

It's Our Job to Tell the Full Story of Jesse's Campaign



by Chester A. Higgins, Jr.

Early, and in fact, during much of his campaign for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson has been noticeably absent from the daily news accounts of the primary campaigns.

Indeed, excluding the USA Today's most recently expose and several articles in monthly or weekly magazines, among them Vanity Fair's lengthy January cover story on Jackson (this story ending negatively by saying Jackson did not want the power -- in short did not want to win -- the office he was seeking; he only wanted the glory of running for the office) little has been said by any local or national publication about his campaign without the accompanying geremaid concerning his inability to win the office. And television coverage has been inequitably void.

Recently, however, this trend has been somewhat lessened. Jesse's impressive showings in state primaries where there were less than one percent Black population have compelled the newspapers to sit up and take notice. And last week a Washington Post-ABC News Poll found that Jackson, and Michael Dukakis, also a Democratic hopeful, and George Bush, the Republican, were the

commanding leaders in virtually all of the 16 states holding primaries on March 8--Super Tuesday.

However, the Black Press should not lament when the white press fails to be less than forthcoming in respect to the relevancy of Jackson's presidential campaign. We should not weep and gnash out teeth when television fails to take note of the patronizing and condescending treatment Jesse receives from other Democratic candidates on a debate panel.

For it is the job of the Black Press -- our mandate, indeed--to do what we have done for so long and at times so well--tell our people what is going on--and tell it like it is.

We must tell the complete, thorough and very remarkable story of the unique campaign that Jackson is waging with limited resources and a dearth of fair and equitable major media coverage. We must inform our readers of Jackson's campaign initiatives -- of his being the lonely voice in this campaign. On the home front we must tell of Jackson's call for just treatment of the poor, the homeless, the threatened farmers and blue collar workers who are losing their industrial jobs to "outsourcing" to cheap foreign labor, and on the foreign policy front, his consistent cry against the brutal, nazi oppression of South African Blacks and the thuggish treatment of young Palestinian protestors at the hands of Israeli soldiers. Herein, then, lies an opportunity for the Black newspapers --the Black media-- to take the lead in getting out the full and accurate story on Jackson's campaign to all Americans, regardless of race, color or creed.

Jackson's campaign is entirely too important to us all to be left to the whims or prejudices of a majority media which may have other agendas or is just indifferent to its thrusts. Nor can we be less fervent in our delineation because the Jackson campaign funds happen to be limited. We delineation

We must urge all candidates to advertise in the Black Press just as they do in the white media, but a candidate's lack of funds or limited resources should not deter us in presenting a fair and factual story or editorial.

Black publishers, particularly, those in the South, can insure increased coverage of the Jackson campaign not only by writing accurate and complete stories and editorials of its progress, but above all by urging our readerships to get off their duffs, to go to the polls and cast their ballots for Jesse L. Jackson. That way they will insure that Jesse Jackson can win.

Hooks Urges Board Support for Commission on Racial Violence

Citing the growing number of racially motivated incidents of violence and the danger they pose to racial harmony in this nation, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, Executive Director of the NAACP, has called for massive public support of a bill now before Congress (H.R. 3914), that would establish a Commission on Racially Motivated Violence.

The bill was introduced in February by Representatives Peter Rodino (D. NJ) and Hamilton Fish (R. NY), and was in response to a call issued last year by the NAACP for Congressional leadership to conduct a series of hearings into the present wave of racial violence, seeking to pinpoint its causes and to develop recommendations to help prevent further occurrences.

Dr. Hooks issued his call on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the report by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders which made an in-depth and far reaching investigation into the causes of the racial riots during the summer of 1967 that resulted in 83 deaths and millions of dollars in property damages. The Commission, which became known as the Kerner Commission, concluded:

"Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal."

"This prophecy, I am relieved to say, has not been fulfilled in its fullest possible dimensions. There has, however, been a significant increase in the width of the gulf that separates whites from blacks, and the haves from the have-nots." Dr. Hooks said.

"As we needed the Kerner Commission then, we need this Commission on Racial Violence now. Something very wrong is happening in our society and matters are not going to get any better unless we take a hard look at this phenomena," he added.

Under the provisions of the bill, the Commission would investigate and make recommendations regarding issues related to racially motivated violence including:

*Whether the incidence of racially motivated violence is increasing in the United States.

*The causes and factors leading to such incidents and the influence, if any, of specific groups or organizations in causing such violence.

*Methods and techniques to avert and eliminate racially motivated violence.

The commission would be composed of 12 persons--six to be appointed by the President, three by the Speaker of the House, and three by the Senate Majority Leader. It would be empowered to hold hearings and would make its report no later than one year after its initial meeting.

Dr. Hooks' endorsement of the legislation came as the NAACP's Board of Directors concluded its meeting on Saturday, February 20, 1988. Actions taken by the board included the following.

*The establishment of a Commission on Higher Education charged with investigating the numerous problems associated with higher education for blacks including student recruitment and retention, violence against blacks on white college campuses, tenure for black faculty members, and equal employment opportunity at all levels.

Commission members will be drawn from a wide spectrum of disciplines. They will produce a final report with recommendations.

*The establishment of a NAACP leadership University as an appropriate college or university for the training of NAACP branch leaders. Through the training, NAACP leadership will be provided the modern informational tools needed to motivate and stimulate a cadre of volunteer workers.

*Opposition to the sale, manufacture and distribution of plastic guns and armour piercing bullets.

*Appointment of a task force, to be named by the Chairman of the NAACP Board, to investigate the problem of homelessness with the objective of presenting specific recommendations to the Resolution Committee for consideration at the 1988 Annual Convention. This problem has reached epidemic proportions and a disproportionate number of blacks have become "street people".

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