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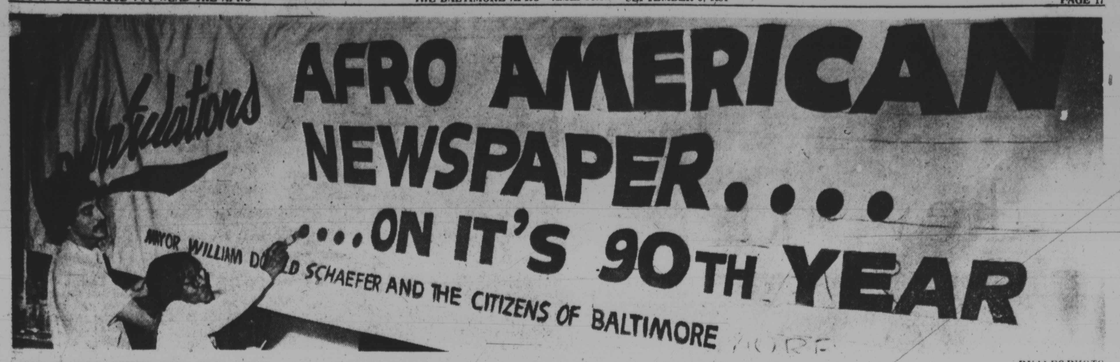


RYALES PHOTO

THE BANNER WHICH WILL SOON HANG downtown near Harbor Place for one year is the one from Mayor Schaefer and the citizens of Baltimore congratulating the AFRO on its 90th Year of Publication. Shown here are the Park Sign Co. sign painter and 90th Year Edition Elizabeth M. Oliver putting the finishing touch on the giant banner which will stretch clear across the street. Made of vinyl, the banner is designed in red, white and blue and is 20 feet in length and four feet wide. The sign painters who accomplished the work are Albert Papenberg (above) and Mike Gott who did it in about four hours.

A Preview of the AFRO's coming 90th Year Edition

A famous writer tells us about today and tomorrow

BLACK EDITORS who went to Washington for a conference during World War I in 1917 include AFRO editor and publisher John H. Murphy Sr., Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Bishop Ernest Lyon and many other famed personalities of the day (L TO R) FRONT ROW (L to R) Former Gov. P.B.S. Pinchback, Charles W. Anderson, Major L. P. DeMontal, Dr. Emmett K. Scott, chairman; Col. Edouard Requim, Dr. Robert R. Moton, Judge R. H. Terrell, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Maj. J. E. Spingarn, Chris J. Perry, Rev. Ernest Lyon. SECOND ROW — W. H. Steward, Dr. A. M. Curtis, W. T. Andrews, Dr. W. H. Davis, Benjamin J. Davis, Henry A. Boyd, Robert S. Abbott, John Mitchell, John H. Murphy, G. L. Knox, A. E. Manning. THIRD ROW — Dr. Maurice Curtis, Dr. H. M. Minton, J. C. Dancy, H. C. Smith, E. A. Warren, C. K. Robinson, J. E. Mitchell, Ralph W. Tyler, R. W. Thompson, N. C. Crews. FOURTH ROW — Dr. S. A. Furniss, R. C. Bruce, P. B. Young, George W. Harris, Dr. W. H. Brooks, James A. Cobb, Dr. J. R. Hawkins, C. N. Love, W. J. Singleton, W. L. Houston, William E. King. FIFTH ROW — Dr. R. E. Jones, Maj. A. W. Washington, Robert L. Vann, A. A. H. Grimke, Prof. George W. Cook, Capt. Arthur A. Spingarn and F. R. Moore.

By Dr.
Samuel L. Banks

The black press, historically, has been a staunch and luminous beacon of hope, solace and inspiration for black Americans. The Black Press has remained steadfast and riveted on two fundamental principles which form the ethos of America: (1) equality of all citizens before the law; (2) belief in the intrinsic and fundamental worth of all citizens.

NATIONAL IDEALS AND REALITY

In spite of our nation's affirmation of egalitarian and lofty principles, the reality of our national experience reveals, past and present, a painful and troubling bifurcation between national ideals and practices.

The sequestration of over 60 percent of 31 million black Americans to a substandard standard of living in the United States today provides a clear indication of the gap between American ideals and practice.

Additional evidence of the socio - economic pathology affecting black Americans is shown in the Depression levels of unemployment affecting black youths.

In fact, given the present draconian and dreadful supply - side economics (i.e., Reaganomics) of President Reagan, and a highly conservative and reactionary mood of the nation, black America is in profound crisis and travail.

KKK' RESURGENCE

The resurgence of the despicable and dastardly Ku Klux Klan, the disaffection and attenuation of the solid support of humane and liberal allies committed to equality of opportunity and social jusiice and propensity in the White House in the Congress to chastise and circumscribe socio - economic opportunities for blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics and the poor portend calamitous times.

President Reagan and the Congress have determined through the budget process that the defense establishment will have priority over paipable and urgent human needs.

Consequently, the nation will commit over $1.5 trillion to defense. The effects of this situation as reflected in shoddy schools, inadequate health care and nutritional programs, reduction of the school lunch programs, curtailing of food stamps, care for the elderly and young, reduction of support for higher education, among other budget cuts, depict an unnecessary unconscionable situation for a nation with a Gross National product in excess of $2 trillion.

ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE BLACK PRESS

It falls, principally, to the black press, as in the past, to depict and call attention to the suffering and unqual status of the preponderant number of 31 million Americans at a time of unparalleled national prosperity.

The concept of "speaking for ourselves" remains the leitmotif and unifying focus of the black press in America. The black press serves to protest inequality, to affirm uplift and opportunity for all and to challenge our nation to live up to her national ideals.

The extraordinary records of accomplishments, resilience and staying power of black Americans, in the face of monumental adversities, have been captured by these black journalistic precursors and their black successors.

T. Thomas Fortune editor of the New York Age a powerful black precursor of an earlier period, reflects the spirit of protest and opposition to human debasement in a widely discussed address to the Afro-American League in Chicago in 1890:

"We are met here today, representatives of eight million free men who know our rights and have the courage to defend them.

"We have met here today to emphasize the fact that the past condition of dependence and helplessness upon men who have used as for selfish and unholy purposes, who have murdered and robbed and outraged us, must be reversed . . .

Ladies and gentlemen, we have been robbed of the honest wages of our toil, we have been robbed of the substance of our citizenship by murder and intimidation; we have been outraged by enemies and deserted by friends . . .

Was ever race more unjustly maligned than ours? Was ever race more shamelessly robbed than ours? Was ever race used to advance political and pecuniary fortunes of others as ours?

Was ever race so patient, so law - abiding, so uncomplaining as ours?

Ladies and gentlemen, I stand here today and assert in all soberness that we shall no longer accept in silence a condition which degrades our manhood and makes a mockery of our citizenship . . .

We appeal to the nation, which fears a righteous God and loves justice, to judge if our contention here is unreasonable . . .

We are weary of the empty promises of politicians and the platitudes of national conventions, and we demand a fulfillment of the stipulation in the bond as a condition of our further confidence and support."

WE MUST CONTINUE

The black press, in the eloquent and insistent spirit of Fortune, must continue to be relentless in its quest for equality of opportunity and social justice in our nation.

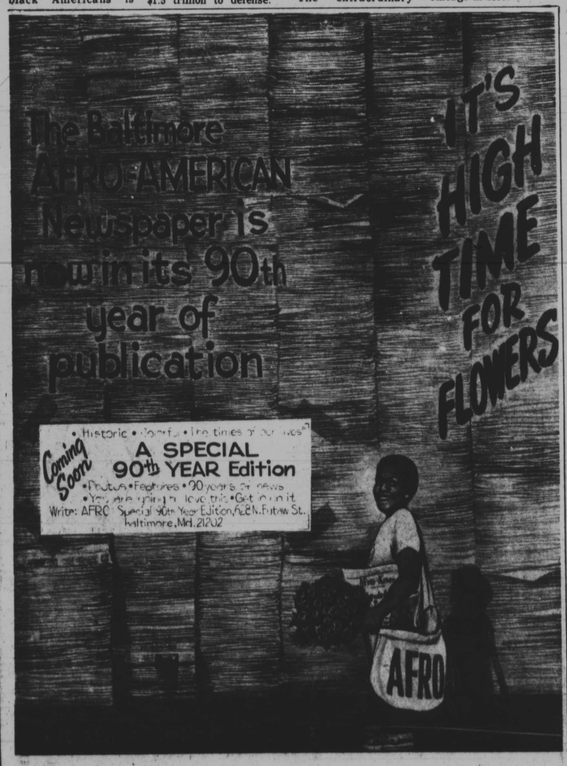
THE ROAD AHEAD

The socio - economic prospects in 1981 for 31 million black Americans are bleak and lugubrious. The lacerating cuts in national socio-economic programs by the Reagan administration and U.S. Congress, the proliferating levels of Depression levels of unemployment among black youths, a national mood reflecting a punitive and hostile attitude toward blacks, hispanics and the poor, the strident and vituperative voice of the Klan committed to an ideology of hate, violence and human debasement and a failure of the Reagan administration to provide strong and decisive leadership in human rights support an aura of fear, insensitivity, restivness and division.

It is abundantly clear, as measured by socio-economic indicators, that the situation will worsen before it improves.

Recent statements by Mrs. Margaret Bush Wilson, chairperson of,

(Continued on Page 31)



Bethlehem Steel is braced to take care of KKK problem, will not tolerate it

In response to a claim earlier in the week that Ku Klus Klan literature was found in one location at Bethlehem Steel Corporation's Sparrows Point plant, corporation officials announced the company will not tolerate threats to individual civil rights and that the matter is being investigated.

In a letter to Russell R. Jones, general manager of the plant, Dr. Emmet C. Burns, the regional director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, (NAACP) indicated that Klan literature was found in a locker room in the plant's fire department and that certain employees said they had been harassed.

Shortly before press tome, today the company told the AFRO - AMERICAN, "Bethlehem does not condone, nor will it tolerate, any actions that threaten, or have the effect of threatening, the civil rights of any employee."

Jones said the management of Sparrows Point "is committed in its equal employment opportunity program to the prevention not only of discrimination but of harassment in any form."

As recently as July 20, 1981, Donald H. Trautlein, Bethlehem's chairman, in a letter to all supervisors in the company wrote:

"As you know, I am deeply committed to making Bethlehem the most productive steel company in this country.

"I believe that one step in that direction is to insure that the quality of working life at Bethlehem is the best that we can make it."

He continued by saying, "The level of that quality is very much influenced by the harmony in which each of us, of whatever race, sex, age, national origin, or religious persuasion, strives to make our workplace free of any form of personal harassment and full of true equality of opportunity."

The chairman said that only in such a work environment can employees "be truly productive."

Mr. Jones said the company appreciates Dr. Burns' concern and is making a prompt and full investigation into the matter. The company is working with union representatives to bring about a solution and intends to respond to Dr Burns just as soon as the matter is clarified.

Mitchell seeks strong laws against KKK

Congressman Parren J. Mitchell (D - 7th - Md.) has called upon the Justice Department to increase its anti - Ku Klux Klan and anti - Nazi enforcement activities.

Mitchell, a sixth - term Democrat, is concerned that definitions of "intent" and "conspiracy" within present statutes are being interpreted too narrowly by the Justice Department.

These narrow definitions result in few convictions of alleged offenders.

"We are experiencing a nationwide resurgence of hate group activity," warned Mitchell in a letter to William French Smith, the U.S. Attorney General.

"It now appears that the strength of these organizations is as great as it has ever been in traditional southern strongholds. More ominously, many areas in both the northeast and midwest have begun to display covert repressive behavior tendencies toward certain groups."

The letter is an outgrowth of Mitchell's recent hearings in Baltimore on the resurgence of hate group activity in Maryland.

Subsequent research revealed that the Justice Department has been reluctant to pursue prosecutions authorized under Title 18 of the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

Under Title 18, specific intent of a conspiracy to deprive a person of their civil rights need be proved to indicate successful prosecution of Klan and Nazi party members who perpetrate crimes.

According to federal court rulings, the details of the intent or conspiracy are not required.

Mitchell concluded the letter by saying, "Vigilante groups who conspire to violate the Constitution have wreaked havoc on racial and religious minorities in America.

"Leaving the rebirth of such groups unchecked would result in reopening wounds which have only recently begun to heal."

SEP