



AFRICA in Today's World

(This is the first of a two-part examination of the present precarious condition of the Organization of African Unity compiled from various reports received from abroad, including recent observations by Los Angeles Times correspondent Dan Shannon writing from Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia and temporary headquarters of the OAU.)

A PARALLEL COULD BE DRAWN between the struggles of the 13 North American colonies of Great Britain to effect a workable, independent union (following the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the opening session of the first United States Congress in 1789, seven years after the British cabinet finally recognized independence) and the tortured efforts of the newly independent African states to solidify the Organization of African Unity during the past couple of years.

As can be imagined from the seven year gap between actual independence and organization of the first Congress, the former American colonies had many problems to iron out before this nation was launched on a sound, constitutional basis. Although circumstances on the North American continent in the latter part of the 18th century and those existing on the African continent today differ in many important respects, there is enough similarity to buoy the hopes of those who feel that Africa will eventually become united in some sort of effective federation of mutual interest.

None the less, as things now stand, it must be said that the present Organization of African Unity, riddled by dissension and conducted on a shoestring with a pick-up staff, is facing a bleak future. Yet it remains the one, big hope of the 36 independent nations which comprise it, although some members seem reluctant to acknowledge the obvious fact that they are too small and weak to survive alone.

"TODAY IN AFRICA, with its population of 260 million, only eight independent states have more than 10 million inhabitants, while the majority of them are inhabited by less than 5 million," Ato Kifle Wodajo of Ethiopia told the first meeting of the OAU Economic and Social Commission in 1963.

"There are about 35 customs areas and 26 currencies in seven major groups. No economist worth his salt can seriously suggest that the great majority of us, with such small bases of population, fragmented as we are into so many anomalous political units, could make a going concern of economic development, however much we try.

"As we are, the forces of the economy of scale will work adversely against us. Sooner or later, we have to think in terms of organizing our efforts and pooling our resources."

KIFLE IS NOW first assistant secretary-general of the OAU at its temporary headquarters in an Addis Ababa apartment house not far from the imperial palace. The University of Wisconsin-trained political scientist is as firmly convinced as ever of the need for African co-operation but he can point to few advances.

In fact, the situation is worse instead of better since the OAU was founded in 1963.

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, which had a common currency inherited from British colonial rule, this year decided to break up the arrangement, following the lead of the former Central African Federation of the two Rhodesias

VOICE READERS COMPRISE a \$30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

They Never Seem to Learn

A POSSIBLY "INSPIRED" ATTEMPT by the "political expert" of a Las Vegas daily newspaper to foster the impression that Lt. Gov. Paul Laxalt would be an even money bet to defeat Gov. Grant Sawyer if they are opponents in next year's gubernatorial election was closely examined in this department last week. A detailed analysis of the two prospective nominees' chances in such a contest indicated that Democrat Sawyer should be--and most likely would be--a solid favorite over Republican Laxalt under normal circumstances.

We say "normal circumstances" because there is no telling what "abnormal circumstances" may develop in the next 15 months that would tend to change the odds in Laxalt's favor. We do not even preclude the remote possibility that Laxalt could defeat Sawyer under certain conditions not now discernible. But if there is any "Laxalt money" available at this time looking for an equal amount of cash backing Sawyer, we know of several well-heeled parties who are ready and willing to risk a buck or two on the defending champ at such an attractive price. (This is NOT an offer to furnish the names of prospective bettors nor is it a solicitation for the placement of wagers, so PLEASE DO NOT send us any cash, check, money order, etc., to bet on anyone or anything. Moreover, it is illegal for licensed booking establishments to handle wagers on political contests, so if you want to bet on any candidate for public office, you will have to do so on a private, man-to-man basis.)

To get back to the pretended political pundit on the local daily, let us now examine his either innocently ignorant or cunningly contrived prediction that "both Sawyer and Laxalt face problems on the Westside" because "the Negro leaders closest to Sawyer have declined in the Westside power structure" and "Laxalt was clobbered in his race against Sen. Howard Cannon."

HERE WE HAVE a classic variation of the "slanted item" technique so cleverly employed by journalistic sharpies, in which an incontrovertible fact is neatly coupled with a baseless insinuation in order to lend credence to the baseless insinuation.

It is an incontrovertible fact that Laxalt faces problems on the Westside in view of his miserable showing against Cannon. ("Impossible situation" would be a more apt description of his difficulty.) But to say that Sawyer also faces problems on the Westside because the Negro leaders closest to the governor have declined in the Westside power structure is most certainly a baseless insinuation.

It may be that the author of the prediction quoted above, like many of his predecessors who have been assigned to cover the local political scene, has been duped into accepting false conclusions based on spurious information picked up from rumor mongers and rank political opportunists.

Time and again in recent years, the "political experts" on the local dailies have come up with the ridiculous report, based on inspired rumor or wishful thinking, that the "Negro power structure" here has been seriously disrupted and that the Westside "voting bloc" would crumble in the next election. They never seem to learn anything when the Negro electorate continues to vote almost intact in its own best interest except in isolated and comparatively minor instances.

These misguided observers have repeatedly confused healthy, intelligent differences among local colored leaders as an indication of faltering political unity in the Negro community. It is no secret that Leonard Mason, Joe Neal and other young adults on the Westside have lately launched an organized effort to make their influence felt in community politics. This move-

and Nyasaland.

Tanzania has imposed bans on imports from Kenya to end Kenyan economic domination just as trade between adjoining regions elsewhere in Africa has suffered from political quarrels.

(Continued next week)

ment of young Negroes is a gratifying development, perhaps the most significant expression of aroused civic responsibility on the Westside in five years. The VOICE heartily approves this movement and salutes these political giants of tomorrow. We extend full support to their cause, even though we may find it necessary to oppose some of their specific objectives from time to time.

IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS to the readers of the VOICE and the Westside community at large that the publisher of this newspaper does not weigh political values on the same scales as, say, Charles Kellar--if, indeed, Mr. Kellar uses any scale to weigh his sometimes bewildering decisions. It should be equally apparent that Jim Anderson sometimes disagrees with Bob Bailey, and that Bob may see things in a different light than Joe Neal and Joe may not necessarily go along with all of Leonard Mason's views. Gwen Weekes and Sarah Hughes have been known to differ on certain issues, while Leo Johnson and Ike Rome are certainly entitled to disagree with the political leanings of the VOICE whenever they please.

However, it should be noted that when the chips are down and election time rolls around, the divergent forces in the Negro community invariably reach rapport. This is no mystery, nor is it any miracle. It is a matter of necessity and enlightened self-interest. All concerned realize that the ballot is the black man's passport to first class citizenship and they recognize that everyone will benefit from a united front at the polls. They have learned that combined voting strength is the Negro's most effective weapon in his uphill battle to win equitable consideration in employment opportunity and other areas of economic self-sufficiency.

Differences of opinion produce political intelligence and voting wisdom. Political enthusiasm is generated among Negro voters through this conflict of ideas.

The Negro is rapidly learning--and learning very well--that his hope for a better tomorrow, for the elimination of discrimination and disintegration of the ghetto, lies in his wise and united use of the ballot. Not even a fool would cast aside the most important tool he has to get his work done. The new Negro is far removed from such a state of self-denying folly. Wise use of the vote can move the Negro in only one direction--upward--with ever expanding force.

THE NEW NEGRO has profited by the mistaken loyalties of his ancestors. In recent years, he has demonstrated extraordinary faithfulness to public officials who have furthered his cause and helped him achieve his legitimate aspirations. It is inconceivable that the Negro voter will turn his back on the party of Lyndon Baines Johnson. Nor can we imagine the Nevada Negro voting against the best friend he ever had in Carson City--Grant Sawyer.

There can be no doubt about how the Westside colored community will vote if Gov. Sawyer seeks another term. His only problem here will be getting the chronic laggards to the polls in order to swell his plurality beyond the lopsided majority by which Sen. Cannon "clobbered" Paul Laxalt last fall.

We devoutly hope that nothing will persuade Gov. Sawyer from running for reelection. And we are firmly convinced that if he does run, he will win in a breeze.

LAS VEGAS
Voice

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER (Published every Thursday) DEDICATED to the INTERESTS and ASPIRATIONS for a BETTER LIFE of the NEGRO CITIZENS of the STATE of NEVADA

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