

# EDITORIAL / OPINION



## Along the Color Line

Dr. Manning Marable

### "Dukakis Lost, But Bush Didn't Win"

by Dr. Manning Marable, Along The Color Line

Conventional political wisdom has declared that George Bush's massive electoral victory over Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis represents a smashing triumph for Reagan conservatism over the ideology of liberalism. Superficially, the electoral and popular vote totals appear to validate this interpretation. Bush won forty out of fifty states. Souther voters backed Bush by a three to two margin, and the Republican candidate held a substantial majority among voters earning \$25,000 or more annually. Nearly 60 percent of all whites supported Bush.

Although President-elect Bush indeed will be inaugurated next January, his "victory" is far less substantial than it seems. Given his monumental advantages going into the presidential campaign, as well as the election results for Congressional and gubernatorial races, it would be more accurate to assert that Dukakis lost, but Bush didn't win.

President-elect Bush had several notable advantages over his Democratic challenger. Most Americans haven't forgotten the painful period of double-digit unemployment and inflation from the late 1970s. For better or worse, it is identified with former President Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Party. Bush scored easy points by reminding voters that the inflation rate was over 12 percent in 1980, but only 4.2 percent this year. Joblessness in 1980 was 75 percent, and only 5.2 percent today. Never mind the fact that hundreds of thousands of working people have become "discouraged workers," and aren't even calculated in the unemployment statistics. Or that millions of blue collar workers have experienced severe pay cuts and reduction in their families' standard of living. The Bush strategy in the general election was to promote the selective use of positive economic statistics, and to obscure or distort the bulk of the economic truth.

Fortunately for Bush, however, the country was not in the midst of an unpopular foreign war. The initiatives taken to reduce the nuclear arms race with the Soviets were widely popular, and the Reagan administration has been somewhat less bellicose on foreign affairs recently. Bush was largely successful in projecting himself before the public as an experienced if not imaginative number two man, elitist yet sufficiently competent to reduce the national deficit and to address urban crime. Although the selection of Dan Quayle as Vice Presidential candidate threw into question Bush's capacity for leadership, the Presidential nominee neatly distanced himself from the unpopular Indian Senator throughout the last six weeks of the campaign.

But the election was actually a repudiation of the philosophy of Reaganism - best represented by massive military expenditures, cutbacks in social and health care programs, simplistic anti-Communism abroad and welfare for the rich at home. In several recent presidential elections, the triumphant Republican candidate has succeeded in shifting the balance of Congressional power to the right. Back in 1968, for instance, Richard Nixon's election produced a net gain of six GOP Senators. When Reagan defeated Carter in 1980, the Republicans gained one dozen seats in the Senate. This November, however, the situation was reversed. The Democrats picked up seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Pro-labor, pro-Civil Rights candidates generally did much better than Dukakis state after state. In Ohio, liberal Democratic Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum withstood an unprincipled media attack by Republican

challenger George Voinovic. In New Jersey, Democrat Frank Lautenberg ran a successful campaign against conservative candidate Pete Dawkins. As all predicted, Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy was reelected in a landslide. In Nebraska, former governor Bob Kerrey trounced Reagan-Republican David Karnes, the incumbent, in the Senate race. And in almost all of the House of Representatives races, liberal and pro-labor Democrats elected in 1984 and 1986 were re-elected.

The real political question of 1988 is not why Bush won, but how Dukakis lost. A central reason was the failure of the Massachusetts Democrat to embrace progressive values and public policies which would have repudiated the legacy of the Reagan administration. At the Atlanta Democratic convention, Dukakis mistakenly asserted that this election was not about ideology, but competency. His image of the presidency was managerial, not executive. Any successful president must articulate a vision of where the country needs to move - an ideological road map. He hires aides and administrators to carry out the technical decisions which fall into his general ideological approach toward public policy. By distancing himself from the rich traditions of liberalism, populism, and social justice which are central to the democratic protest movements of American working people, Dukakis sent the wrong message to his potential friends and gave rhetorical ammunition to his opponents. He refused to answer scurrilous

and false attacks clearly and unambiguously. He failed to make any serious overtures to the Black American electorate, the most loyal Democratic constituency in terms of voting percentage, until only several weeks before the election.

Finally, in late October, Dukakis rediscovered his ideological compass. "I'm a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy," the candidate finally declared, after months of running a non-ideological campaign. The tactic worked. In mid-October, according to a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, Bush led Dukakis by a commanding 17 point spread. By election day, that margin was reduced to 8 percentage points. Most Americans now recognized that Bush's policies would favor the wealthy over the middle class, and would escalate poverty. But Dukakis was too late in declaring how a progressive, liberal agenda served the interests of the vast majority of Americans.

## MAYOR CLARK RESPONDS TO SERAW'S DEATH

I am saddened and disturbed by the incident of Sunday, November 13, 1988, which resulted in the



Mayor Bud Clark

death of Mulugeta Seraw. The violent loss of life of any citizen of the City of Portland at the hands of violent attackers cannot be tolerated.

This incident is of particular concern because it was probably racially motivated. The Police Bureau is conducting a vigorous and thorough investigation, and Police Chief Richard Walker has directed the Detective Division to keep him personally apprised of developments in the case.

Pending the outcome of the investigation, it would be premature to hold any group responsible for the attack. While I deplore the existence of gangs and of racial supremacists, it is inappropriate to ascribe Sunday's violence and tragic loss of life to the Skinheads or to any other group before any such assertions can be documented. The Police are coordinating their investigation among detectives and the officers who are already assigned to the Youth Gang Detail, in order to determine the facts and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Chief Walker and representatives of my office are in communication with the Youth Gangs Task Force, Black United Front, Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, and other community representatives, and will continue to share information so we can address this tragedy. The likelihood of racial motivation in this attack makes it imperative that involved citizens and public officials maintain a constructive dialogue to work toward eliminating racial hatred and violence in our city.

I want to express my deepest sympathy to Mr. Seraw's family and friends, on behalf of the citizens of Portland. We all share in your loss.

## AFRICA

The continent where all life originated.

## Election '88: The Significance of The Black Vote

by Norman Hill, President, A Philip Randolph Institute

Now that the 1988 election and all of the attendant hullabaloo are (finally) over, we need to sit back and take a look at the impact of the Black vote on the results.

The most obvious fact is that Black voters did not swing the presidential election. But if we look beneath the blaring headlines, we can find a great deal with which to be satisfied.

The Black vote decided the New Jersey Senate race. White voters preferred conservative Republican Pete Dawkins by 54% to 46%, but Blacks gave incumbent Democrat Frank Lautenberg an overwhelming 79% to 18% edge.

It appears that Black votes also made the difference in Connecticut's Senate contest, where Democrat Joseph Lieberman narrowly beat incumbent Republican Lowell Weicker in what was a virtual dead heat. This reminds us that even in States where Blacks constitute only a small portion of the electorate, they hold the balance of power in close elections.

Of course, Black votes were crucial in many of the 71 Congressional districts in which Blacks make up 20% or more of the population.

All 23 Black Congressional incumbents were re-elected, and Donald Payne carried New Jersey's 10th Congressional District to become the State's first Black Representative. So there are now 24 Blacks in the House of Representatives, an all-time record.

In addition, early estimates indicate that the Black share of the total vote cast was a bit higher this year than in 1984. Even the results of the presidential election show the importance of the Black vote. Blacks gave Mike Dukakis some 86% of their votes, while winner George Bush received only about 12%. But these numbers show that the Black vote is the most solid element of the Black-labor alliance for economic and social justice. And because of demographic factors and the voter participation activities of such organizations as the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund and the affiliates of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Black vote will become a greater portion of the total vote in the years ahead.

Now what does that mean for the future of American politics? For one thing, it means growing political influence for Blacks. And therefore, despite what some cynics say, it also means increased success for a progressive (dare we say liberal?) brand of politics. Why? Because the Black agenda includes a deep concern about economic and social justice and therefore appeals to the great majority of Americans.

If you don't believe it, think back to the last weeks of the campaign. The polls didn't begin to turn in Dukakis's favor until he took off the gloves and began speaking aggressively on behalf of ordinary people, black and white. The "I'm on your side" slogan was the one that worked, because it appealed to blacks, trade unionists, and a large segment of the middle class.

We'll never know for sure whether Dukakis would have won if he had changed his approach earlier. But it is clear that progressive candidates can't win the presidency by talking like managers or technocrats. They must present themselves as the advocates of working people.

The cynics I referred to earlier say that as blacks become more prominent in a political party, the whites move out. But consider this: Black Congressman Mike Espy defeated his opponent with 66% of the total vote, including some 40% of the white vote. And this happened in Mississippi!

Some people are calling it a miracle. But to us at the Randolph Institute, it's not a miracle. We realize that the problems faced by Blacks in their communities and work-places are simply more extreme versions of the problems all working people face. And as the poison of racism evaporates, more and more Americans are realizing this.

When asked why he received so much of the white vote, Congressman Espy cited his record on economic issues and said, "If people are thinking about their pocketbooks, they often forget about color."

The Congressman is right on target, and Americans who hunger for more progressive politics would do well to remember his words.

## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

### Help Angolan War Victims

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.



During this season of Thanksgiving, we all should be reminded that there are millions of people throughout the world who have been victimized because of injustice. Recently, a delegation of eight persons from the People's Republic of Angola arrived in the United States under the sponsorship of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ. Six members of the delegation are victims of the unjust war being waged in Angola by a group of terrorists known as UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi. Savimbi gets his support from the Reagan-Bush Administration and from the racist apartheid regime of South Africa.

This small delegation from Angola only represents thousands of other victims of the war who remain in Angola and who are in need of our help and assistance. When I first greeted the delegation last week, I was filled with emotion to see the sight of five children and one adult who had lost their legs and limbs because of explosives planted by UNITA. I was also filled with a sense of responsibility to try to do something effective and positive about their condition. Too often we may view suffering as if it is a hopeless situation. The good news about Angola is that there is a lot that concerned citizens of the United States can do to assist these victims and to prevent future victimization.

Bernarda N'guvulo is twelve years old. Earlier this year, the UNITA mercenaries attacked her

family's house in the Huila Province of Angola. Members of her family were killed and Bernarda was shot in the back. Now she is paralyzed from the waist down. It is our prayer, however, that a team of highly skilled African American surgeons at the United Hospital Medical Center of Newark, New Jersey will be able to give Bernarda another chance to walk. She is scheduled for surgery in the next few days.

Rufino Octaviano is eleven years old. He stepped on a land mine planted in a civilian area in the Benguela Province of Angola. This land mine was planted by UNITA. Both of Rufino's legs have been amputated above the knees. Dr. Buel Stagers, Chief Orthopedic Surgeon at United Hospital in Newark, has offered to help Rufino get a set of artificial legs.

Clementina Cassavo, another amputee victim, is sixteen years old. Dr. Stagers performed successful surgery on Clementina which will enable her to be fitted for an artificial leg. Fernando Segunda, another teenager and amputee victim of UNITA, has also been treated by Dr. Stagers. Gabriela N'ambonga, who stepped on a land mine planted by UNITA while she was playing with a group of children, is scheduled to undergo surgery by Dr. Stagers to also make it possible for her to receive an artificial leg.

Most of these children from Angola will be in the hospital on Thanksgiving Day. It is our hope

that you who read Civil Rights Journal will remember them in your prayers. We were very fortunate that in the City of Newark, New Jersey to find an African American physician who is not only an outstanding orthopedic surgeon but also a person committed to justice. In addition, this delegation has received enormous support from the entire administration staff of the United Hospital Medical Center of Newark, New Jersey. Dr. Adelaide Troutman, the Medical Director of the City of Newark, has been effectively helping to coordinate the medical care that the delegation has received. Newark Mayor Sharpe James should also be given great gratitude for his leadership and support on this matter.

The delegation is led by Mrs. Luzia da Silva Ingles, who is an experienced child educator from Angola and works under the Division for Social Affairs of the People's Republic of Angola. Mrs. Ingles is assisted by Amelia Matias Neto, who also has been working in Angola on behalf of those persons victimized by the war. The eighth member of the delegation is Mrs. Iria Geremias, a mother of five and a member of the Organization of Angolan Women. Mrs. Geremias lost her foot due to an aerial bombing attack by South Africa. Dr. Stagers has also arranged for her to receive an artificial foot and by the President of the United States. The support of UNITA must stop and it must stop now!

## The Other Side

### Now What?????

By: Harold C. Williams



The election is over and we are back to normality. The question is what is normality? George Bush has been elected President, the Democrats control the House and the Senate, Bud Clark is Mayor, Margaret Carter is the Representative for District 18.

Now What? The now what will be what do the Blacks want now and our answer will be control of our own political destiny and fair plan in the economic progress of this country. We have the power. It is time to use it.

Now who will address the Black agenda? Will we sit on our butts and assume that somebody else will take care of our issues for another four years and wait for a political Messiah to come and rescue us, or will we be attentive to our needs as other groups are attentive to their's, making our

agenda the paramount agenda for the next four years.

The Republican party has not been sensitive, but they control the economic purse strings. We must do a social and economic balancing act by participating in both parties and never allowing any party to take us for granted again. The now what is we must take control of our destiny, be more active in the political process, study both parties to see what advantages each offer and only play when it is to our benefit. If we do this, we will be taken seriously in the next four years.

The Democratic party has proven that they could care less about our agenda and all we are to the Democratic party nationally are flunkies that they take for granted when it comes to our vote. They slapped us in the face with the treatment of Jesse Jackson and

that national slapping could have trickled down effect if we don't make our agenda for ourselves a priority.



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