

Point of View

Editorial

Let's Kill Complacency

November 4 is the date for the general election — just 26 days away and most of the candidates will be headed for the home stretch. With some, the campaign funds are short and with others there will be plenty to do the job.

The one thing of interest is how badly do some of the candidates need the black vote.

A recent check with some of the candidates who are serving in Districts encompassing the black community, it was revealed that their advisors are suggesting that there will be no need to make a concerted effort to get the vote... that there are not enough registered to make the difference... that a sufficient number of blacks will not be out election day...and that it will take only one week's effort to sway or "swoon" the black

voters over to their camp.

This will mean that they will purchase a few radio spots on the black oriented radio station and run one ad in the black papers.

Well, Gov. Thomas Dewey of New York got the surprise of his life when his camp took everything for granted during a presidential race of yesteryear. The newspaper, early in the evening, had headlines giving Dewey the election. What a nightmare he had the next morning when he found the eventual winner to be Harry Truman.

For those who are taking things for granted, they, too, may have a rude awakening.

Voters need to be out election day full force and decide for themselves who will serve. The time is now to kill COMPLACENCY.



CARL ROWAN

Should Americans Have A Civil Right To A Job?

BALTIMORE — Picture a jobless 45 year old mother of two children as she hobbles on crutches down a street toward a federal office building in the elegant new Harbor Front area.

Serena White, one of the 1,684,000 black women who head families with children (the poorest families in America), must be going to the welfare office, whose checks stand between her youngsters and starvation!

No. Serena White, victim of a traffic accident, is crutching her way to the Garmatz Federal Office Building to get one of 70 trainee jobs that someone has told her the Social Security Administration will fill in January, Ms. White arrives to find 15,000 other people have for-

med mobs clamoring for those same 70 jobs that will pay \$7,210 to \$11,555 a year, with no guarantee of tenure.

What do we conclude from Serena White's efforts to get a job? Or the efforts of 15,000 other people in a city where 9.9 percent of the official work force (40,500 people) are jobless?

We can conclude that the cruelest slander in the land is that uttered by America's blessed who go around portraying the economically unfortunate as "bums and chiselers."

"Welfare bum" has become a racial code phrase in America because the press has built up the myth that white people work and pay taxes while black people have babies and live off welfare. The truth

is that this propensity for slandering poor people knows no racial bounds.

A few days ago a black friend was explaining why he put his 86 year old mother in a nursing home. "She needs care 24 hours a day," he said, "and it's impossible to hire private care because nobody wants to work these days when they can sit on their rears and collect welfare."

Nobody wants to work? Fifteen thousand Baltimoreans refute that with their feet when they contest for 70 of the least desirable jobs that the federal government has to offer.

But I conclude something else, something more far-reaching socially and politically, from Serena White's search for a job.

I am convinced that American politicians are going to have to suck up some courage and deal seriously with the question of whether society — the government, that is — OWES Ms. White and the rest of the unemployed a job.

President Carter promises training programs that will give marginal help to only a few, and tax credits to businesses which create jobs; Ronald Reagan promises tax cuts to the rich who are supposed to turn their bonanzas into "enterprise zones" and other job-producing investments; John Anderson cries "JOBS, JOBS, JOBS," but offers only a free enterprise pie in the by-and-by.

That old bugaboo cry

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Black Business Under Pressure

By Vernon E. Jordan

Black-owned and operated businesses managed to proliferate throughout the economic adversities of the 1970s, but the credit crunch and the recession could put those gains under severe pressure.

The annual Black Enterprise survey of black

businesses reports that the number of black businesses with paid employees grew by almost fifty percent during most of the seventies.

Gross receipts of all black businesses grew by 47.5 percent since 1972, but that impressive gain masks a real decline, since inflation ran even higher.

The magazine reports that the greatest growth took place in companies with nine workers or less, indicating the importance of small growing companies in job creation.

All in all, given the continuing discrimination, the poor business climate, and the newness of many black businesses, their continued survival and growth reflects hard work, perseverance, and continued belief in American dream of successful entrepreneurship.

That belief will be sorely tested in 1980. Small business is especially vulnerable to the kind of credit crunch we're experiencing, and recession hits hardest at small businesses that don't have the capital, established markets, and long-term customer relationships to weather



JORDAN

the storm.

The sharp downturn in the auto industry has the potential to drastically alter the black business picture. The Black Enterprise Top 100 Firms include 32 automobile dealerships. Auto dealers and service stations account for the largest chunk of gross receipts among black businesses.

With massive layoffs in the industry and a bleak outlook for auto sales this year, this vital sector of the black

economy will be under tremendous pressure.

The personal care and cosmetics industry has long been a mainstay of black business, but despite the product and marketing excellence of many such firms they have become vulnerable to the inroads established giants in the field have been making among black consumers.

At the same time, those companies have experienced frustration in breaking into the general cosmetics market as many downtown stores place all their products, even those for white consumers, in the "ethnic sections."

Restructured federal minority business programs may be more effective than in the past, but no one knows if they can supply the safety net that keeps

those businesses alive in a deep recession.

It is an important national objective to nurture the tenuous foothold blacks have achieved in the business sector. The recession should not be permitted to send black businesses back to square one by wiping out the limited gains they've made in recent years.

A government that rushes to the rescue of giant corporations that find themselves in trouble can't deny positive steps that keep alive a struggling and important part of its urban business sector.

But policies should not be limited to ensuring survival; they should also be designed to aid minority firms to enter growth areas of the economy, and to assist

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