five ways and it is impossible. In Portland, Oregon the way for a black candidate to win is to be *the* candidate. If that is to be, some persons will have to put their own personal ambitions and desires aside in the interest of the community. Not all can lead; not all can be elected.

The decision of who will be the candidate in 1984 must be made by the community and it must be made soon. If the community can get together and select a candidate—rather than allowing the candidates to select themselves—the results can be different next time. The work and organization needed must begin soon.

The question that now must be answered is whether Leek will learn to represent the community. It is incumbent on him—as the elected official—to build bridges, to insure that he communicates with the community, to involve the community in the legislative processes. He might find out what it is that so alienates many of his constituents and make amends. He could, perhaps, even gain some reluctant support or at least a working relationship.

This is a two way street. Leek will be in Salem; he has a vote and will have influence. The community leadership must insure that Leek receives the input that will guarantee that he represents District 18.

If this communication is not achieved, both will be isolated. Leek will be in Salem without the support of his constituents and this community will still be without representation.

The full employment option

by Norman Hill
A Philip Randolph Institute

The monthly recitation of Labor Department unemployment figures lately has taken on the characteristics of a dirge. With each month's inexorable increase in the human misery brought about by the recession come the inevitable grim-faced editorialists with their televised commentaries lamenting the Administration's inaction. From the Administration come the obligatory expressions of concern and the empty promises of prosperity around the corner. When such equivocations were first advanced, they at least had the force of novelty behind them. Today even the novelty has worn thin and the unemployment statistics only emphasize the bankruptcy of the Administration's economic program.

Each month of Reaganomics brings with it more of the same bad news. The tragedy of 11.3 million out of work, and of millions more working part-time or dropping out of the job market, has been ritualized.

This record of continued failure must test the limits of the public's tolerance. And October's news that the unemployment rate stands at 10.1 per cent indicates where the limits of tolerance lie.

Yet, disastrous as it is, for black Americans 10.1 per cent unemployment, would be regarded as a heaven-sent improvement. For, today, black unemployment stands at 20.2 per cent, more than double the rate for white workers.

For the last two decades, through

ups and downs, under Republicans and Democrats, black unemployment has consistently stood at twice that of other workers.

The reasons for this phenomenon are complex and numerous. Blacks are disproportionately located in such industries as steel and auto, which have been hardest hit by the recession. The black workforce is younger in age and has less seniority than the white workforce. A large proportion of black workers are unskilled and so are most vulnerable to layoffs.

Yet despite such elegant and sophisticated explanations, the fact remains that today black unemployment stands nearly at the same level as national unemployment during the Great Depression. It constitutes a national failure and disgrace.

The full extent of the catastrophe have yet to be gauged. But we all know what losing a job can do to family stability, to a person's sense of self-worth, to a worker's sense of motivation. This recession is tearing at the seams of the social fabric of the black community.

What the unemployment statistics would seem to call for is a jobs program that deals with the requirements of all those who are out of work, whether they be black or white, while recognizing the specific needs of blacks.

Yet according to the October 7th *Washington Post*, Reagan Administration officials in the Education Department have recommended major personnel cuts in education programs that primarily benefit minority and disadvantaged children. The

focus of the recommended cutbacks is Title I, a program that provides states with funds to help disadvantaged children improve their math and reading skills. Such skills are absolutely essential for any worker's successful entry into the job market.

There is, of course, a humane, workable and rational alternative to such inhumane proposals. It is to be found in the anti-recessionary program developed by the AFL-CIO. The program calls for a massive re-industrialization and modernization effort centered around a government-supported Reconstruction Finance Corporation which would target loans; loan guarantees, interest rates, subsidies and tax benefits to stimulate economic growth in high unemployment areas. The program also calls for temporary restrictions on imports which result in the loss of American jobs, for the training and re-training of workers, and for the providing of funds for new low-and-middle-income housing.

The disastrously high unemployment rate is only the latest signal that Reaganomics has failed. Yet even if the President and the Republican Party are repudiated on Election Day, November 2nd, the momentum of this repudiation will soon dissipate if it is not channeled into support for a constructive national economic agenda that recognizes the special needs of blacks and other unemployed workers. Only by linking the politics of protest to such a program for economic growth will our country find itself on the road to economic recovery.

Crisis on the Black Campus

by Manning Marable

All educational institutions mirror the racial and class dynamics of the larger society. Black higher education was designed neither to promote the intellectual development of black youth, nor to advance the material prospects for black working class and poor people. Education for blacks, as first advanced by the white majority, was to maintain the structures of inequality within both the political economy and the culture and society as a whole.

Thus, black students and faculty who attended and taught at majority black colleges have always faced a very different set of problems than those which confront progressive minded whites at predominantly white schools. From their beginning after the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, these colleges were directly the products of racial segregation. Black scholars like W.E.B. DuBois, who graduated from Harvard with honors in 1895, were not hired to permanent posts in white universities simply on the basis of race.

The historically black college is largely the direct product of racial segregation. Ninety one of the 107 black colleges were established before 1910. Generally underfinanced and inadequately staffed, black higher education was permitted to exist only in skeletal form during the long night of White Supremacy. As late as 1946, only four black colleges—Howard University, Fisk University, Taladega College and North Carolina State—were accredited by the Association of American Universities. In the school year 1945-46, black undergraduate enrollment was 43,878 in the black colleges. Less than eighteen hundred attended black professional schools; only 116 were then training to become lawyers. Even after the passage of expanded educational legislation, the number of Afro-Americans who were financially able to attend universities was pitifully small. By 1950, 41,000 "minority" men and 42,000 "minority" women (blacks, Asians, etc.) between ages 18-24 attended colleges, about 4.5 per cent of their total age grouping. That same year, by way of contrast, 1,025,000 white males between 18-24 years old attended college, 15 per

cent of the total white age group. The function of the black college was, at least from the view of white society, to train the Negro to accept a "separate and unequal" position within American life.

Despite these institutional barriers to quality education, the black schools did a remarkable job in preparing black youth for productive careers in the natural and social sciences, in the trades and humanities. A brief review of one black college, Fisk University, provides an illustration. Fisk was the home for a major number of black intellectuals during the era of segregation: DuBois, historian John Hope Franklin; sociologist E. Franklin Frazier; artists/novelists James Weldon Johnson, Arna Bontemps, Sterling Brown, Nikki Giovanni, John Oliver Killens, and Frank Yerby. A number of Fisk alumni joined the ranks of the black elite in the twentieth century as decisive leaders in public policy, representing a variety of political tendencies: U.S. Representative William L. Dawson; Marion Berry, mayor of Washington, D.C.; Wade H. McCree, U.S. Solicitor General during the Carter Administration; U.S. district judge Constance Baker Motley; Civil Rights activist John Lewis; Texas State Representative Wilhelmina Delco; Federal judge James Kimbrough. Other Fisk graduates moved into the private sector to establish an economic program for black development along capitalist lines, such as A. Maceo Walker, president of Universal Life Insurance Company. One out of every six black physicians, lawyers and dentists in the United States today are Fisk graduates. A similar profile could be obtained from Atlanta University, Morehouse College of Atlanta, Spelman College of Atlanta, Tougaloo College of Mississippi, Tuskegee Institute of Alabama, Howard University of Washington, D.C., and other black institutions of higher learning. My point here is not that these schools ever developed a clear pedagogy for black liberation, nor that they were organically linked to the daily struggles of the black masses. The conservatism of many black college administrators, as represented by Tuskegee's Booker T. Washington, is almost legend among people. These schools operated under the

rigid constraints of race/class tyranny, and often suffered under benign-to-malignant administrations imposed by white trustees and state governments. But despite these and other contradictions, the black universities have on the balance been much more open to progressive and liberal faculty—particularly during the period of the Cold War of the 1940s and 1950s. They created the intellectual and social space necessary for the development of militant political reformers, dedicated public school teachers, physicians, and other skilled professionals within the black community. Without such institutions, the nightmare of Jim Crow might still exist, and the material conditions of the black ghetto and working class would unquestionably be worse.

The Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, combined with a political shift of the U.S. government under the Johnson Administration toward implementation of some affirmative action guidelines within white civil society accelerated this educational process. By 1970, 192,000 black men and 225,000 black women between ages 18-24 attended college. The overall percentage of black youth enrolled in college, 15.5 per cent, contrasted with white attendance figures of 34 per cent for males and 21 per cent for females. Five years later, 294,000 black men and 372,000 black women between ages 18-24 were in college, respectively 20 and 21 per cent of their age groups. The most recent available statistics, for the years 1976 and 1977, reveal a slight decline in black college enrollment—a testament to the political assaults against black educational opportunity of the 1970s. The total numbers of black college youth slipped from 749,000 to 721,000, and the percentage of black men who were college students within the 18-24 age group declined from 22.0 to 20.2 per cent. Despite the desegregation of white universities, traditionally black institutions continue to serve a majority of blacks seeking college or professional training. 25 per cent of all blacks in higher education attend the 35 state-supported black colleges. 62 per cent of all black M.D.s and 73 per cent of all black Ph.D.s are products of black institutions.

Hill, Leek join Legislature

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publican challenger Thomas Phelan 3 to 1; Les AuCoin handily defeated Bill Moshofsky, former Georgia-Pacific executive; Jim Weaver retained his 4th District seat. Denny Smith narrowly defeated Democrat Ruth McFarland in District 5. Re-

publican Robert Smith becomes Oregon's fifth Congressman.

Jim Hill of Salem has won election to the House of Representatives from District 31 in Salem.

A lawyer, Hill served as a hearings officer in the State Department of Revenue for three years, hearing citizens' appeals of property and income tax assessments. As an Oregon Assistant Attorney General he specialized in public utility regulations, criminal law, anti-trust enforcement and workmen's compensation.

Hill, a Democrat, defeated Republican Diana Evans with 60.71 percent of the vote.

Oregonians defeated all ballot measures except the nuclear freeze. Of special concern was Ballot Measure 3, the 1 1/2 percent property tax limitation which would have greatly restricted funds available to state and local governments.

State Superintendent of Schools Verne Duncan won a third term, handily defeating challenger Bill Kendrick, Superintendent of the Salem School District. Labor Commissioner Wendy Roberts retained her position.

Dennis Buchanan defeated conservative Gordon Shadburne for Multnomah County Executive. Commissioners Gladys McCoy and Earl Blumenauer easily prevailed.

Police issue undecided

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of the measure.

Stan Peters, president of the police union, is in the same position as Commissioner Jordan—with the election results hanging at nearly 50-50. "There was a fast swing from being 1,000 votes ahead to being 500 behind," he said Wednesday. "I wouldn't like to lose by 500 and neither would Commissioner Jordan. It's not good to lose by a narrow margin—but it's not good to win that way either. You always prefer a decisive win."

Peters said that regardless of how

the vote goes it indicated that people have an interest in a review board and they should have one. He will not oppose a citizen review board without politicians on it, he said. The disadvantage of the measure passing is "that we would have a disciplinary board with politicians on it. That won't work—it never has and it never will." Peters said that if Measure 51 fails to pass he will not oppose the creation of a citizen review board. "A review board would serve both our interests—the people's and the police's."

Gains, losses

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with a 53.9 percent favorable vote. Included in this initiative is a constitution that, if adopted, would be the most progressive in the nation. Among the stipulations of this constitution is the right of every resident to a job or an income.

The vote is only advisory, since only Congress and the states can create a new state.

Walter Fauntroy was elected to another term in Congress, where he represents Washington, D.C. residents without a vote.

The Observer welcomes "Letters to the Editor". Letters should be brief and must contain the writer's name and address although addresses are not printed. The Observer retains the right to edit for length.

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