

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Caucus influence growing

The 21-member Congressional Black Caucus has become a power to be reckoned with. Collectively they chair seventeen committees and subcommittees of the House. Their leadership and influence is being felt.

Among their 1983 achievements are:

- The budget resolution adopted by the House on March 23rd contained 75 percent of the CBC recommended funding levels for programs aimed at putting people back to work, reversing cuts in social programs, lowering projected federal deficits and reducing proposed increases in military spending.

- Because of the leadership of Rep. Parren Mitchell, regulations for Department of Transportation grants include 10 percent minority set asides.

- The CBC won a 15-year struggle when national Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was signed into law on November 2nd.

- A \$3.5 billion bill which creates 500,000 jobs for long-term unemployed was passed by the House due to Rep. Augustus Hawkins' work.

- Rep. Julian Dixon authored a successful amendment prohibiting U.S. support of IMF loans to South Africa.

- Rep. William Gray authored successful legislation to prohibit new investment in South Africa.

- Rep. Walter Fauntroy and Rep. Mitchell led the fight for a housing authorization bill of \$15.6 billion.

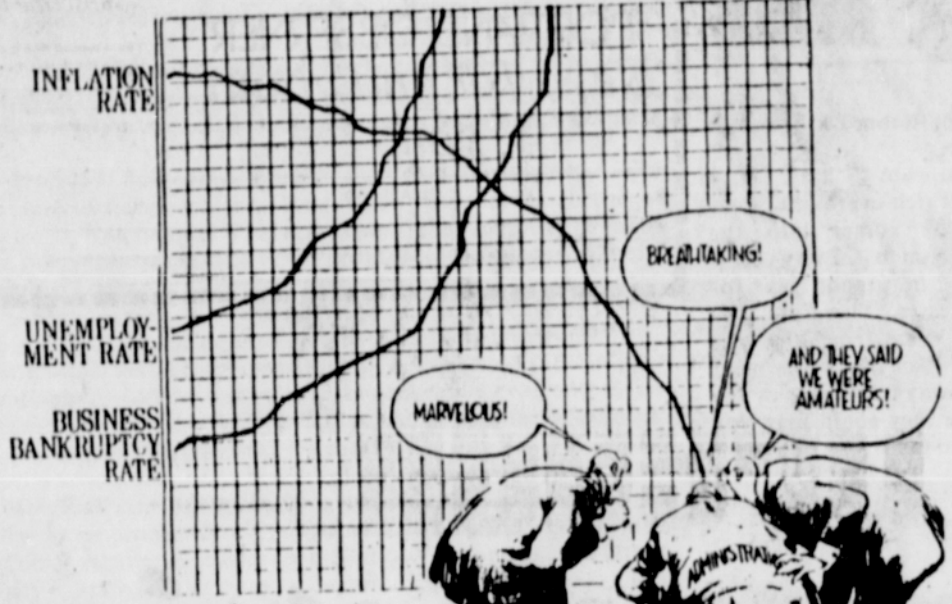
- The \$96.2 billion fiscal 1984 labor/HHS/education bill contained several amendments, by Rep. Louis Stokes, including increased funding for science and health education; nullification of the Administration's effort to terminate the National Health Service Corps' Scholarship program.

- Rep. Ron Dellums obtained a \$254 million increase in annual payments to Washington D.C. and other advantages for the city.

- Rep. Dellums led the fight against increases in military spending.

The CBC budget, prepared each year as an alternative to the Administration budget, has become an important part of Congressional budget deliberations and has been strongly endorsed by labor, civil rights and religious organizations.

The 21 Blacks in Congress have become the watchdogs of the legislative process, using their unity and moral influence to bring some measure of humanity to the national government. They are in Washington D.C. only because their constituents register and vote for them.



CBC challenges Reagan

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- The Caucus believes funding must be provided for federal nutrition programs as a first step toward eradicating hunger.

- Mickey Leland (D-Texas) has authorized a resolution to establish a House Select Committee on Hunger.

Black Infant Mortality

On the average, Black babies die at twice the rate of white babies, and in some urban centers the mortality rate for Black babies is four times higher.

- The CBC has requested hearings by the Energy and Commerce Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee to determine reasons for the Reagan Administration's delays in responding to a formal

petition on Black Infant Mortality. This petition outlines specific remedies.

Human Rights and Foreign Affairs

- The CBC will continue to speak out against the Administration's policies of military intervention and to urge the adoption of strong economic and political sanctions against apartheid.

- The CBC supports Rep. William H. Gray's amendment to the Export Administration Act prohibiting new U.S. investment in South Africa, which overwhelmingly passed the House last year.

- Other priorities include urgent supplemental appropriations to respond to the famine in Africa and

adjustments in the status of Haitian refugees in the U.S.

Minority Enterprise

The Reagan Administration has done more to thwart Black and other minority enterprise than any administration in the last 20 years. In 1983, the percent of contracts to MBE's decreased. The Administration seeks to eliminate the SBA Direct Loan Program: in December of 1983, the SBA published new rules to restructure its MBE program.

- Rep. Parren Mitchell (D-Md.) will again take the lead in providing aggressive oversight of this Administration's total failure in encouraging Black economic progress and will seek to redirect federal policies in this regard.



My daughter and Jesse Jackson

by Dr. Manning Marable
"From The Grassroots"

Like any devoted father, I am proud of my three children. My oldest daughter, Malaika, is only six years old. But her ideas on Black politics and Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign are miles ahead of those Black "Doubting Thomases" and Mondale-followers who keep insisting that Blacks aren't ready to contest for the White House.

A few weeks ago, she picked up one of the many newspapers on my desk, and was struck by a photo of an armed Nicaraguan woman and her two small children. Malaika asked why the woman was carrying a rifle, and I explained that the U.S. government and President Reagan were financing terrorists to attack her and her village. Malaika looked at the photo again, and then cut through my complex explanation with accuracy: "You mean, Ronald Reagan is trying to kill her children?" I thought for a second, and nodded yes—that's exactly what's at stake in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Angola, and Namibia. The Reaganites are indeed, funding illegal, racist wars to kill Black and Brown children.

Several days passed, and I caught my daughter watching television. Jesse Jackson was on the screen, standing before an applauding audience of Blacks and whites. Much to my amazement, Malaika looked up with a broad smile, declaring "That's Jesse Jackson! He's the Black man who's running for president!"

Stopping dead in my tracks, I asked my daughter why she liked Jesse. A look of sharp surprise came to her face. "Why we've got to stop Ronald Reagan. Don't you know

that?" Again, the truth from a child is so simple. Malaika summed it up: "Reagan is so mean to Black people. He has to go."

The polls now have Jesse tied for second place with Senator John Glenn for the Democratic Presidential nomination. He's raising the level of interest in the collective effort to purge Reaganites from public life. His dramatic trip to Syria weeks ago illustrated the diplomatic touch which has eluded the current administration. Millions of Blacks, now inspired by this Black political challenge within the Democratic Party, will become part of a broader electorate. But perhaps the most important contribution of the Jackson race is the symbolic value of a Black person running for national office.

Jackson has brought into the political process Black intellectual, religious and political leaders who have heretofore eschewed involvement in the electoral arena. He has also inspired a new generation of Black youths to challenge the established barriers to our people's progress.

One prime example is provided by Minister Louis Farrakhan, the charismatic leader of the Nation of Islam. Speaking before the Washington, D.C. branch of the NAACP at its annual Freedom Fund dinner, Farrakhan urged the NAACP to back Jesse Jackson. Farrakhan traveled to Syria with Jesse, stating that he "Saw that my brother (Jackson) was walking down in the valley of death, and I would not let him go down there by himself." In the February issue of *Essence* magazine, Farrakhan warns Black apologists for Mondale that

they are undercutting the freedom struggle by their refusal to back Jesse. "Whenever a strong Black leader made a revolutionary stand," Farrakhan states, "the moderate Black leaders condemned that revolutionary leader, giving the signal that it was all right to move against him. This is how we lost most of our brilliant leaders."

Maulana Karenga, the founder of Kwanzaa, is another leader who has stayed out of electoral work—yet he too backs Jackson. Karenga argues that an independent challenge inside the Democratic Party is absolutely essential. "The political timidity of the Democratic party in the face of the Rightist tendency in the U.S. makes it imperative that Blacks play their traditional role of raising the radical and progressive banner around which others can rally," Karenga states. Only a Black candidate could "produce a spirit of mobilization and organizational formations which can be used after the campaign in other projects."

But the most basic reason for supporting Jackson was expressed by my daughter. When I asked Malaika what she thought about a Black person running for the presidency, she replied: "I'd like to be President. I would help give food to poor people."

Our children are our most vital resource. What we do to inspire them, to promote their political development, lives on long after we have gone. We have the opportunity to tell our children that no doors will remain closed to Black people when we actively challenge the status quo. We have the capacity for national leadership. For Malaika, and for every Black child, can we do less?

Democrat 18 viewpoint

by Ross Danielson

A previous "Democratic 18 Viewpoint" called attention to one of many misconceptions commonly held about the Democratic Party. But to overcome the generally low level of information and understanding about the Party we need (Catch-22) stronger, more effective Party organization that can carry out educational work.

Setting aside the many reasons for the current state of Party affairs, the potential capability of the Party organization is dependent on the role of the precinct committee person.

On May 15, new precinct people will be elected, following State law, and in June and July these new precinct committee people will elect new district, county, and state party leaders and also select delegates to the National Democratic Convention.

But how many of these new precinct people will actually help to build the Party organization and promote its work? How many will carry out their major duties as voting members of the County Democratic Central Committee and

as local activists in the grassroots, neighbor-to-neighbor work of the Party?

Unfortunately, many precinct people elected in presidential primaries are only interested in the presidential campaign or in the distant glitter of the National Convention. And for the following two years they passively occupy a precinct position that could otherwise be filled by an active Democrat.

We live in times that require a revitalized Democratic Party to promote a long overdue progressive agenda. Active precinct people and Party leadership are badly needed.

To run for election for the position of precinct committee person in your precinct or in an adjacent precinct, you may file for election (with your name appearing on the ballot) at the County Board of Elections Office, S.E. Morrison at 11th, or contact the district leader who will be glad to answer questions and help process all forms.

To be eligible, you must have been a registered Democrat for at least 180 days before filing. The filing deadline is 5:00 p.m., March 6. However, if you miss the filing

deadline you may still conduct a write-in campaign in your precinct or in an adjacent precinct.

Before filing, one may inquire if someone else has already filed for election in that precinct and, if so, it is a courtesy to your fellow Democrat to file in a different, adjacent precinct. (The County Elections Office, the County Democratic Party Office, most campaign offices, and the district leader have maps to help determine available precincts.)

Although most take pride in being elected to serve as precinct people, very few folks would mind being "defeated" in their candidacy for a precinct committee position. In District 18, the Party organization is designed to be a UNITED organization of precinct people and Democratic volunteers. And non-precinct people are eligible to be elected as officers of the District, County or State organizations. Finally, after the reorganization of the Party in June-July, any registered Democrat may apply for appointment as a precinct person, and appointed precinct persons have the same voting privileges as elected precinct people.

Reactions to City plan for N.E.

(continued from page 1, column 3)

to whites living outside of inner-Northeast say some NEED members. Johnson says a community group should be contracted to provide employees for positions created with public funds. This role is now partially filled by the Multnomah-Washington Private Industry Council which draws workers from throughout the metro area.

As the *Observer* goes to press, PDC commissioners are reviewing a proposal for implementation of a \$50,000 Minority Business Development Program—a program ap-

proved nearly two years ago. PDC claims they were hampered by Reagan's U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (who originally claimed such a program is illegal). Linda Johnson and others are irate about the delay and also wonder if the interest earned on this and the \$150,000 unspent money from the Land Banking program will be made available. "After all this time, said Johnson, "they insult our intelligence in telling us they are making a proposal."

Even with all of the mixed

feelings about PDC and the problems the Black community has had in developing a cohesive voice, many are optimistic. There are positive signs of growth all along Union Avenue.

NEED is firmly standing on its own two feet and most members say PDC's Northeast coordinator has a higher level of genuine commitment than have others who've filled the job in the past. Then too, several community based groups are aggressively promoting the area: next week, the *Observer* will examine some of these.

Letters to the Editor

Planning needed

To the editor:

Thank you for the thorough articles by Chuck Goodmacher on our proposal for a Central City Plan. As your articles pointed out, the need for a strong vision for the central city area is acute, especially as major new developments are proposed and as social problems continue to grow.

The quality of the plan will be determined in part by the quality of the process we use. That is why I want to make sure that citizens and neighborhood have a full opportunity to participate in both the pre-planning phase, which the City is engaged in now, and the planning phases, over the next three years. Anyone wishing to become more involved in the Central City Plan is encouraged to call or write my of-

ice, Room 211, City Hall, Portland, 97204.

Margaret D. Strachen
Commissioner of
Public Utilities

The *Observer* welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The *Observer* reserves the right to edit for length.

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