

CLINTON CLASHES WITH BLACK PRESS and JESSE JACKSON

By Larry A. Still

CNS-Democratic party presidential candidate Bill Clinton said he still hopes to meet with Black press officials of the National Newspaper Publishers Association to explain his failure to keep a scheduled luncheon speaking engagement at the NNPA's 52nd annual convention in Baltimore last June 11th.

"I've invited the (NNPA) board to meet with me....I hope we can do it," the Arkansas governor told the Capital News Service after making a rescheduled appearance at the National Rainbow Coalition's "Rebuild America" National Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., June 13th. But, standing next to Rev. Jesse Jackson, NRC founder and president, Clinton surprised most of the conference guests by criticizing the appearance of rap artist Sister Souljah at the Rainbow convention the night before.

"Her (reported) comments before and after Los Angeles were filled with a kind of hatred that you do not honor today and

tonight....I quote "If black people kill black people everyday, why not have a week and kill white people?".....She sounds like David Duke...."the candidate told the flabbergasted audience. Jackson later told reporters that Clinton's "comments were unfair" because Sister Souljah's words were taken out of context.

She was referring to media coverage giving less emphasis to Blacks killing Blacks versus black people killing white victims, Jackson aides explained. The governor's reaction was cited as an example of this distinction.

In presenting Clinton to a smaller, select audience of 500 guests from among the 3,000 conference participants, Jackson outlined NRC proposals for addressing the nation's economic problems and changing the direction of the Democratic Party. He reminded the audience that the potential president is from Hope, AR, and "he certainly ought to be able to keep Hope Alive."

Clinton endorsed the "com-

monality" of the Rebuild America program "with what I have been saying for 12 years....and I want to recognize Reverend Jackson for not just placing all the blame on government in the past, but assuming some responsibility for change"....(The candidate also endorsed Jackson's campaign for increasing voter registration through local motor vehicle license offices. However, he questioned Jackson's "new math" plan for winning the presidential election with 40% (instead of 51%) of the vote in a 3-way race with Republicans, Democrats and H. Ross Perot.

Although two-time presidential candidate Jackson cautiously introduced Governor Clinton as the next presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, it was obvious that the two political leaders did not agree on all positions. The minister and ceremonial "Shadow" Senator in the District of Columbia campaign to become the nation's 51st State, said Clinton should apologize to Sister Souljah, but when asked about the governor's failure to meet with the Black Press, Reverend Jackson replied "it's a non-issue".

Earlier in the week, Robert W. Bogle, publisher of Philadelphia Tribune and NNPA president, released the following statement in part: "The.....(NNPA) is deeply concerned by recent events involving the probable Democratic Presidential candidate Bill Clin-

ton. After the confirmation that Governor Clinton would address the annual convention of NNPA, the national trade organizations of Black (owned) newspapers, he reneged on his commitment at the absolute last minute. His reasoning and excuses for ignoring the Black Press of America are unacceptable and look upon as an affront, not only to this body, but to the African American community which we represent...."

"An invitation was extended to president Bush, H. Ross Perot, Governor Clinton and Lenora Fulani. Each responded quickly and decisively regarding their intentions and availability to come before us. Mr. Clinton's attitude is the only one of the group whose actions and statements are inconsistent with his public persona of being a candidate willing to embrace the goals and aspirations of African-Americans across this country...."

"We intended to report to our 11 million readers that the Clinton campaign is one to be watched and scrutinized very carefully and his positions regarding the African-American community should be received with a great deal of apprehension. We believe that the honoring of commitments is an essential ingredient of the character of anyone seeking the highest office of this nation...."

Sonny Messiah-Jiles, NNPA first vice-president and conference coordinator, also issued a



statement saying "CLINTON THUMBS NOSE AT BLACK PRESS—Bill Clinton the presidential candidate who begged to appear at the national convention of the (NNPA), backed out at the last minute when he learned that a Black woman presidential candidate would appear on the same panel...."

"Back in January 1992, Mr. Clinton sent a representative to NNPA's Mid-Winter Workshop in San Diego, California, to request an appearance at the June convention...."

"When Mr. Clinton learned that Lenora Fulani, who he felt embarrassed him in New York, was going to appear at the same time as he, he tried to negotiate a different time...."

In a letter to individual members, dated on the day he was scheduled to appear and signed by the presidential candidate, Governor Clinton states (in part) "I regret I was unable to attend your annual convention in Baltimore. My staff worked with the

Association in a effort to find a time that was mutually acceptable, and we offered several alternatives, including an interactive satellite feed during the Thursday luncheon, a mid-afternoon appearance on Thursday, and early morning appearance on Saturday. Unfortunately, we could not work it out...."

"Again, I'm sorry I could not be with you for your convention. Please accept my sincere apology. I hope we can work together during this campaign season in our mutual quest to change our country. Sincerely, Bill Clinton."

At week's end, representatives of the Clinton for President Committee attempted to meet with NNPA representatives to arrange future discussions as national media speculated that the candidate was seeking to back away from overt appeals to black voters in an effort to keep from alienating conservative whites possibly attracted to President Bush and Perot.

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NAACP NEWS

"HONORING OUR PAST, FULFILLING OUR PRESENT, PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURE" THEME OF 1992 ANNUAL NAACP CONVENTION IN NASHVILLE

"Honoring Our Past, Fulfilling Our Present, Preparing For Our Future" has been selected as the theme for the NAACP's 83rd Annual Convention to be held July 11-16, 1992 at the Nashville Convention Center, Nashville TN, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, Executive Director/CEO has announced.

The convention is expected to attract more than 20,000 persons.

This year's theme reflects the NAACP's continued recognition of the monumental work the Association has done throughout its 83 years in existence as well as the outstanding work that it's more than 1,800 branches nationwide are doing in preparing African-Americans for the challenges that they will face by the year 2000.

The five-day convention at the Nashville Convention Cen-

ter will provide a forum for dialogue and discussion by notables from the worlds of civil rights, politics, government, labor, the church, the arts and other areas to discuss issues of importance to the nation's African-American communities.

The convention will also showcase a number of NAACP sponsored programs such as the Back-to-School/Stay-In-School Program and ACT-SO (Atro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) which annually provides incentives to achieve scholastic excellence for more than 25,000 students in grades 9 through 12 from across the nation.

The convention will also feature exhibits by more than 200 nationally known corporations and items produced by many outstanding minority vendors.



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