

Point of View

Editorial

'Big Stick' Gets Something Done

There's an old adage that says if you carry a "big stick" you'll get something done. That's just about the size of it when something pressing is needed.

Several years ago, the Westside community was badly in need of a cleanup. There were a number of old wrecked cars strewn everywhere, trash scattered in every nook and corner, dead trees hanging dangerously and fire-gutted buildings beckoning for real disaster --- a real unsightly mess.

Something had to be done. . . and fast.

A small group of ministers and concerned citizens called on city hall to file a complaint. The NAACP and other organizations pushed for support. They all wanted immediate action. . . to get the mess cleaned-up and for the city to do something about sidewalks and street light. Well, it wasn't long before the city started work in that direction.

To see the street cleaning crews out there daily was a sight to behold. The street excavation teams moved in. Things were happening. The unfortunate thing was that it did not last long. They moved out just about as fast as they moved in. The job was not complete. It appeared to be an attempt to appease.

Now the area is getting back to the old condition. There's still much work to be done, particularly the need for sidewalks and street lights.

A couple months ago, there was a cleanup and beautification effort developed by the Las Vegas Beautification Committee and others for a small designated area within the Westside. It was a contest with prizes given to those who made the greatest improvements on their property. It was very effective but certainly not broad enough.

The other day, City Commissioner Ron Lurie said he had directed the city manager to form a committee to study how to clean up downtown Las Vegas, which he described as being in "deplorable condition."

Paper and other litter line streets, gutters and alleyways downtown, Lurie said.

Asked if residents or tourists were more responsible for the litter, Lurie replied, "I don't want to put the finger on any one group."

The committee should be composed of the city's Beautification Committee, planning commissioners, merchants and private citizens, he said.

Big deal!

(See Sentinel, page 20)



CARL ROWAN

Carter Can't Cope With Black 'Rage'

MIAMI -- It is painful and distressing to see President Carter's motorcade pelted by rocks and bottles thrown by black, the very people who voted for him so overwhelmingly that they gave him the 1976 election.

Some of the president's aides may tell him to forget the Miami incident -- that the rocks and bottles came from "the street people," from that black world of cloutless people who are not likely to vote in November anyhow.

But Mr. Carter surely is aware by now that the other black world where people wear ties and speak politely, the world of the Congressional Black Caucus, also is plenty angry at him.

The street people are enraged because they are the direct victims of Carter's economic policies. They are the humans behind the statistics showing that while nationwide unemployment has jumped to 7.8 percent, it is only 6.9 for whites, but 13.9 for blacks. Teenage rock-throwers are grim reminders that idle youth (one-half of urban black teenagers cannot find work) commit a great

proportion of the serious crime in this society. These ghetto blacks see things getting worse, leaving them without real hope of ever knowing economic security and the self-respect that goes with it.

More sophisticated blacks are angry at Carter because they think he plays them for fools -- that he offers platitudes and cliches, but nothing of specific value.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus express disgust at Carter's attempt to blame the current recession on OPEC and rising oil prices. They know that this a deliberately-contrived recession brought on in a desperate Carter effort to beat down inflation.

Black visitors tell the president that they resent his fighting inflation at the expense of minorities, the poor, the elderly. Carter talks about how his budget reflects "compassion" and how he is "fighting to care for the poor, the elderly, the afflicted."

Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-Ill.) left a meeting with Carter expressing dismay. She said it was

like "two ships passing in the night," with Carter and the blacks talking past each other.

"I call on you to keep the faith," Carter said to a black audience here. "We will never waver in our struggle to build an economy that sustains the hopes and dreams of the forgotten people of our country."

Nice words, but they ring hollow in the ears of people who know that 364,000 more blacks are jobless now than was the case when Carter took office -- a 26 percent increase in black unemployment.

Carter goes to the riot-ravaged Liberty City section of this city to tell black political and business leaders that he "will meet you at least halfway" in rebuilding this inner city. The people were left wondering what, specifically, that means.

Some angry blacks carried signs saying "Hail to the Chief Racist" -- a slur that this president does not deserve. I have seen nothing to suggest that Carter has adopted policies leading to a recession because he has less regard for blacks than for other Americans. The truth is that Mr. Car-

ter just didn't know what to do to prevent runaway inflation, and he doesn't know what to do to keep this recession from plunging out of control.

I have no doubt that Carter would like to be able to say that he kept his 1976 promise to provide jobs for blacks and other minorities. But he found, as president, that he couldn't buck institutionalized racism, or override the handicaps of inferior education and lack of training imposed upon minorities by years of discrimination -- especially in a time when Americans were clamoring against "reverse discrimination," berating social programs, demanding more money for defense programs.

Many blacks argue that if Carter had been a better leader, Americans would not have drifted to the right to a point where they reject compassion, social and courtroom justice and vote proudly for Ku Klux Klansmen.

Mr. Carter's relationship with blacks is likely to sour even further, and it is not pleasant to ponder the impact that this will have on the fall elections.

Campaigners Avoid Major Issues

By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.



JORDAN

The presidential campaign is off to a bad start. It has yielded little in the way of educating the public or informed discussion on the issues that count.

All of the candidates appear to think the electorate consists of citizens who share the same center-to-right opinions on foreign and domestic policy.

Political appeals to that perception of what most voters are like in homogenized campaigns,

with studious avoidance of the issues. And one grim immediate result is to shift the center of political gravity to the right.

By refusing to break out of the mold of issues as defined by the right and solutions acceptable to the right, candidates neglect the interests of many millions of Americans, especially those who are black, minority, or poor.

Thus far the campaign -- such as it is -- has centered on foreign policy.

Frustrated candidates charge the President won't slug it out with them on the campaign trails. Instead he's been on the job, acting "presidential" in a time

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of crisis. If we criticize his international actions, the candidates wail, we just look unpatriotic.

Well, that's an advantage incumbents have that has plagued opponents in the past. But

such complaints get little sympathy from this quarter.

There's nothing to stop a candidate from speaking out on any issue, and some may even

silently welcome the chance to avoid taking hard positions even as they complain about it.

But more important, why do the candidates feel foreign policy is the only ground for campaign

debate? We have high unemployment that's going higher; runaway inflation; deteriorating cities; a housing shortage; energy problems; high poverty rates; resurgent racism, and a host of other woes.

But despite their importance for the nation and its future, the candidates seem to be running away from those issues.

Black and minority voters are prime victims of campaigners' neglect. (See Vernon, page 20)