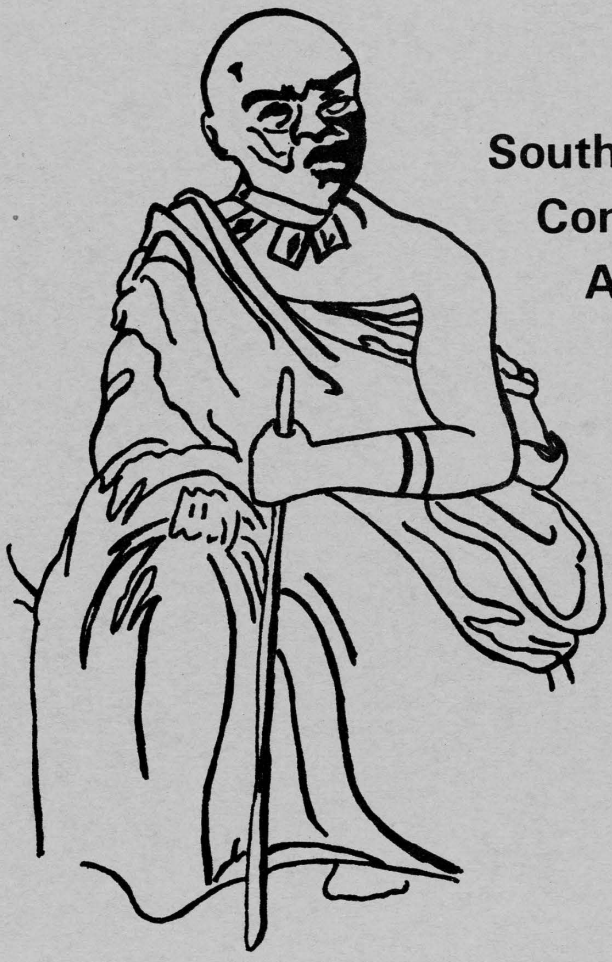
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THE GRIOT



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THE GRIOT

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SUNDIATA, DJIBRIL T. NIANE

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Seven Days A Week: Black Workers Of Houston

Merline and Richard Pitre

From their earliest arrival in Houston, blacks have performed the least desirable tasks in the town.[1] As slaves in the antebellum period, they served their masters as menial laborers and domestic servants. As a result, following emancipation, the white population continued to maintain control of both the skilled and unskilled occupations, while blacks were restricted to menial labor.[2] Unlike the older slave states, Texas failed to develop a class of black artisans. Thus by 1900, Texas had the lowest percentage of black wage earners per unit of population than any other state in the union.[3] In the twentieth century, anti-black prejudice on the part of labor and management, inadequate educational opportunities and the lack of sufficient black artisan class were factors that stymied black Texans' economic development.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of black wage earners throughout the South were displaced by white workers in traditional "Negro jobs". But this displacement phenomenon was not much of a problem for Houston. Twentieth century Houston had and continues to have one of the nation's most dynamic economies. In view of the city's growth, the tragedy of Houston has not been so much the removal of blacks from various occupations but the barring them from areas of expansion. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to show that between 1900-1960 the urban black workers of Houston were confronted with an economic structure which allowed appreciable numbers to obtain employment, but only at the unskilled entry and service levels.

Statistical data for broad occupational categories from 1900 to 1960 describes and bears out such a pattern. According to the 1920 census, more than two-thirds of all black male workers served as unskilled laborers, while only 10.7 percent of their white counterparts served in similar capacities. In contrast, only 5.4 percent of the city's black males managed to attain positions among the white collar professional, proprietary and clerical ranks, as compared with 44.6 percent of all white laborers who enjoyed the status associated with these upper level occupational groups.[4] A close examination of the census data further reveals that the few blacks who penetrated the most prestigious job categories were concentrated heavily in only a hand full of occupations.[5] For example, of the 261 male black professionals, clergymen accounted for 48.7 percent and teachers supplied a more modest 16.3 percent. Physicians and lawyers represented 9.2 and 1.9 percent respectively. On the other hand, no black males were classified as civil, electrical or mechanical engineers. Moreover, retail dealers accounted for two-thirds of the 234 black males in the proprietary class, and of the 171 black male clerical workers, 55.6 percent were classified as clerks (except clerks in stores).[6]

Comparative data for 1930 reveals

a similar pattern. Black males in the higher status occupations continued to be concentrated in a few areas. Preachers accounted for 53.9 percent in 1930 of all black male professionals, while retail dealers represented 44.7 percent of the black male proprietary class. In addition, over 80 percent of the black male clerical workers were engaged in only three jobs: mail carriers (24.4 percent), salesmen (28.5 percent) and clerks not employed in stores (27.7 percent).[7]

As far as black women in the labor force is concerned, the census data for 1920 looks very similar to that of black men. In 1920, three-fourths (75.2 percent) of all black females were employed as domestic servants. Only 5.5 percent enjoyed employment within the white collar occupational groups as opposed to 68.7 percent of white women who worked in these positions. By far, the largest relative disparity among female workers occurred in the clerical occupations, where 53.9 percent of all white women were employed as compared to a mere 1.0 percent of their black counterparts. On the other hand, a larger proportion of black women worked in unskilled jobs than was the case of white women. Perhaps most significantly, although white women in the labor force outnumbered the black female workers 1.2 to 1 percent, the number of blacks exceeded whites nine-fold in domestic services.[8] The fact that black women, like their fellow male workers, held jobs in fewer different occupations than their white counterparts, compounded the limitations of their low status. For the most part, black females were concentrated in only one profession, one proprietary category, two skilled occupations and a very few unskilled occupation jobs. For instance, 84 percent of all professional women served as teachers in the city schools. Seventy-one and six-tenths (71.6) percent of black female proprietors were boarding housekeepers. Black barbers and hairdressers comprised all of the skilled occupations in which black women were engaged. Even in the lower-rated status job categories, black women suffered unequal occupational distribution. Laundry workers and seamstresses in factories accounted for 42.6 and 33.3 percent respectively.[9]

The 1930 census did not show any significant change in the occupational status of black female workers in Houston. Black women were still concentrated in a handful of the white collar professional jobs. For example, in 1930 black teachers comprised more than three-fourths of all black female professional and boarding housekeepers which constituted more than one-half of the black women within the proprietary class. Of the black women engaged in semi-skilled occupations, 46.4 percent were dressmakers and laundry operators. It is no surprise that 71.0 percent of the black women in domestic jobs were engaged as house servants.[10] It should be noted that black female workers were subordinated in terms of job status when compared not only with all white workers, but also with all black males of Houston.

Looking at the above statistics one might argue that the Great Depression of the 1930's added insult to injury, and indeed the blacks were the "worst fix" of all. Not only were there few blacks in higher prestigious jobs in the professional, proprietary and clerical occupational categories, but in fact, the absolute number of black professionals declined between 1930 and 1940.[11] If the Great Depression revealed anything, it revealed the insecurity of black people in the urban labor market of Houston. The Federal unemployment census of January

1931 indicated that unemployment among black workers in Houston was twice as high as among white workers. In addition, this same data revealed that 35 percent of the black workers in the city who had been gainfully employed within six months prior to the time the census was taken, were now unemployed.[12] To be sure, Houston in the 1930's was not so heavenly as some would like to believe. Nor was it the city that the Depression forgot, at least, as far as blacks were concerned.

Despite the hardship of the Great Depression, a brighter day would come to all the people of Houston. Prosperity returned to Texas after 1939 and continued for more than a decade thereafter. By 1939 the growing threat of war in Europe and Asia signaled more to the United States than a threat to world peace. According to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it meant the United States involvement and the creation of stockpile materials that might be important for America's defense.[13] The result of this was the establishment of a wartime economy which, in turn, led to a level of prosperity of both Texas and Houston, which was unknown for a decade. But the benefits of that prosperity were not equally distributed among all Texans.

For the majority of white Texans, prosperity meant fuller employment and a concomitant increase in wages as private industries turned to the production of war time materials. In the drive to create defense industries in Texas, massive aircraft manufacturing plants were built in north central Texas. Shipyards were established on the Gulf Coast in Baytown, Galveston and Houston. Petrochemical industries were created near existing petroleum refineries and were located at various points in the state including Houston.

It is often presumed that a tight job market is a virtual panacea for bringing forth a climate of change in racial employment. However, a review of the Houston experience should put to rest such simplistic notions. As far as blacks were concerned, as industrial plants began to convert for the purpose of producing war materials, black Houstonians found great difficulty in securing employment. Because employers were generally inclined to first absorb those still unemployed white workers, unemployed black people generally moved into the resulting vacancies created in the New Deal relief work agencies. Thus, the first benefit which black Houstonians derived from the boom in defense industries was in securing jobs that had been deserted by whites who were attracted to defense industries for higher wages.[14]

However, as the operation of defense industries continued, the demand for additional labor was intensified by military manpower needs. By 1942 the economic expansion and manpower shortage accompanying the Second World War created a heretofore unrealized employment opportunities for the peoples of Houston. One might argue that in the remaining years of the Second World War an increasing number of black workers - male and female - received training in semi-skilled and skilled defense work in Houston. But despite their defense training at Prairie View and elsewhere in the state, the skilled and semi-skilled black workers who were produced were not usually employed in Texas industries. Instead, they were transported to Chester, Pennsylvania or Oakland, California to work in shipyards, while the shipyards of Texas were experiencing a labor shortage. When black workers were employed in the state, the prevailing practice was to assign them to semi-skilled work despite any

previous training. This phenomenal evasion in the utilization of total manpower resource by a nation at war was a clear tribute to the tenacity of racial discrimination in Texas as well as the entire nation. The effect of such attitudes upon industrial production was noted by a black newspaper, *The Informer,* in December 1942. Comparing the shipbuilding on the West Coast with that of Houston, *The Informer* stated that it took only 37.5 days to build a ship on the West Coast, while "the lily white Houston Shipbuilding Company required 83.6 days per ship."[15] This article went on to argue that while the manpower shortage in defense industries became critical due to the military effort which was mounted after 1942, black skilled workers were walking the streets of Houston as the management of those industries talked of extreme shortages of skilled workers.

Black workers were "short changed" by other industries as well. Perhaps in no other industries was discrimination so glaring as in the case of the building trades and the oil industries. Even a cursory examination of the census data reveals how poorly blacks were represented in the building trade. According to the 1940 census report there were 1,505 black carpenters out of a total of 31,000; 254 black plumbers and steamfitters out of a total of 6,619; only 65 roofers and sheet metal workers out of a total of 2,777.[16] As for the oil industry, it has been the most important industry in Texas since 1901, but still black workers made only slight gains in employment in petroleum production, refining and the allied petrochemical industries. The growth of the petroleum and allied industries in Texas was astronomical throughout World War II, and the pace had not slackened by the mid-1950's. The refineries and petrochemical plants in Texas employed thousands of Texans, but only a small minority of those workers were black.[17]

For those few who penetrated the above growth industries, promotion was virtually non-existent. Such became evidence late in 1954, when the black auxiliary of Local 367 of the OWIU in the Shell Oil Refinery in Houston filed a complaint with the FEPC Regional Office in Dallas. Contending that the white leadership of Local 367 and the management of the refinery prevented black workers from rising above the levels of janitor, laborer, and gardener, the complaint persuaded the management of the refinery to attempt to upgrade seven qualified black workers.[18] The effort to promote the seven blacks to skilled employment provoked a strike by the white workers in the refinery. The strike produced the desired result as the management of Shell retracted the promotions.[19] Thus, the question of vertical mobility for black workers in the petroleum industry in Houston was not resolved for nearly another decade. This was borne out by study of industrial employment among black Texans which concluded that the "greatest opportunities for Negroes appear to be in firms employing them at the lowest levels."[20]

It is worth noting that World War II almost doubled the number of black industrial workers in Houston. Yet, as blacks entered the shipbuilding, food and tobacco processing, chemical, petroleum, and apparel industries, they entered at the bottom of the totem pole. Since wartime placement came overwhelmingly in unskilled positions, blacks were hardest hit by postwar reduction.

That only a small percentage of blacks were used in the above industries in clerical, professional or managerial posts is not uncommon nor unique; the same held true in public employment in government. Other than public education, the op-

portunity for public employment in government on the local, county and municipal levels was extremely limited for black Houstonians. The record of black workers reveal that only a minute number were employed by the government. Without exception, there were no black firemen, few black clerical workers, few nurses in public hospitals and only a few librarians.[21] This discrepancy existed despite the fact that black citizens paid taxes which provided salaries for all public employees.

Unlike traditional black employment, which was considered undesirable by most white workers because of low wages, the work hazard involved, or because of its irregularity, public employment was far more attractive. Its attraction was not lost upon black Texans either, but for them the door was closed. A few mail carriers and seven policemen made the sum total of non-menial government employment available to black Houstonians during and immediately after World War II. Aside from this, blacks had to find work as janitors and porters.[22] Another example of the white monopoly upon government in Houston was found in the State Highway Department. This Department employed more than 7,000 workers by 1947. However, the sole black employee hired by that agency was in janitorial personnel.[23]

It should be noted that while the majority of blacks throughout the city's history have been wage earners, there have been some blacks who went into business for themselves. A review of black efforts in this regard reveal that black businesses were overwhelmingly small. In the Spring of 1954 Jacob T. Stewart, a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas, conducted an extensive survey of Houston's black business community. Stewart studied 770 black-owned businesses. Of the 770 companies 428, or 55.6 percent, were classified as retail and the remaining 342 were placed in a service business category. One of the most notable characteristics of the black-owned retail and service companies in Houston was the decided trend toward proprietary ownership. Of the retail stores 89.5 percent were proprietorship, 10 percent were partnerships and .5 percent were corporations. Proprietorships accounted for 88.5 percent of the service enterprises. The percentage of partnerships among service companies was 10.2 while .9 percent of the firms had corporate structure. From the list of 770 businesses, only five were corporations. The five corporations consisted of two funeral homes, one grocery and meat market, one household appliance store and one school. Thus, the typical black corporation in Houston was a service enterprise and was not in the realm of manufacturing.[24]

One can point to a number of reasons for this typically small business enterprise - difficulty in acquiring capital and credit, lack of business training and experience. However, these blacks who started those small businesses were in the vanguard of those who refused to accept the premise that blacks were predestined to menial labor and low wages. But these individuals were in the minority. For the majority of black workers, menial labor was a way of life.

In the 1960's, on the surface, the economic situation appeared a little better for blacks, but beneath the situation was about the same. Between 1940-1960, the black urban population in Houston grew from 19.5 percent to 23 percent. As a result of this, there would be a change in the occupational status of many blacks; a large number of blacks moved out of domestic and labor oc-

cupations. This was especially true among black males who as private household workers, were 7.4 percent of the labor force in 1940, but only .8 percent in 1960. For black men who were previously engaged in domestic service, they moved to construction, utilities, trucking, wholesaling, restaurants, retail sales, welfare and hospital employees. Collectively, those industries doubled the percentage of their black workers.[25] Yet, most of these new positions still fell in the unskilled and semi-skilled labor categories. An interview with Mr. George Jefferson, Director of Civil Service, bears out this point. Mr. Jefferson revealed that the number of persons employed by the City of Houston as of August 1963 was 9,062: 7,091 males and 1,971 females. When asked: "How many of these 9,062 were black," the Director of Civil Service stated that a good estimate would be about twenty percent. But he emphasized that this was only a guess. Assuming his guess was correct, there were 1,812 blacks employed in the City of Houston.[26] The number is not so important as the occupations in which they were employed. It was further revealed that the great mass of these blacks were employed in the following areas: Public Works Department, Utility Divisions, Parks and Recreation and Police and Fire Departments.

No one will deny that Houston had a booming economy in 1960. Yet the characteristic individual expansion and labor shortage provided little in the way of advancement opportunity for the city's sizable black labor force. It is true that black unemployment rates in the 60's were low when compared to many urban labor centers, but the familiar relationship of the black rate being twice the rate of whites held true. Nonetheless, the critical issue was not unemployment **per se**. Most black men who sought jobs found them, but the jobs they held were typically in personal services, small business enterprises, and declining occupational categories.

The occupational structure described in this paper reveals that blacks were clustered in the lowest paying, least skilled and most competitive jobs in the city. If one had asked the average black worker about his job, he would probably have described it in the words of Elliot Lielow: "This job is not a stepping stone to something better. It is a dead end. It promises to deliver no more tomorrow, next month or next year than it does today." By and large, black workers were found in 1960 in the same kind of jobs they were doing in 1900. It can be argued that the relative economic position of black workers does not appear to have deteriorated in the first half of the twentieth century, but to have remained the same. Stagnation rather than deterioration characterized the status of blacks in the Houston job market. Blacks entered the century in an economically untenable position and remained there through the 60's.

One reason for this stagnation was that the invisible sign of the expanding Houston economy usually read for "Whites Only." A second reason has to do with the shortcomings of social legislation both in Texas and in Houston. The city did not have a fair employment practice act nor a human relations commission with enforceable authority. Moreover, the City of Houston did not have a municipal minimum wage low. Also in regards to social policy, Texas is a right-to-work state which comments upon the minimal role assumed by the labor movement in local political affairs. A third reason for this stagnation is that the labor unions of this city were lily white. A fourth and final reason is that blacks were barred from the city's only full-time vocational

high school which provided such courses as refrigeration, automotive, mechanics, drafting, machine shop, and printing[27] - courses that put one on the tenured tract for employment. It is not surprising, then, that in 1960 blacks were still relegated to the industry of the 3 H's - hot, heavy and hazardous. It is no wonder that two-thirds of the blacks employed by the city in 1960 were employed in the labor classification - a job classification that excluded them from civil service coverage and the job security it affords.

So, for seven days a week black workers performed tasks which were usually strenuous, frequently unpleasant and often repetitive. More than this, they usually worked long hours for low pay. While a small number of blacks moved into professional and skilled jobs, they, for the most part, were vitiated by tokenism, gradualism and persistent racial insensitivity. Thus, the traditional American pattern of progress upward through striving was not found in the history of black workers in Houston from 1900-1960. For those people the glorious age is in the future.

FOOTNOTES

[1]O. F. Allen, *The City of Houston, From Wilderness to Wonder* (Temple, Texas, 1936), pp. 1-21.

[2]Robert Eli Teel, "Discrimination Against Negro Workers in Texas: Extent and Effects," (M.A. Thesis; University of Texas, 1947), p. 131; see also George Tindal, *The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge, 1967), pp. 161-1633.

[3]Lawrence Rice, *The Negro in Texas 1870-1900* (Baton Rouge, 1924), p. 184.

[4]*Fourteenth Census of the U.S., Vol. 4, Population: Occupations,* p. 368; see also James Sorell "An De Po Cullud Man in De Wuss Fix Uv Awl: Black Occupational Status of Houston, Texas 1920-1940," *The Houston Review,* Vol. 1 (Spring 1979), 13-26

[5]*Fourteenth Census of the U.S. V . 4, Occupations,* pp. 1114-1115.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]*Fifteenth Census of U.S., Vol. 4, Occupations,* pp. 1593-1595.

[8]*Fourteenth Census of the U.S. Vol. 4, Population-Occupational,* pp. 1114-1116.

[9]*Ibid.,* p. 1116.

[10]*Fifteenth Census Vol. 4, Occupations,* pp. 1595-1596.

[11]See *Sixteenth Census of United States Vol. 3, Part 5: Labor Forces.*

[12]National Urban League, "A Review of the Economic and Cultural Problems of Houston, Texas as They Relate to the Conditions in the Negro Population (1945)," p. 35; County and City Data Book, _____ A Statistical Abstract Supplement, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

[13]Fred Z. Israel (ed.), *The State of the Union Message of the President* (3 vols; New York: Chelesa Publisher, 1966), 111, 2820.

[14]Allan Weber, "Negro in the Texas Industrial Labor Market," (M.A. Thesis, University of Texas 1948), pp. 15-16.

[15]*Houston Informer,* December 26, 1942; see also Teel, "Discrimination Against Negro Workers."

[16]*Sixteenth Census of the U.S. Vol. 3, Part 5, Labor Force,* p. 408. See also Mildred H. Meltzer, "Chapter in the Struggle for Negro Rights in Houston 1944-1960" (M.A. Thesis, University of Houston 1963).

[17]Allene A. Adams, "The Development of the Oil Industry in the Baytown Area, Especially as it Affects the Employment and Welfare of Negroes," (M.A. Thesis, Prairie View, 1944), p. 131.

[18]Fair Employment Practice Committee - *Final Report* 1946 (Washington: Government Printing Office 1947), p. 23; Carl Biking and Howard W. Fisher, Jr., *The Negro and Petroleum Industry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1969), p. 31.

[19]*Ibid.*

[20]Henry A. Bullock, "Racial Attitudes and Employment of Negroes," *American Journal of Sociology* LVI (March 1951), 451; National Urban League, "A Review of the Economic and Cultural Problems of Houston, Texas as Related to Conditions in the Negro Population" (Houston, 1945), p. 35.

[21]*Sixteenth Census of the U.S. Vol. 3, The Labor Force,* pp. 510-520; see also Letter to Robert E. Teel from K. O. Womack, Acting Secretary and Chief Examiner of the Houston Civil Service Commission, May 27, 1943 in Teel "Discrimination Against Negro Workers," p. 46.

[22]H. L. Lee, Interview in Charles S. Johnson, "Source Material Patterns of Negro Segregation: Houston, Texas," (Research Memorandum for use in the Preparation of Gunnar Mydial, *American Dilemma* (New York: 1940), p. 5.

[23]*Ibid.*

[24]Jacob T. Stewart, "Characteristics of Negro Owned and Operated Business Establishment in Houston," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas 1956), pp. 20, 41.

[25]*Eighteenth Census of U.S. General and Economic Characteristics,* Texas Final Report PC (1) 45C, Table 74-78.

[26]Interview by Jesse Gloster of George Jefferson, Director of Civil Service, August 3, 1967 (Texas Southern University Library).

[27]Ira Bryant, "Houston Independent School District of School Plans and Curriculum Study," (3 vols, 1954) I; p. 15; *Houston Post,* February 24, 1943.

Black Crossover Voting in a Majority Black Congressional District: The 1984 Re-Election of Lindy Boggs

Monte Piliawsky

For the past fifteen years, electoral politics have been the cutting edge of the civil rights movement, the major weapon available to blacks to improve their quality of life. Since 1980, there has been a sharp increase in black registration and voter participation. According to the Joint Center for Political Studies, the result has been that the number of black elected officials increased by 8.6 percent between 1982 and 1983 (from 5,160 to 5,606), which represented "the sharpest increase since 1976 and one of the largest numerical increases in the past ten years."[1] But, the fundamental problem of black politics still remains the translation of political empowerment to economic betterment.

The Congressional Black Caucus

Controversy exists as to what extent black elected officials are able to effect significant improvement for the black community. For example, several studies have revealed that the severe legal and economic institutional constraints on black mayors, exacerbated by President Reagan's "New Federalism," greatly restrict their leverage to ameliorate the economic conditions of their black constituents.[2]

However, in terms of the U.S. Congress, it is undisputable that black interests would be better served by greater black representation. For, as Lucius J. Barker points out, black congresspersons perform the dual role of functioning both as district representatives performing the pork-barrel and case work services that impart particularistic benefits within a given constituency, as well as an interest group representing the hopes and aspirations of all blacks.[3] In this capacity, the primary purpose of the Congressional Black Caucus, as Congressperson Louis Stokes expressed it in 1973, is to "utilize the legislative process to help bring about full equality of opportunity in American society," and to put "the black perspective into all legislation."[4]

Because of the unique role which black congresspersons perform, a considerable black presence in the Congress is indispensable for black America to articulate a political agenda which essentially differs from the one advanced by white representatives. The Congressional Black Caucus has long understood that its intrinsic purpose is to directly attack the structural conditions of black subordination, by raising issues that involve economic redistribution, issues which, in its absence, either would not be raised or would even be deemed as illegitimate in the American political system. Marguerite Ross Barnett explains the function of the CBC this way:

> If CBC members are to act simply as legislators, then white legislators are substitutable for black legislators. Voting records and activity within Congress would be the only relevant basis

for assessment of the CBC. Rationalization for a racially based caucus and for special efforts on behalf of blacks must hinge on a clear understanding of the special needs of black constituents and the particular responses of black representatives to those structurally created needs.[5]

Currently, there are twenty blacks serving in the U.S. Congress, all in the House of Representatives. In view of the massive grassroots campaign headed by Rev. Jesse Jackson, the outcome of the 1984 congressional election must be considered disappointing for black Americans. Following a three-seat gain in 1982, the size of the CBC was reduced by one in 1984, with the defeat of Indiana representative Katie Hall. More significantly, black candidates in four southern congressional districts containing majority black populations were all defeated by white incumbent officeholders. The result is that in 1986, there still are only two black southern congresspersons—Texas' Mickey Leland and Tennessee's Harold Ford—the same number as in 1972 when Barbara Jordan and Andrew Young became the region's first black congresspersons in the twentieth century.

Given the political reality that very few blacks have been elected to represent white majority districts—Alan Wheat of Missouri and Ronald Dellums and Julian Dixon of California are the only present examples—it is imperative that blacks win election in majority black congressional districts if their ranks in the Congress are to swell. Tom Cavanaugh, senior researcher at the Joint Center for Political Studies poses the issue well:

> The easiest congressional districts for blacks to win have already been won. The next step is districts with white majorities. That's much harder. Practically all the districts with black majorities have black incumbents now. The handful that don't have white incumbents who've gone out of their way to cultivate black support.[6]

This paper is a study of the attempt by black challenger Israel Augustine in the 1984 congressional election to wrest control of Louisiana's second congressional district from one such white liberal incumbent, Lindy Boggs, both Democrats. While Boggs won the election by the decisive margin of 60 percent to 39 percent, the key element of the contest was the whopping 36 percent of the black vote that Boggs received. An analysis of the factors which accounted for this sizeable black crossover vote hopefully will provide insights into the difficulties black candidates encounter in mobolizing black voter support in other similar elections.

A Profile of Boggs and Augustine

The Boggs family—Lindy and her husband Hale—together have represented New Orleans in Congress for almost all of forty-five years. First elected to Congress in 1940, Hale Boggs, after a defeat at the polls and a four-year hitch in the Navy, returned in 1946, and remained there until his death in an Alaskan plane crash in 1972. The Majority Whip of the Democratic Party in the House for nine years and elected the Majority Leader in 1971, Boggs was next in line to become House Speaker when he was killed. Throughout his congressional career, he remained one of the handful of liberal southerners in Congress. He was a champion of civil rights in the 1960s, voting in favor of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1968 Open Housing Act. As *The New Republic* put it in 1971:

> Hale Boggs of Louisiana is no fossil. If you compare his voting record with that of every representative from his state, Boggs looks like a red-hot populist. He's a Southerner with a Northern accent on race, urban affairs, welfare, education....He is accommodating, ready to do a good turn, even when there's no visible promise of the favor being returned.[7]

Lindy Boggs, age 68, won a special election in 1972 to succeed her husband and subsequently was reelected to five consecutive terms, receiving less than ninety percent of the vote only once, in 1980, when a Republican opponent held her to 66 percent. Chairwoman of the 1976 Democratic National Convention and prominently mentioned as a possible Democratic Party vice-presidential candidate in 1984, Lindy Boggs compiled a decidedly liberal voting record in Congress, particularly on civil rights issues. In fact, according to the rating system of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in 1982, only eight of the 106 southern congresspersons achieved a more liberal performance than did Boggs.[8]

Boggs' chief opponent in the 1984 election was Israel Augustine, a 59-year-old civil rights lawyer, political science teacher at Southern University, and judge on the criminal and appellate benches. In 1971, Augustine was elected as the first and still only black to serve on the New Orleans Criminal District Court. In 1981, he was elected without opposition to Louisiana's Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, a position he resigned from in May 1984 to make the congressional race. Augustine's decision to oppose Boggs was a result of the action taken by the state legislature in 1983, under pressure from the federal judiciary, that created a reapportioned black-majority congressional district for New Orleans.

The Congressional Campaign

At the outset of the campaign, political observers expected that the Boggs-Augustine election would be closely contested. Despite the considerable advantages accruing to Boggs, including name recognition, the ability to raise large sums of money, and a good reputation among black voters, the mere fact that fifty-six percent of the district's registered voters were black seemed to provide Augustine with a ray of hope.

According to William E. Nelson and Philip J. Meranto, a high numerical concentration of blacks remains only potential political power unless the black electorate exhibits both high voter turnout and high group cohesion.[9] Indeed, a survey conducted in late April 1984 by Rose-Stekler Associates showed that Augustine faced a decidedly uphill struggle in mobilizing the level of black support needed to win. In fact, the poll revealed that Boggs began the race with a 46 percent to 25 percent lead overall, with five out of six whites supporting her and a surprising 37 percent of black voters favoring her candidacy. Since both candidates recognized that black voters would determine who the next congressperson would be, they focused much of their campaign efforts on that constituency.

Boggs' strategists hoped to receive a minimum of 20 percent of the black vote in light of her background, friendships and previous favors to the black community. For his part, Augustine hoped to create a crusade to elect Louisiana's first black congressperson in the twentieth century, although he was determined not to make an overt racial appeal. The result was that the election presented black voters with an agonizingly difficult choice. Political scientist Al Stokes summarized this dilemma:

> This election is agonizing for the average person because when you look at the record of Lindy Boggs, her political beliefs have reflected the desires of her constituents. In that context, I suspect that most black voters are thinking, "This lady has earned my vote."
>
> On the other hand, here is Israel Augustine, the one black politician in New Orleans that most persons like, be they black or white....Augustine represents the aspirations of black people who say, "Not only are we intricately a part of the great tradition of choosing our representatives, but we have arrived at a point where one of ours should be there."[10]

As might be expected, the Rose-Stekler poll indicated that Boggs did well among older more partisan blacks who vote regularly and who remembered her and her husband's record as liberals. This group of black voters expressed the sentiment, "She's been good for us; why vote her out of office?" On the other hand, younger blacks, especially those who were involved in Jesse Jackson's spring 1984 presidential primary campaign in Louisiana, preferred Augustine. These voters viewed the judge as a role model to emulate in their own lives.[11]

Endorsements: Both candidates exerted considerable effort to win political endorsements, with Boggs securing the most significant ones. The first major endorsement in the campaign came from Louisiana's governor, Edwin Edwards, himself just re-elected by a landslide to an unprecedented third four-year term. In supporting Boggs, the governor stated:

> Mrs. Boggs is nationally known. She has credibility and seniority, and until a person in public office gives voters some reason to dismiss them, they should continue in office.

Governor Edwards called Augustine "a credible and formidable candidate," but suggested that he was too old at age fifty-nine to begin a congressional career.[12] The Edwards endorsement enhanced Boggs' respectability, for his argument echoed the rationale of many blacks who cast their ballots for her.

In addition, Boggs secured the endorsements of the only New Orleans daily newspaper, the Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO, and the bulk of the city's white political organizations, including the prestigious Alliance for Good Government. Augustine received the endorsements of the four major black political organizations—SOUL, COUP, BOLD AND DAWN—however; Boggs garnered the impressive support of seventy-two smaller black political organizations. Although the overwhelming majority of New Orleans' black ministers backed Augustine, a number of highly respected black clergymen endorsed Boggs. At the end of the campaign, Boggs aired a very effective television commercial which featured the strong endorsement of black Ohio congressperson Louis Stokes.

Undoubtedly, the single most important endorsement in the congressional election was the non-endorsement of either candidate by New Orleans' first black mayor, Dutch Morial, the most powerful political figure in the city. Re-elected in 1982 to a second four-year term with 99 percent of the black vote in a runoff against a formidable white challenger, Morial was enormously popular in the New Orleans black community. The mayor's endorsement of Augustine

would have brought the latter much needed money, a street organization consisting of 500 unclassified City Hall workers, and the prospects of galvanizing unified black support behind his candidacy. In fact, insiders suggested that Augustine would not have challenged Boggs if he had not been confident of receiving Mayor Morial's endorsement. The speculation is that Morial privately hoped that Boggs would be re-elected to one more term to keep the congressional seat open to him as an option in 1986, when his second term as mayor would end.

Without Morial support, Augustine experienced difficulty in generating enthusiastic endorsements. He did receive the support of a coalition of black political leaders, including city councilmen, state legislators and ministers. But, several black organizations that supported him did not go all out in their efforts. For example, SOUL endorsed Augustine and put his name on its widely distributed sample ballots, but it did not operate a massive telephone bank operation on election day for him as it had done in several past campaigns.

Campaign Contributions: In opposing an incumbent, particularly someone who is an "institution" as is Lindy Boggs, it is generally necessary for the challenger to wage a media oriented campaign, if only to give the appearance of being a bona fide candidate. To his detriment, Augustine was unable to raise sufficient funds to purchase television time. Incredibly, Boggs raised and spent more than **eight times** as much as did Augustine. Thanks in large measure to $232,000 in contributions from political action committees, Boggs poured $622,000 into the race, making it the fourth best financed of all 1984 congressional campaigns.[13] The congressperson defrayed the expenses incurred by many small black political organizations for printing sample ballots and even paid people to distribute campaign paraphernalia.

On the other hand, Augustine's extreme paucity of funds, about $75,000 in all, left him unable to air television advertisements, restricting him to spots on black radio, billboards and signs on buses. Even worse, he lacked the money necessary to fuel the political organizations that mobilize voters to the polls of election day. While some organizations backed Augustine, even though he could not subsidize their printing and distribution expenses, others would not.

The Issues: Without Mayor Morial to help unify black voters behind his candidacy, and facing an incumbent regarded as friendly to blacks, it was apparent from the start that Judge Augustine's best hope of mobilizing sufficient black support was for him to wage an aggressive emotional campaign which resembled a righteous moral cause. As political scientist Paul Stekler explained: "For a challenger to run a race in which he seriously threatens the incumbent, there has to be a fire. I'm not sure there ever was a fire."[14] Simply put, Augustine conducted a relatively lackluster campaign; in fact, his unwillingness to criticize Boggs or distance himself from her on **any** issue position contributed to the most polite election contest in anybody's memory.

On the issues affecting the congressional district, such as federal aid for housing, education and jobs programs, Augustine and Boggs expressed similar views; consequently, in their campaign literature and public appearances, both candidates stressed their qualifications. As the campaign progressed, no confrontations emerged. As old friends, the two opponents heaped praise on each other at forums, never saying any-

thing nasty about each other. When Augustine mentioned Boggs, he usually described her as "this nice lady," while Boggs called Augustine by his nickname, "Chuck," and referred to him as "my old friend Israel."[15]

Even when addressing black audiences, Augustine steadfastly refused to make race an issue in the campaign, apparently not wanting to contribute to an atmosphere of racial polarization. Accordingly, Augustine permitted Rev. Jesse Jackson only to make one token appearance on his behalf at the very end of the campaign. The sole injection of the race issue into the campaign was a letter drafted and circulated by the "Friends of Israel Augustine Committee." The letter read, in part:

> IT IS TRUE! For the first time in over 100 years, we have a chance to elect a black person to be the United States Congressman from New Orleans-Judge Israel Augustine....We're primarily supporting Judge Augustine because he's the most qualified and most experienced candidate in the race....
>
> We agree that no one should be judged solely on the color of their skin. And we've never done that. But maybe someone else has. Because isn't it strange that there are **no** black U.S. Congressmen from the deep South?...
>
> For the past **45** years, we've supported the Boggs family by giving them our vote....Yet we cannot find one instance where they ever openly endorsed and supported one of our candidates. And now we're being told by some that we still owe the Boggs family. What do you think? Is there a debt due. If so, by whom and to whom?

For her part, Boggs conducted a very well organized and extravagantly financed campaign. Boggs spent close to $200,000 for radio and television advertisements and another $100,000 for direct mailing. Her schedule was hectic, as she performed the dual role of congressperson and candidate, coming to New Orleans from Washington, D.C. every Friday and staying through Sunday, scurrying around the district to forums, openings, meetings and parties.

Boggs' handouts and television commercials emphasized her seniority in Congress and particularly the money which her membership on the various House Appropriations subcommittees could generate for such New Orleans enterprises as the port, housing and the NASA installation in eastern New Orleans. As Boggs, herself, depicted it,

> I think that I have been effective and I know that I enjoy a position that is fairly unique in Congress because of the left-over affection and regard for Hale and for the work that I did before I was elected. I can sometimes accomplish things privately that other people can't accomplish.[16]

And to remind black constituents of her record, Boggs printed brochures listing her votes on such bills as civil rights acts, day care, and the measure to make Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday.

Two prominent observers of New Orleans politics—one black and one white—shared the belief that Judge Augustine simply did not raise an issue against Boggs that gave black voters a reason to cast their ballots

against her. Trevor Bryan, a Harvard Law School graduate and law partner of William Jefferson, one of two blacks in the Louisiana Senate, assessed Augustine's campaign this way:

> The problems with Augustine's candidacy were mostly technical. He did not campaign very vigorously. He assumed that he would win most blacks' votes because he himself was black. His mistake was not to offer anything but his "blackness." He did not differentiate himself whatsoever from Boggs, but rather agreed with her positions on all important issues. Even though Boggs had a basically sound liberal voting record, she had voted "wrong" on a few issues; however, Augustine did not point out these cases to the electorate.
>
> It was not the lack of money which hurt Augustine, for what he had to do did not require that much money. To illustrate, the black candidates running for the school board and for New Orleans district attorney both generated massive black support because they developed grassroots campaigns. Therefore, it was more a matter of Augustine not giving the black community a positive reason to support him rather than it was their active support of Boggs.[17]

In a similar vein, Allan Katz, a well-respected political reporter for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune/States-Item* newspaper, offered this evaluation of Augustine's campaign:

> Boggs had very strong black support going into the election, perhaps one-third of the voters. But could she have maintained it against a black opponent who pulled out all the stops to generate high black unity? Such a candidate might have reduced Boggs' black vote in half, though she probably still would have won the election.
>
> Because Augustine genuinely liked Boggs, he refused to criticize her at all. He never said she was less than perfect. As such, he did not give blacks a reason to vote for him. He refused to use race as an issue. He finally permitted Rev. Jesse Jackson to make a token appearance, but Augustine did not have the stomach "to go racial." He did not differentiate himself from Boggs on issues, though she may have been somewhat vulnerable of the issue of creating jobs in the black community.[18]

Conclusion

On September 29, 1984, Lindy Boggs was re-elected to her seventh term in Congress, defeating Israel Augustine by the margin of 60.1 percent to 38.6 percent. Thus, Boggs overcame the black voter majority in her district by combining a black crossover vote of 36 percent with her 90 percent of the white vote. Significantly, the actual election outcome perfectly mirrored the first poll taken in late April by Rose-Stekler Associates, in which Boggs led Augustine by 21 percentage points—her exact final margin of victory. In a sense, the election campaign only served to reinforce the initial inclinations of almost all undecided blacks to vote for Augustine and of undecided whites to support Boggs; apparently, very few voters switched their original preferences.

Table 1: Rose-Stekler Poll, April 1984
(Column Percentages)

	All	Black	White
Boggs	46	37	55
Augustine	25	40	11
Undecided/ Other	29	23	34

Table 2: Actual Election Results, September 29, 1984
(Column Percentages)

	All	Black	White
Boggs	60	36	90
Augustine	39	63	9
Undecided/ Other	1	1	1

In the introduction, we indicated that for black candidates to win office in majority black districts, generally two prerequisites exist: high black voter turnout and cohesive black bloc voting. In the Boggs-Augustine election, the first requirement was met, for the black turnout exceeded the white turnout by one percent. However, Boggs' considerable black crossover vote of 36 percent proved to be Augustine's undoing.

What are the lessons to be learned from this election? The most obvious conclusion is that the rise of blacks to political power is not as automatic as many have thought; instead, it is wrought with a multitude of pitfalls. Clearly, a district where the voter registration exceeds 50 percent black is not necessarily a sufficient condition to elect a qualified black candidate.

While race remains the most important factor where a majority black population resides, the results of the New Orleans election show that race can be mitigated or overcome when past performance, qualifications and personality become the major issues. Particularly when a popular white liberal incumbent is well financed and campaigns effectively in the black community, the white candidate probably will receive at least a segment of the black vote. Therefore, a key factor which makes the election of blacks problematic is the traditional willingness of black voters to cast their ballots for liberal white candidates. As sociologist Daniel C. Thompson puts it:

> Black voters in the South have always supported white candidates because until recently we had no other choice. Today, in instances where white liberals like Mrs. Boggs run against black liberals like Judge Augustine, blacks often split their support because they may feel that a deserving white incumbent has earned their support.[19]

Conversely, for a black candidate to gain near unanimity of black voter support, two minimum conditions exist. First, the candidate must generate virtually monolithic support from all major black politicians, community leaders, clergy and political organizations. Second, and most importantly, the black candidate must differentiate himself or herself from the white opponent on the basis of some issues salient to the black community, besides the appeal to racial solidarity. Without doubt, an election which offers black voters the choice between a white liberal who has been their friend and a qualified black opponent poses a vexing dilemma for many black voters.

FOOTNOTES

[1]*Ebony* 39 (August 1984): 36.

[2]See Monte Piliawsky, "The Limits of Power, Dutch Morial, Mayor of New Orleans," *Southern Exposure* 12 (February 1984): 70-76; "Do Black Mayors Make a Difference?" *Ebony* 39 (August 1984): 82-86.

[3]Lucius J. Barker and Jesse J. McCorry, Jr., *Black Americans and the Political System* (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, Inc., 1980), pp. 267-282.

[4]*Ibid.,* p. 269.

[5]Marguerite Ross Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus: Illusions and Realities of Power," in *The New Black Politics: The Search for Political Power,* eds. Michael B. Preston, Lenneal J. Henderson, Jr. and Paul Puryear (New York: Longman, Inc., 1982), p. 53.

[6]New Orleans *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item,* October 3, 1984, p. 4.

[7]"Byrd and Boggs," *The New Republic* 164 (January 30, 1971): 10-11.

[8]Bob Hall and Lois Seibel, "The South in Congress: *Southern Exposure* Rates the Region's Representatives," *Southern Exposure* 12 (February 1984): 15-19.

[9]William E. Nelson and Philip J. Meranto, *Electing Black Mayors* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1977), pp. 322-331.

[10]John Pope, "Race Makes 2nd District Contest Tough," New Orleans *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item,* September 9, 1984, p. 14.

[11]Interview with Paul Stekler, December 18, 1984.

[12]New Orleans *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item,* May 26, 1984, p. 17.

[13]*Gambit,* November 17, 1984, p. 10.

[14]John Pope, "Boggs, Augustine Running Polite Race," New Orleans *The Times-Picayune /The States-Item,* September 23, 1984, p. 12.

[15]Pope, "Race Makes 2nd District Contest Tough," p. 14.

[16]Iris Kelso, "Boggs Is Running," New Orleans *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item,* January 19, 1984, p. 13.

[17]Interview with Trevor Bryan, December 19, 1984.

[18]Interview with Allan Katz, January 21, 1985.

[19]Allan Katz, "Black Hit Obstacles to Election," New Orleans *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item,* September 16, 1984, p. 4.

Something Inspiring to Behold: The Ninth Cavalry and Fort Sam Houston Expansion

Garna Christian

Since the early eighteenth century San Antonio and the military have shared a destiny as intertwined as that of the city and the serpentine river that rambles beneath its streets. Wars, revolutions, and plots conceived under a host of flags reinforced this amicable relationship. Yet, even "the mother-in-law of the army" found itself tossed between the horns of the civilian population and the military sector in 1911 when the pressures of the Mexican Revolution brought the black Ninth Cavalry to the Alamo City.[1]

The inclusion of the "Buffalo Soldiers" to the maneuver division dispatched by President William Howard Taft to the Southwest in response to the imminent ouster of Porfirio Diaz renewed a sometimes stormy acquaintanceship that dated back to Reconstruction. The unit originally reached Texas at the end of the Civil War, along with three other black regiments, shortly after its organization by Congress. After training briefly in the San Antonio area, the Ninth Cavalry joined the Tenth Cavalry and the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry in protecting the western stretches of the state from Indians, outlaws, and border revolutionaries. With the climax of the Indian Wars in the 1870s, the black regiment and its fellow units moved farther westward, not to return until the close of the Spanish-American War.[2]

The Cuban intervention marked a watershed in the relationship between black soldiers and Texas communities. Often victims of verbal, and occasionally physical, abuse in nineteenth century Texas, the troops generally managed to maintain strict discipline toward adversity. Heightened black consciousness, a byproduct of acknowledged heroism in battle, coupled with the swelling tide of Southern racial segregation and restrictions affected the change. Clashes between enlisted men and white citizens spread across Texarkana, Laredo, Rio Grande City, and El Paso before the public and political reaction to the Brownsville Raid of 1906 drove the black troops from the state.[3]

The threat of the Mexican Revolution to the borderlands overcame the War Department's reluctance to return the star-crossed units to Texas. Revolutionaries and gun runners congregated along the Rio Grande, and Francisco Madero, destined to replace Diaz at the Mexican helm, plotted at San Antonio. Border towns complained to Washington of increased lawlessness in the south. With Diaz' *federales* battling insurgents at Puebla Zacatecas, and Madero, Pascual Orozco and Pancho Villa poised to strike Ciudad Juarez, within pistol range of El Paso. President Taft ordered a division of infantry, artillery, and cavalry to San Antonio for duty along the international line.[4]

The maneuver division's immediate destination comfortably fit the role of a regional military center. San Antonio had boasted a garrison since its founding in 1718 and subsequently had accommodated Mexican, Texan, American, and Confederate troops. In 1870 the citizenry outbid rival municipalities seeking a permanent fort by presenting the War Department with 40 acres of a future 3,300 acre Fort Sam Houston. By the turn of the century, San Antonio had witnessed the captivity of Geronimo and his Apache followers, the training of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and the elevation of the post to the largest military establishment in the nation, headquarters of the Department of Texas. On the eve of the Mexican Revolution, Fort Sam Houston housed cavalry, artillery, and infantry units, alongside a quartermaster depot, the profits from which whetted the appetite of the business sector for further expansion.[5]

But Texas' largest city exceeded a one-dimensional camp town. The 1910 census counted its inhabitants at over 96,000, or 4,500 above second place Dallas. This constituted a growth of more than 40,000 since the census of 1900. Also embracing the largest foreign born population in the state, the Alamo City stood astride five railroads as a shipping point for cattle and farm products. Flour mills, foundries, and breweries dotted the landscape, while twenty-nine private schools and colleges graced the educational scene. Still, the city had not completely shaken the gambling hall and saloon image fashioned by cattlemen and immigrants in the roaring 1870s and '80s. Much of the Hispanic population lived marginally within the economy. With Dallas and Houston aggressively challenging for economic leadership, civic fathers viewed the expansion of the military quarter as a financial godsend, barring a racial incident that could jeopardize the finely laid plans for a larger permanent post.[6]

The San Antonio press, ever mindful of the city's well-being, controlled every impulse to capitalize on the emotional issue of the Ninth Cavalry's entry. Although all four black regiments had encamped in the city at one time or another without serious incident, residents keenly remembered clashes at other communities. Mere mention of the Brownsville Raid, in which members of the Twenty-fifth Infantry allegedly assualted the town, killing one man and wounding another, dredged up deeply held fears. With lynchings, invariably attributed to the victims' malevolence, rising across the state and nation, racial tensions threatened even this comparatively tolerant municipality of diversified populations and economy.[7]

Following several days of conjecture over increased government purchase of supplies, local newspapers headlined the mobilization on March 8. Only hours after the announcement, Major General William H. Carter prepared to assume his new duties of division commander. He awaited the arrival of components of the Tenth, Eleventh, Thirteenth, Fifteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Twenty-eighth Infantry; Third and Fourth Field Artillery; and Third, Ninth, and Eleventh Cavalry, the largest massing of troops since the Spanish-American War. The Ninth Cavalry, the only black unit of the division, received no editorial comment and only cursory mention. Indeed, the press made no allusion to color until the day after the entrance of the nine hundred men.[8]

Aside from praising the expected military protection, newspapers directed their focus on the prospective monetary rewards of the

assemblage of up to 20,000 new consumers. The haste of the mobilization precluded comparative shopping by the soldiers before embarkation to San Antonio, assuring immediate sales. The security of the city might well attract tourists from other winter sites. "The people of San Antonio," predicted one writer, "can look forward to several golden pay days at the least." He might have added that if the accommodations and treatment of the garrison pleased the War Department, those "several pay days" might stretch on indefinitely.[9]

Obviously, much depended upon the actions of the uninvited guests in the Ninth Cavalry. Ominously, the soldiers quickly realized that segregationist Texas contrasted sharply with their previous, rather temperate, station, Fort D.A. Russell, Wyoming. According to an excited Quanah newsman, a brief stopover at Wichita Falls evoked a barroom fight, broken store windows near the depot, and an altercation between a cavalryman and a white brakeman. At San Antonio the troops billeted in the extreme southeastern corner of the reservation, "isolated as far as possible from the other regiments of the division."[10]

The incident which threatened the peace and profits of the city occurred shortly after the arrival of the Ninth Cavalry. Several soldiers refused to heed the Jim Crow seating arrangements on a trolley, and during a verbal exchange one of them apparently pushed or struck the conductor. Although neither the time, place, or exact description of the confrontation ever reached the public, the fleeting encounter ballooned to alarming proportions, ultimately involving a Congressman, the War Department, and even the President of the United States. By contrast the shooting of a San Antonio woman by a white infantryman and the burning of a Galveston brothel by angry white soldiers within two weeks of the incident elicited no such excitement. A local newspaper, in fact, took the occasion to print two editorials lauding the "Anglo-Saxon" soldier.[11]

The Texas Republic, a weekly organ and customarily the most provocative of the San Antonio newspapers, filed on March 25 the earliest description of the trolley imbroglio. Depicting a brutal assault on a conductor by "swaggering semi-savages," "a couple of weeks ago," the editor demanded the expulsion of blacks from the military "until they have reached a higher stage of refinement and cultivation." A cryptic reference to the Twenty-fifth Infantry signaled an undisclosed reminder of the Brownsville Raid.[12]

A visiting correspondent, one of many who descended upon the garrison city with the call to mobilization, reported racial attitudes of the citizenry not far removed from the protestations of the bigoted editor. "[It] is not pleasant to hear men say they'd like to see any negro sentry tell **them** where to go," stated the *Collier's* columnist, "...and to have well-behaved negroes assumed to be troublemakers merely because they wear a United States uniform and are enlisted under our flag."[13]

While neither the local newspapers nor the wire services immediately reported the incident, the *Express* struck a racial note on April 1 in an editorial praising the white soldier's dubious temperance. "Rowdyism and blackguardism upon the part of negro soldiers should not be laid to the door of the white soldiers," it pontificated. Inasmuch as five years had elapsed since the Brownsville Raid, the comment evidently referred to the unreported local incident. As such it enabled the newspaper to express a conviction in harmony with much of the population, while imposing self-restraint on an issue that could hinder

the growth of the city and the army post.[14]

Washington remained unaware of any difficulties at San Antonio until Representative John Nance Garner, of Uvalde, injected the matter into a foreign policy discussion with President Taft on April 3. Garner, a fifth term Congressman from the Fifteenth District, which did not include the Alamo City, raised the issue, rather curiously, in the absence of Representative James L. Slayden of San Antonio. Whether acting from personal prejudice, bitter memories of the Brownsville Raid, which had occurred in his district, or from public complaints to which he was witness, the South Texan forcefully recounted the story to a receptive Chief Executive. Taft, as secretary of war, had concurred in President Roosevelt's decision to discharge from the service the Twenty-fifth Infantry members who refused to testify at the investigation. Sensitive to expressed fears of black soldiers at San Antonio, he sought cordial relations with the new Democratic majority in the House of Representatives. At the close of the conference, Garner publicly announced his intention to introduce a bill to disband the black regiments, citing demands from the states of Washington, Vermont, and Texas.[15]

Official dispatches then reverberated between Washington, D.C. and San Antonio. On the afternoon of Garner's conversation with Taft, the War Department questioned Major General Carter on conditions at the post and city. The division commander assured his superiors by return wire that "no difficulty exists between men of the Ninth Regiment U.S. Cavalry and civil authorities at San Antonio." Nevertheless, on the following day the department ordered the removal of the black unit from the city, although not as Garner had intended. Instead, by rare military logic, the Ninth would replace the white Third Cavalry along the border, in Garner's district, while circumventing Brownsville. Government spokesmen stiffly described the rotation as "routine," bearing no connection with complaints against the Ninth Cavalry.[16]

If the War Department hoped to curtail criticism at San Antonio by the move, it provoked an opposite response. Officers from Fort Sam Houston deemed the order "drastic and unnecessary," directed toward appeasing "Southern prejudice." A resident veteran advised President Taft: "I have not seen one negro soldier drunk." Even W.B. Tuttle, president of the streetcar company on which the altercation occurred, discounted tales of habitual misconduct, acknowledging "only one case of serious trouble." Mayor Bryan Callaghan confirmed that police had "made but few arrests, and all for trivial offenses." Colonel John F. Guilfoyle, Ninth Cavalry commander, refused to close his camp to the public, continuing parades and musters while admonishing his troops to demonstrate their best behavior.[17]

Slayden, fourth term Representative from the Fourteenth District, discreetly distanced himself from Garner and the War Department decision, stating merely that he knew of no dissatisfaction among his constituents with the black soldiers. As a longtime advocate of an expanded Fort Sam Houston, he found himself in a delicate situation. On the very day of the controversial order, President Taft publicly endorsed the San Antonian's proposal to proclaim the base a permanent division post and to augment its size by 17,000 acres. For Slayden to assume a strident position on either side of the debate involved risk to the future of the military installation, though he could hardly avoid resenting Garner's intrusion into

his bailiwick.[18]

The grousing from San Antonio, however, paled in comparison to the thunder of dissent that rolled up from South Texas at the prospect of receiving the Ninth Cavalry. A hastily assembled citizens' committee at Eagle Pass beseeched Secretary of War J.M. Dickinson to reconsider "transferring colored troops to this point." Laredo mayor Robert McComb implored Garner to intervene, asserting that black troops had "shot up" the town "several times." Del Rio businessmen voice opposition to the impending transfer, and the mayor of Brownsville, a city not affected by the order, joined the chorus. Representative Garner, whose expressions of concern had unwittingly unleased the demons, agonized in silence.[19]

Twenty-four stormy hours after issuing the transfer order, the War Department countermanded the decision on April 6 by suspending the rotation of the regiments. "Officers and men of the Third are thoroughly familiar with their duties," the wire lamely explained. In actuality the abrupt reversal followed an hour long conference between President Taft and an anguished Garner. Although the Representative professed to believe that the meeting would remain confidential, Taft broke the news to reporters only a few minutes after its conclusion. The President evidently credited the anticipated public relief more heavily than the possibility of again embarrassing a powerful legislator.[20]

While the government perpetuated the fiction that both orders derived from routine military considerations, San Antonio's newspapers exploited the opportunity to chide a neighboring Congressman. The *Express* tittered that before the revocation, the War Department had "lifted the Hon. John N. Garner off the pan and dropped him carefully in the fire." The *Light* saw Garner as "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire." It also teased his aroused constituency as "Cactus Valley" and "Chaparral Thicket." *The Texas Republic* switched metaphors by casting its neighbor into "a nice kettle of fish." The *Light* also reserved a mild rebuke for the army: "If the Ninth Cavalry should march as far 'cross country as it does on paper the official speedometer would show a trifle less then 500 miles this week. The Ninth...went to Laredo this morning and returned in time for lunch."[21]

The source of the commentary, the Ninth Cavalry, earned mixed reviews in local editorials. *The Texas Republic* persisted in its vindictive denunciations, labeling the men "Chocolate Soldiers." The dailies reacted more favorably. The *Express* carried two editorials asking simple justice for them and depicted the commotion as "a tempest in a teapot." The *Light* offered no immediate comment, but said at the regiment's departure: "The disorders that have arisen have been unimportant and none of them...worthy of discussion."[22]

Significantly, the *Express* devoted a full column to the issue uppermost in the collective mind of the political and business establishment, the importance of a permanent division post. "San Antonio is ideally situated in respect to climate and location as the site of the greatest army post in America," it opined. "The magnificent establishment existing in this city...has cost the Government over three million dollars...San Antonio and the army are getting along nicely together, and will continue to do so." Clearly, racial prejudice, regardless of how well founded in tradition, could not be allowed to hinder a partnership already paying out $400,000 monthly in payrolls and supplies.[23]

Accordingly, enlightened self interest triumphed over raw emotion,

and San Antonio escaped the bitter consequences of other less fortunate garrison communities. Judicious civic leadership, a largely responsible press, and a tight rein on the soldiers by the military all contributed to this end. The community's perseverance paid off: in turn Fort Sam Houston became headquarters of the Southern Department, Eighth Corps Area, and the Fourth United States Army. It was, in the words of a military historian, "something inspiring to behold."[24]

The Ninth Cavalry remained at San Antonio without notable incident for three months after the initial frenzy. The regimental band drew accolades as perhaps the best in the service, while the troops shared with their white counterparts the misery of drilling in endless rain. For his part, Congressman Garner devoted his efforts to matters within his own district, though doubtlessly cheered by praise from constituents who credited him with saving them from black soldiers. In May insurrectionists seized Ciudad Jaurez, mortally wounding the Diaz regime. As conditions settled in Mexico, the War Department prepared the demobilization of the maneuver division. On July 8 the Ninth Cavalry headed the troop movement from Fort Sam Houston.[25]

The sequence of departure, insisted Washington, was strictly routine.[26]

FOOTNOTES

[1]For the San Antonio - military relationship see Frederick Charles Chabot, *San Antonio and its Beginnings* (San Antonio, 1931); Albert Curtis, *Fabulous San Antonio* (San Antonio, 1955); _____ *Military San Antonio* (San Antonio, n.d.); John L. Davis, *San Antonio: A Historical Portrait* (Austin, 1978); Edward Werner Heusinger, *A Chronicle of Events in San Antonio* (San Antonio, 1951); Sam Woolford (ed.), *San Antonio, A History for Tomorrow* (San Antonio, 1963); Donald E. Everett, *San Antonio Legacy* (San Antonio, 1975); David McLemore, *A Place in Time: A Pictorial View of San Antonio's Past* (San Antonio, 1980); Charles William Ramsdell, *San Antonio, A Historical and Pictorial Guide* (Austin, 1959); Green Peyton Wertenbaker, *San Antonio, City in the Sun* (New York, 1946); Charles Albert Sloane (ed.), *I Remember* (San Antonio, 1938).

[2]William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman, 1967), 11, 82-83; Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History* (New York, 1974), 54-56, 74; Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869-1891* (Westport,

1971), 16-17, 24; Marvin Fletcher, *The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army 1891-1917* (Columbia, 1974), 22; John M. Carroll (ed.), *The Black Military Experience in the American West* (New York, 1971), 96-98; Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas* (Austin, 1973), 86-88.

[3]C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1966), 67-109; *Galveston Daily News,* October 20, 1899; November 22, 1899; *Houston Daily Post,* February 1, 1899; *El Paso Herald,* February 17, 1900; John D. Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid* (New York, 1970); Ann J. Lane, *Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black Reaction* (Port Washington, 1971); James A. Tinsley, "Roosevelt, Foraker, and the Brownsville Affray," *Journal of Negro History,* LXI (January, 1956), 43-65; Frank N. Schubert, "Black Soldiers on the White Frontier: Some Factors Influencing Race Relations," *Phylon,* XXXII, no. 4 (Winter, 1971), 415; Garna L. Christian, "The Twenty-fifth Regiment at Fort McIntosh: Precursor to Retaliatory Racial Violence," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book,* LV (1979), 149-161; "Rio Grande City: Prelude to the Brownsville Raid," *ibid.,* LVII (1981), 118-132; "The El Paso Racial Crisis of 1900," *Red River Valley Historical Review,* VI, no. 2 (Spring, 1981), 28-41. For a nineteenth century Texas racial incident see J. Evetts Haley, *Fort Concho and the Texas Frontier* (San Angelo, 1952), 235-237.

[4]Howard F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico* (Cambridge, 1965), 121-122; *El Paso Times,* December 3, 1910; February 2, 1911; February 5, 1911; *San Antonio Express,* March 8, 1911.

[5]Walter Prescott Webb (ed.), *The Handbook of Texas* (Austin, 1952), I, 632; II, 540-542; Leo Turner, *The Story of Fort Sam Houston, 1876-1936* (San Antonio, 1936), 6-12; C.R. Howland, "Fort Sam Houston - Largest Army Post in the United States," *Texas Centennial Magazine* (September, 1935), 3-4; Boyce House, *City of Flaming Adventure, San Antonio* (San Antonio, 1968), 190-192; Maj. E.A. Kindervater, *Fort Sam Houston: A Historical Sketch* (San Antonio?, 1936), 1-4; Col. M.L. Crimmins, *Historical Data on San Antonio and Fort Sam Houston* (San Antonio?, n.d.), 3.

[6]*Texas Almanac and Industrial State Guide,* 1911 (Dallas, 1911), 255; 1910 Census Report, 853.

[7]Barr, *Black Texans,* 84; Kindervater, *Fort Sam Houston,* 2-3; Arthur Ruhl, "The Gallery at San Antonio," *Collier's,* XLVII (April 29, 1911), 13; *San Antonio Light,* March 17, 1911.

[8]*San Antonio Express,* March 8, 1911; Sherwin R. Mills, "The Army Maneuvers in Texas," *The Texas Magazine,* III, no. 1 (May, 1911), 11; Kindervater, *Fort Sam Houston,* 4.

[9]*San Antonio Express,*March 8, 1911.

[10]*The Texas Republic,* March 25, 1911; *San Antonio Light,* March 16, 1911 (quotation).

[11]*San Antonio Light,* March 23, 1911; May 6, 1911; *San Antonio Express,* March 13, 1911; April 1, 1911.

[12]*The Texas Republic,* March 25, 1911.

[13]Ruhl, "The Gallery," 25.

[14]*San Antonio Express,* April 1, 1911.

[15]*Ibid.,* April 4, 1911; *San Antonio Light,* April 4, 1911.

[16]Carter to the Adjutant General, San Antonio, Texas, April 3, 1911, RG 94, AGO file #1766391, National Archives; Adjutant General to Commanding General, Washington, D.C., April 4, 1911, *ibid; Dallas Morning News,* April 5, 1911; *San Antonio Express,* April 7, 1911.

[17]*Dallas Morning News,* April 5, 1911 (first quote); A.G. Peterson to Hon. W.H. Taft, San Antonio, Texas, April 4, 1911, RG 94, AGO 1769561 (second quote); *San Antonio Express,* April 7, 1911 (third quote); April 8, 1911 (fourth quote).

[18]*San Antonio Express,* April 5, 1911.

[19]*Ibid.,* April 6, 1911.

[20]*Ibid.;* Memorandum for the Adjutant General, Washington, D.C., April 6, 1911, RG 94, AGO 1766391, N.A. (quotation).

[21]*San Antonio Express,* April 6, 1911 (first quote); *San Antonio Light,* April 7, 1911 (second quote); April 10, 1911 (fourth quote); *The Texas Republic,* April 8, 1911 (third quote).

[22]*The Texas Republic,* April 8, 1911 (first quote); *San Antonio Express,* April 7, 1911; April 15, 1911 (second quote); *San Antonio Light,* July 22, 1911 (third quote).

[23]*San Antonio Express,* April 15, 1911.

[24]Webb, *Handbook,* I, 632; Kindervater, *Fort Sam Houston,* 4, 6, 7 (quotation).

[25]*San Antonio Express,* April 9, 1911; April 13, 1911; June 1, 1911; July 1, 1911; July 9, 1911; *San Antonio Light,* April 8, 1911; May 17, 1911; July 11, 1911.

[26]*San Antonio Express,* July 9, 1911. Reports of "bad characters in the neighborhood of San Antonio and Fort Sam Houston" may have accelerated the troop movement: *San Antonio Light,* July 11, 1911.

Middle East Terrorism and TWA 847 Myth and Reality: A Commentary

Mfanya Donald Tryman

INTRODUCTION

This commentary is based upon two rationales: 1) the notion that Blacks must write not only on Blacks or Black Studies, but broaden the scope and depth of their intellectual horizon and scholarship, and 2) the fact that there are other oppressed peoples in the world, and writing and researching in other areas helps us to understand their plight. The discussion examines one international event that may have consequences for the U.S. (and indirectly for Blacks) in the future — the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 during the summer of 1985 (hereafter referred to as 847). Specifically, this commentary discusses the irrational thinking of U.S. leaders and subsequent myths that arose as U.S. citizens were held hostage aboard 847 at Beirut International Airport. In the opinion of this author, the irrational thinking on the part of the U.S and the subsequent myths that developed were based upon the need to "do something" as the western superpower watched with futility while events unfolded. The irrational thinking and resulting myths may be divided into five categories, which constitute the body of this commentary.

NON-NEGOTIABLE DEMANDS

It is argued that to negotiate with terrorists will only encourage such activity and increase the likelihood of terror in the future. Whether the demands of terrorists are negotiated or considered non-negotiable has not had any affect upon the spread of terrorism. Rather, terrorism spread as a result of the perception on the part of the Arabs that the U.S. has been pro-Israeli and subjective in its treatment of Arab countries, yet too powerful for the Arabs or political and religious factions to confront face-to-face. As George Kupperman of George Washington University, an expert on terrorism, and later Secretary of State Weinberger pointed out, the U.S. is actually in a state of war, but the U.S. is unprepared (according to Kupperman) to fight it.

When terrorists from other countries hold the U.S. hostage, greater creativity needs to be exhibited by western countries, particularly the U.S., in exacting solutions. Rather than argue that terrorists will not be negotiated with, the U.S. should use such a platform to make counter-demands and set the negotiations stage. This way, at some point in the negotiations, there is the possibility of concessions by both parties. Otherwise, the U.S. has no leverage with terrorism — organized or otherwise. If the hijackers of 847 were really trigger-happy, as the media attempted to portray them, more Americans may have died. This could have happened while the U.S. pondered over what to do regarding the demand that 766 Shiite Moslems held in the Atlit prison camp in northern Israel without charge be released. Though Israel has received billions in U.S. weaponry and military aid, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres initially stated publicly

that the hostage crisis was strictly a U.S. problem.

Failure on the part of the U.S. to negotiate with what is considered terrorist entities only frustrates such organizations and encourages terrorist groups to engage in additional "radical" acts. It is precisely because many of these organizations feel that legitimate grievances fall upon deaf ears, and the inability to engage in conventional warfare, that makes them resort to terror in the first place.

MIDDLE EAST STATES CAN STOP TERROR

The argument has been put forth that radical states like Syria, Libya and Iran can stop terror because they sponsor it. These states have not been able to stop terror in their own backyard, much less abroad. Internal conspiracies to kill Presidents Hafez Assad and Moammar Khaddafy have been blunted recently. Admittedly, Syria, Libya and Iran may be able to stop terror in some instances and get hostages released in others, but it may be wishful thinking, if not naive, to think that they can get hostages released in every instance. It should be remembered in this context that not only are other factions often involved, but that the aforementioned states are not exactly the most friendly countries of the U.S. Surely, some isolated acts of terror, especially in Lebanon, are just that —isolated —in which it is hard to identify a particular group or organizational headquarters. It is interesting to note that while the U.S. and the world did not know who was initially responsible for the 847 hijacking, the U.S. was quick to hold Nabih Berri, Shiite leader and Arab politician, responsible for the safety and release of the American hostages once Berri *voluntarily* stepped forward and agreed to arbitrate the crisis. There is no evidence, however, that Berri played any part in the hijacking, though Berri is head of Amal, one of the primary actors involved in the 847 incident. There was talk of even revoking Berri's American passport. It is true, nevertheless, that countries in the Middle East that are considered moderate, such as Egypt, have been able to sidetrack terrorist activities once they have begun, though such countries are not connected with the terrorist parties. The crisis involving the Achille Lauro in October of 1985 showed that Arab states *not* involved in sponsoring terror can not only stop certain activities as they unfold, but can do it successfully through negotiation and save hundreds of lives.

REPRISALS WILL STOP TERRORISM

Henry the K (Kissinger) has fervently advocated that the U.S. must retaliate against terrorists and, in the case of 847, should have retaliated after the hostage crisis was over. The K argues that the only way to stop international terrorism, if not completely prevent it in the future, is through violent counterattacks. Israel's "Iron Fist" policy which fights isolated and single acts of terror with massive doses of retaliatory state terror (and sometimes initiates rather than retaliates), presumably serves as the appropriate model. In reality, this has not stopped individual or group acts of violence against Israel. The recent withdrawal of most of Israel's troops from southern Lebanon in the summer of 1985 served as a paradoxical example. The prime reason given by Israel for her aggression and invasion of Lebanon in June of 1982 was to rout all terrorists from Israel's northern border once and for all. Yet, as the Israeli military withdrew from southern Lebanon near the third anniversary of the "Peace for Galilee" invasion, Shiite Moslem guerillas were still launching attacks on the Israeli army as they returned to Jewish ter-

ritory. Total losses among the Israelis rose over 550 casualties in the Peace for Galilee campaign, and was a major factor in former Prime Minister Menachem Begin retiring from public life. The fanatical and suicidal nature of many terrorists tends to defy western rationality and logic regarding reprisals. This is particularly true of the Hezbollah (Party of God), which considers it an honor and sure road to heaven to die for just religious causes in which followers believe. One only has to witness the sacrificial and suicidal tactics of young Shiite Iranians fighting in the Iran-Iraq War in which youngsters literally throw their bodies in front of shells and bombs on the battle-front in order to insure themselves a place in heaven. The Hezbollah in Lebanon is strongly linked to Iran and held some of the passengers of 847. Numerous other incidents of suicidal car bombings against Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon and the U.S. marines and Embassy in Beirut provide ample evidence that reprisals will have little effect upon terrorism. It was just as easy for Reagan to sit on the sidelines and criticize Carter for his handling of the American hostages in Iran. Reagan, like Carter, found out that with power comes responsibility, and with responsibility comes accountability in an electoral political system.

TERRORISTS WILL NOT ATTACK THE USSR

It has been argued by Henry the K and other experts on international relations, particularly during the 847 crisis, that terrorists are afraid to attack the airlines and peoples of the Soviet Union when they are abroad. The reasoning goes that, because the Soviet Union is not a democracy, its reponse to terrorism would be brutal and that terrorists would not want to suffer the consequences. It is argued that the lack of a free press and freedom of expression in Russia allows the Soviet military to respond to international events without consideration for public opinion among Soviet citizens. But given the orientation of Shiite fundamentalism and its fanatical nature, fear of the Soviet Union is irrelevant to Shiite Arabs (and particularly the Hezbollah). They perceive the U.S.S.R., as they do the U.S., as "The Great Satan." The fact of the matter is that, notwithstanding Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has had a minimal role (relatively speaking to the U.S.) in undermining and destabilizing Arab nation-states. To the contrary, the U.S.S.R. has been an ally over a number of years with key Arab states, has provided these states with military support in the various Arab-Israeli Wars, and has given Arab states economic assistance in their quest for modernization. Even though the Soviet Union has been an ally with many Arab states, the kidnapping of three Soviet diplomats in Lebanon in the fall of 1985 destroys the argument by Henry the K and others that terrorists will not attack or target Soviet citizens for the purpose of kidnapping. One of the diplomats was later killed. Nor did the Soviet Union, even after the killing of one of its diplomats, engage in physical retaliation in any way whatsoever.

America's record in the Middle East is quite different. The CIA was responsible for the assassination of Mohammed Mossedegh, the elected prime minister of Iran (though Iran is Persian, not Arab) in 1953. The U.S. marines, who invaded Lebanon in 1958, has provided almost all of the weaponry for Israel's attacks on southern Lebanon which brought massive death and destruction during 1982. As recently as February, 1984, the U.S.S. New Jersey was firing her 16" guns into the mountain areas of suburban Beirut, guns which

reportedly can make bomb craters almost the size of a football field. The assassinations of Diem (Vietnam), Lumumba (Congo), Mossadegh (Iran), and Allende (Chile), with direct U.S. involvement, should also put to rest the myth that democracies do not engage in terror.

OUTSIDE AGITATOR THESIS

Sociologists and social scientists often argue that outsiders stir up trouble among indigenously oppressed people. Political leaders have also made this claim from time to time. "Red-baiting" in South Africa serves as a case in point. This argument was used during the fifties and sixties in the United States as Blacks fought to obtain civil rights. Communist instigation supposedly was the root cause and Martin Luther King was labeled as a communist by many — including the late director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover. A similar argument continues to be made in South Africa as Black Africans struggle to obtain civil and human rights. In both cases, it has been argued that outside communist agitators were stirring up trouble among the local population. This argument has now been made in Lebanon and 847 represents a classic case. The thesis has been put forth that Syria and Iran were behind the hijacking. In the case of 847 this may or may not have been true. President Hafez Assad of Syria took the position, nevertheless, that he would help end the hostage crisis at Beirut International Airport. Further, Assad publicly stated that he was also against terrorists hijacking planes to promote their case. It is hard to believe that given the level of oppression of Palestinian Arabs, in particular by Israel using U.S. weapons, political leaders and terrorists would have to come in from the outside to instigate and arouse such an alienated and hostile mass of people.

Whatever the case, the outside agitator thesis denies that an indigenously oppressed population is intelligent enough to struggle against unjust policies superimposed by a foreign power on a local population. Unfortunately, there will probably be more rather than less acts of terror and planned hijackings in the future. The hijacking of the Achille Lauro and killing of three Israelis in Greece several months after the debacle of 847 provide adequate examples of this continuing trend.

One with a comprehensive knowledge of Arab-Israeli politics knows that there has been extensive suffering in the Middle East, particularly with the Palestinian and Lebanese Arabs, and that peripheral or foreign actors do not have to stir up local sentiment or mobilize such populations in order for people to rise up against oppression.

In addition to taking more precautions to prevent plane hijackings in the future, eventually the U.S. is going to have to come to grips with problems which give rise to such events in the Middle East from an Arab as well as Jewish perspective. This means a more even-handed approach in the Middle East will have to prevail in the future. Given the institutional and societal biases in the U.S., however, the likelihood of a more balanced approach is unlikely. Hence, it will not be surprising for irrational thinking and behavior to surface in the future when another Middle East crisis develops. And new myths will be spun.

The Seed of Sally Good'n: A Black Family of Arkansas, 1833-1953

by Ruth Polk Patterson
(University of Kentucky Press, 1986)
Reviewer: Andrew Baskin

"Spencer Polk's life and that of his family remind us that, as Arkansas, as southerners, and as Americans, all of our lives are intertwined, intermingled, and connected by the bonds of the past, whether those bonds were forged in slavery or linked by divine natures, which has bestowed upon us all a heritage that was once, and must forever be, free."

The above statement is the final sentence in Ruth Polk Patterson's book *The Seed of Sally Good'n: A Black Family of Arkansas, 1833-1953.* Without a doubt, this sentence appropriately describes the task accomplished by Patterson. Utilizing and intermixing disciplines, such as, history, anthropology, archeology, and sociology, Patterson traces the history of the Polk family, especially the descendants of her grandfather, Spencer Polk.

Although his brothers and sister are discussed, the central character of the book and patriarch of the family is Spencer. Born in 1833 as the result of a relationship between his mother, Sally, and her master, Taylor Polk, Spencer started life as a slave in Montgomery County, Arkansas. Even though his master-father tacitly recognized Spencer as his son, freedom did not become a reality until the end of the Civil War. Being tacitly recognized as the master's son and playing and hunting with his white half-brothers did not save Spencer from one of the most brutal aspects of slavery-separation of the family. Because Sally's fourth child, Eliza, was dark and had "short, kinky hair," Polk believed she had been unfaithful to him. As a result of his jealousy, between 1835 to 1838, Sally was sold "down the river to New Orleans." Taylor Polk could have a white wife and a slave concubine, but Sally's only lover had to be him, even though "Sally could produce a child by Polk whose feature were more black than white." Thus, Spencer learned early in life of the double standards for blacks and whites.

Notwithstanding this act of cruelty, all four of Sally's children continued to reside at the Polk plantation. More than his black siblings, Taylor took advantage of his favored slave status. The result was he became "a prosperous farmer and landowner in southwestern Arkansas and the founder of a numerous and energetic family." Although economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression forced his descendants to sell the land in the 1930's, he instilled values into his family that continued to draw them in 1985 to the non-existent farm on Muddy Fork Creek in Arkansas. One of these individuals is Ruth Polk Patterson. The book makes it obvious that she may be a resident of Lit-

tle Rock, but a portion of her heart yearns for her birthplace and ancestral homeland.

Despite her love for her family, Patterson does not lose her objectivity. She discusses the family's biases, prejudices, and weaknesses; issues which can cause the reader to lose respect for the individuals. The major issue is racial. As she states on page 20, "The descendants of Spencer Polk said that Sally was a beautiful brown-skinned Indian girl with very little African blood." Others described Sally as "a big yellow Negro woman." Patterson mother, Mattie, was ostracized by the Polks because of her "Negroness." For example, Patterson's aunt, Frances, vowed never to speak to Mattie and to communicate with her would send messages via the children. Seemingly, the issue is still relevant for contemporary members of the family. One advised Patterson "not to exploit the family heritage by 'pulling the name Polk down into any black history.'"

The Polks were caught between two worlds—one was black and one was white. Unfortunately, America did not make any allowances for mulattoes, such as, the Polks. Two incidents emphasize this point.

First, Spencer's oldest son, Charlie; suffered from mental disorders. "The story goes that his ailment was precipitated by a blow on the head by unnamed parties—according to some accounts, a white man or men." The second incident involved the youngest child, Jimmy. There is no doubt as to the race of his murderers. In 1910, "he was accosted by a group of white men and shot down. His body was left to rot in the leaves." Despite the respectable status of the Polk family, Jimmy violated the mores of white society one too many times. No matter the amount of white or Indian blood in his veins, Jimmy was a Negro.

The Polk family, like all Black Americans, is the product of two cultures—African and European. In the case of the Polks, their European strain is Scotch-Irish. Patterson is at her best in Chapter 7, "African Survival and Scottish Airs," as she skillfully reveals her research to identify the cultural sources of games, folkstories, crafts, and linguistics utilized by her family. In fact, Sally Good'n is the title of a Scotch-Irish song which was a favorite of Arthur Polk, her father and Spencer's son. In performing the song, Arthur added "a popular Afro-American musical innovation called 'scat.'" The symbolism is obvious; Arthur was influenced by two cultural streams, and so was his ancestors and descendants. To survive, Black Americans have to be adept at integrating different cultures. The Polk family was, and still is, successful in accomplishing this task.

Patterson may receive criticism because of her efforts to intermingle oral and written history. Too often, scholars only accept written data as being credible, but as Patterson states, Black Americans lack sufficient "authentic written records." To fill this void, scholars must begin to use oral history, and as Patterson does, to use archeology. If not, "the total picture of black folkways" will remain in the dark.

In the opinion of this writer, Patterson's most visible weakness is not the integration of oral and written history, but involves her descriptions of inanimate objects. She excels as a writer about people and their hopes, fears, failures, and sucesses. Her descriptions of the Polk estate, its landscape, buildings, and artifacts as expounded upon in chapters one and ten are confusing and boring. For example, the first seven pages of chapter one, "Crooked Marks on the Landscape," are devoted to describing the estate. Page eight begins

the study of the individual that brought life to the estate. This discussion brought life to Patterson's work. At that point, she captured the reader's attention and maintained her grip for the next 132 pages.

In spite of this weakness, Patterson achieves her goal. By blending information extracted from different disciplines, she recounts the story of "everyday life of a landowning legally black family in a backwoods southern community." The story is not unique; many contemporary Black Americans can trace their roots to a similar environment. What is unique is that the story of Spencer Polk and his descendants is available for public consumption and scrutiny. Her grandfather may not be in any history book. His body may repose on land which is now owned by a lumber company. His estate may have deteriorated by 1930. But, his spirit still lives. The efforts of Ruth Polk Patterson corroborate this fact; the seed of Sally Good'n is still growing.