

Letters to the Editor

"A Third Force Or A Third Party"

Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, in "Reconstruction" said: "The most magnificent drama in the last thousand years of human history is the transportation of ten million human beings out of the dark beauty of their mother continent into the new-found Eldorado of the West. They descended into Hell; and in the third century they arose from the dead, in the finest effort to achieve democracy for the working millions which this world had ever seen. It was a tragedy that beggared the Greek; it was an upheaval of humanity like the Reformation and the French Revolution. Yet we are blind and led by the blind. We discern in it no part of our labor movement; no part of our industrial triumph; no part of our religious experience. Before the dumb eyes of ten generations of the ten million children, it is made mockery of and spit upon; a degradation of the eternal mother; a sneer at human effort; with aspiration and art deliberately and elaborately distorted. And why? Because in a day when the human mind aspired to a science of human action, a history and psychology of the mighty effort of the mightiest century, we fell under the leadership of those who would compromise with truth in the past in order to make peace in the present and guide policy in the future."

Black people have yet to formulate a precise modus operandi for the acquisition of power and the politics of survival. Mao Tse-Tung wrote: "What my enemy affirms, I reject. What my enemy rejects, I affirm." That defines a philosophical parameter for action, but in the unique experience of the Afro-American, a rejection of the apparatus of the majority leaves no alternative. If Black people refuse to operate within the system in the belief they will be co-opted, what kind of alternatives are open to acquire Black Power and insure Black survival? We must acquire Political Power. There is no other recourse. Political Power is government control or the ability to decide who shall control. Black Political Power, a direct function of numerical weakness, is limited solely to the ability to infrequently influence that control and, then, on the most peripheral levels. Black Political Power has rarely been in the forefront of controlling or influencing the control of government. Caucasian Political Power has maintained a monopoly on the apparatus of control by winning elections and, so doing, demeaning Black Political Power. Ever since 1860, national elections have been won by one of the two major parties, the Democrats or the Republicans. They have done so by putting together the broadest of

the electorate.

Black people are owned lock, stock and barrel by the Democratic Party which has as much contempt for them as Mr. Reagan and Company. The reason the "Black vote" has rarely decided the outcome of an election is because of its Political ignorance and blind, single-party loyalty. For example, in 1932 and 1936, when Americans voted overwhelmingly for a Democratic President, Black people in opposite numbers voted for the Republican candidate, because a Republican President had freed their ancestors 70 years ago. They were still paying Political booty. Then, in 1952 and 1956, Amerika shifted its political sentiment and voted in equally overpowering numbers for a Republican President, but Black people voted Democratic 74% and 77% respectively in those two elections. This time they were paying Political booty to a Democratic President who had put food in their stomachs.

Black and caucasoid leaders have a moral responsibility to use their training and skills to help solve the racial, political, educational, and economic problems facing poor people in the State of Oregon. They must address these problems and direct attention towards reforming the "Power interests" in the State of Oregon who demonstrate little concern for the poor and disadvantaged. Educators, ministers, and teachers should not misuse their profession by an unhealthy society to justify the exploitation of Blacks and the poor. Instead of changing people's minds to conform to an unhealthy society, our professionals should work to change society. Let's deal with the social disorders, let's deal with the cause, and maybe we can lessen the effects. We must become aware of the unhealthy social conditions affecting the physical and psychological well-being of Black and poor caucasoid Americans. No one should be asked to accept and adjust to inequalities and injustices. Sociologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists should use the constructs and principles of their professions to improve the quality of life for the poor and oppressed in Oregon.

Amerika is entering an era started under the Johnson administration and one which the Reagan Administration is neurotically pursuing with a vengeance. It is the era of caucasoid consensus Politics. "Come let us reason together," exhorted Lyndon Johnson in a terrible bastardization of the sentiments of one of the greatest Biblical prophets.

Dr. Jamil Cherovee



Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

"The Paradox of Desegregation"

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the black community today is the "paradox of desegregation." Neither Martin Luther King, Jr., nor his contemporaries inside the civil rights leadership a generation ago, anticipated the political and social problems which would be generated by the very successes of their social movement for equality. During the Jim Crow era, the black middle class was small, yet highly organized and organically connected with every element of black working class life. Black doctors or dentists had no choice except to open their offices in all-black neighborhoods, because few or no whites would become their patients. Black teachers usually were employed in all-black school systems; black attorneys normally had black clients; black entrepreneurs had to look to the black consumer market for their sales. Racial segregation created a barrier which was both repressive and an asset to black group solidarity.

This is not to be nostalgic for Jim Crow, in the least. The totalitarianism of rigid racial stratification of the labor force, and the denial of democratic rights and civil liberties, was odious to every black American. The desegregation struggle was a populist movement, in the sense that it galvanized the near-unanimous energies and support of every segment of the national black community. The popularity of the mass movement was partially a function of the clarity of the issues at stake. To oppose Jim Crow meant to strike a blow against second class schools, segregated residential districts, and inferior social services.

A vote for Lyndon Johnson in 1964, from a black perspective, was to endorse voting rights legislation, expand welfare programs, increased educational opportunities, and other liberal reforms which were of immediate and direct benefit. But as the Great Society coalition fell apart, the question of group interests became more complex. Affirmative action pitted traditional liberal allies against each other, as the conservative Republicans began to make a successful bid for disenchanted white workers and Dixiecrats. The white left-liberals who campaigned for McCarthy and McGovern had gravitated behind Gary Hart and his not-so-new ideas. Each segment of the liberal alliance went its own way, leaving blacks politically isolated.

Class stratification dramatically increased within the black community between 1970 and 1985. As the numbers of college-educated blacks soared, a new social

stratum began to break away from the bulk of the black working class and the poor. One could term this new group the "buppies": black urban professionals. By the tradition of their racial group's political culture, they were Democrats. But in terms of their own historical experiences and class expectations, they shared a firm kinship with the new white upper middle class, the "yuppies." They had faint memories of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement. They were generally too young to take part in the sit-ins and massive desegregation campaigns, and had no direct personal experiences in civil disobedience.

The "buppies", unlike the older black middle class, generally do not live or work in all-black environments, and maintain fewer ties to the traditional political and social institutions of the black community. The paradox of desegregation, in short, created a parvenu black elite which was in effect at odds with the very concept of black solidarity around progressive economic and social policies. In this sense, black conservatives like Glen Loury and Walter Williams are "buppie theorists": uncritical apologists for the big corporations, Reaganism and political reaction against blacks.

The crisis of black politics can be resolved through the development of multiclass and multiracial, progressive political structures, agencies of social change which bring together all elements of the black community. The Rainbow Coalition has the potential for creating a vehicle which unite the educated and relatively affluent black middle strata with the vast majority of blacks who remain unemployed, impoverished, and/or within the working class. It also may build links with segments of the traditional labor movement, feminist, peace, and other liberal constituencies, which hold the greatest promise for participation in a new progressive coalition in the 1990s. Yet in the long run, the success for such a coalition which could challenge the new conservative hegemony depends upon a radical realignment of the Democratic party, and probably a decisive split between the party's liberal and conservative factions. Until this occurs, we can expect the continued defection of some black politicians and intellectuals to the right, as well as a deepening of the crisis inside the black electorate as a whole. Unless the black freedom movement quickly regains its capacity to take the offensive against the right, the entire American liberal-left may be isolated in the political wilderness for another generation.

POSAF ON SOUTH AFRICA

Call For Total U.S. Economic Disengagement From South Africa

The IBM, General Motors and Coca Cola changes in South Africa must be seen as interim steps toward the necessary total U.S. economic disengagement in that country, the American Friends Service Committee declared today.

"While we welcome their recent announcements," said Jerry Herman of the Quaker organization, "These firms still will be supporting and making profits from the apartheid system. We call on them to totally disengage economically in order to bring a new beginning for that troubled land and its oppressed majority."

Thomas Conrad, as AFSC researcher/author, who is one of the nation's foremost authorities on computer exports, said IBM's equipment has been used for years in sensitive and military/strategic ways as well as to repress the Blacks and other peoples. "IBM technology is widely used by local government officials, who are in the forefront of enforcing the apartheid system," he said. Their sale of South Africa operations will in no way limit their sales to South African authorities.

Herman, coordinator of AFSC U.S. programs on South Africa, said "GM, IBM, and Coca Cola, through payment of corporate taxes and in the case of GM and

IBM, through provision of strategic items, will not cause South Africa's military budget to shrink. Therefore, there will be no restraint on South Africa's ability to wage violence and war against its neighbors and its own citizens."

Editors: Herman and Conrad, who have travelled, written and spoken extensively, are available for interviews on issues of corporate withdrawal from South Africa and sanctions. Herman has been to South Africa, including Soweto, and heads AFSC's nationwide education and organizing work on South Africa. Conrad has testified before the United Nations committees and is the author of an AFSC book: "Automating Apartheid." Conrad's original research on high-tech sales to South Africa is widely utilized by anti-apartheid activists and organizations around the world. Both are experienced with the media. The AFSC has staff based in Southern Africa and has been working on the issues involved for more than 25 years. Please call for details: Paul Brink (215-241-7060); (215-241-7000); (215-544-2038).

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EDITORIAL/OPINION

Juvenile Center Good Public Policy

A joint plan by the Portland Public Schools, the State Children's Service Division, the Portland Private Industry Council, and the Multnomah County Juvenile Court to build an education and training center for juvenile offenders is good public policy.

Youngsters who are released from state-run training centers face a gamut of problems after they are released back into their respective communities. Chief among them is lack of academic achievement in the classroom,

which is one of the main reasons many get into trouble in the first place.

Not only will the new training center address the youngsters' educational needs, it will also reduce the state juvenile population. As with many adult prisoners incarcerated in state prisons, many juvenile offenders have no business in state training facilities in the first place.

By providing these kids a place where they can receive the necessary education that is essential in making them productive citizens, our entire state will benefit.

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