

THE PAPER

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1972

So we stand here
on the edge of hell
in Harlem
and look out
on the world
and wonder
what we're gonna do
in the face of
what we remember.

—Langston Hughes



The Paper/Archie Lynum

One aspect of Black business: Fashion.

Black Expo:

Culture & Business

(Special to THE PAPER)

Black Expo '72 recently concluded at the American Hotel with what its sponsor, the Greater New York Chapter of Operation Breadbasket, described as an "enthusiastic response."

Officially entitled the Second Black Cultural and Business Exposition, Expo '72 was attended by an estimated 150,000 people.

The events occurring at the Expo were many and diverse, with the main emphasis placed on the more than 200 exhibits, representing businesses — both Black and white — and their products. Featured too, were exhibits and examples of the all encompassing Black culture.

The main purpose of the business exhibits was to make people more aware of the many Black businesses that do exist and of the white businesses (of which there were quite a few) which are more equal than others when it comes down to employing and finding positions for Blacks.

The exhibit area was packed with people from the time it opened in the morning until it closed in the evening, with both the shoppers and the merchants mutually benefitting from the interaction.

Expo Agenda

Black Expo '72 opened with an awards banquet honoring Basil Patterson, Co-Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Samuel Jackson, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, and Ms. Georgia Ware, Chairwoman of the Welfare Rights Association.

Following the banquet, Expo dissolved into various seminars and workshops on International Relations, Urban Affairs and one on racial sensitivity, which dealt with methods for changing institutional racism.

A fashion show presented by Lois Alexander of the Harlem Institute of Fashion was one of the main attractions at this af-

fair. Entitled "300 Years of Fashion . . . Contributions of Black People," the show characterized fashions from as early as the 17th century to the present.

Over 200 Black fashion designers from around the country were there to view and appraise the fashions, which Ms. Alexander hopes to display upon the eventual establishment of a Museum of Historical Black Fashion.

Also included in the Expo were performances by theatre and dance troupes such as The National Black Theatre and the Rod Rodgers dance group, in addition to entertainment for children.

Perhaps the principal drawing attraction for many of the people in attendance was the popular entertainment held in the evenings.

Performing were such personalities as Randy Weston, Mandrill, Labelle, Valerie Simpson, Bernard Purdie and Jimmy Castor and many more, who did not disappoint the audience. The performances lasted until the early hours of the morning and were well attended.

An Overview

In light of the problems that Operation Breadbasket and its parent organization, The Southern Christian Leadership Council, have been encountering (attributed in part to ideological differences and financial woes) the turnout for their second Black Expo must be encouraging to them.

It is worth noting, however, that it did not receive the attention and publicity that the

Medallion Cabs:

Other Side of Town

By STEVEN HOLMES

In the continuing controversy concerning the Medallion taxi industry and the so-called "Gypsy" cabs — a struggle often put in terms of Black vs. white — the fact that a large percentage of yellow cab drivers are Black is often glossed over. Caught in a precarious position, these brothers often feel compelled to defend the gypsies' right to work to white drivers; at the same time they are objects of scorn among segments of the Black community who consider them Uncle Toms.

The word "brother" is perhaps a misnomer when referring to this group. "Elders" might be a more appropriate term since most Black drivers that one sees are older men who have been hacking for long periods of time. They have seen the industry progress from a virtually white enclave into the present situation where the appearance of a white face causes surprised stares in some garages.

This is of central importance because their longevity of service has brought about an identification with the industry rather than the community. As one disgruntled driver put it, "the niggers in Harlem don't pay my rent!"

Talking to several Black cabbies I found that their attitudes

usually coincided with those of their white counterparts with one important exception. Before the recent fare increase most of these Black men worked extensively in the ghetto areas. In fact, many preferred to work there. With about the same number of people riding cabs as downtown and with less traffic, the Black community offered a good opportunity to make money. Also Black people tended to be more willing to allow the driver to "ride stick." This is the practice of not turning the meter on and charging a fixed price for the job. Thus, the cabbie did not have to split the money for that particular fare with the boss. "Used to be that in 4 or 5 hours uptown you could make as much money

as you did working 8 hours downtown." One driver confessed with a sigh. "But not no more." The rate hike and the subsequent fall off in fares has forced these men to join the dog-eat-dog competition of midtown. It has also caused them to be more selective concerning who they will pick up. "You pick up a colored fellow downtown and he takes you all the way up to the Bronx. You then got to come all the way back empty," one driver told me, "It just doesn't pay."

However, even among those who did work in the ghetto, there was often heard negative comments about the experience. "I hate to say it," one elderly cab driver told me, "But our people just don't do right. You get problems with people uptown more so than midtown. Sometimes they don't want to pay you. Sometimes they cuss

(Continued on Page 4)



The Paper/Archie Lynum

Fashion designers receive awards.

Chicago Black Expo sponsored by PUSH, and the former head of Operation Breadbasket in Chicago, Rev. Jesse Jackson. The New York Expo lacked the national exposure given the one held in Chicago, and received minimal coverage from the local press in New York.

Promoting basically the same ideas, the New York and Chicago Expos seem to try and rival each other, i.e., who can get the biggest stars and personalities and the most publicity.

The effectiveness of SCLC and its programs has declined since the death of Martin Luther King, and it seems as if he were only holding together an already weak structure. There have been disagreements and power struggles within the organization which have eroded what little potency is possessed. This is evidenced by the suspension of Jesse Jackson and

his subsequent break from the organization to form his own.

The rivalry between the two Expos might correctly be traced to a personal bitterness between Jackson and the current SCLC leadership.

Both PUSH and SCLC are slowly evolving from the centrist policy of integration. It must be realized though that the struggle has to be a unified one; not about personality conflicts.

There were many positive points at the Expo which ought to be continued and improved upon. Included among these are the opportunities given the various businesses and organizations to display their wares and talents, so that they might be recognized and appreciated.

SCLC and its offspring, Operation Breadbasket, seem to be headed on the road to a meaningful recovery. ". . . hopefully someday it will attain."

4 More Years

President Nixon won his reelection by a "landslide," despite espionage and sabotage by the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP).

This is a strong indication that the citizens of this country are so seduced by power that even such well-publicized irregularities can be disregarded. Some say, "After all, everyone does it."

If this is so then it only points to the lack of personal integrity among the citizens.

Furthermore, when one considers the way in which this country's leaders have been solidifying a basis for a police state, one wonders also how an alert citizenry can continue denying their role in the nature of government.

This top level foul play indicates that on lesser levels, police state tactics are standard operational procedures.

The level of political sophistication exhibited by the American voter encourages the corruption of governmental processes.

At this point in the history of the electoral process, it is highly questionable that the government belongs to the people and not to the corporations.

No rationale can justify control of government by a self-interested few at the expense of fair representation for all levels of society.

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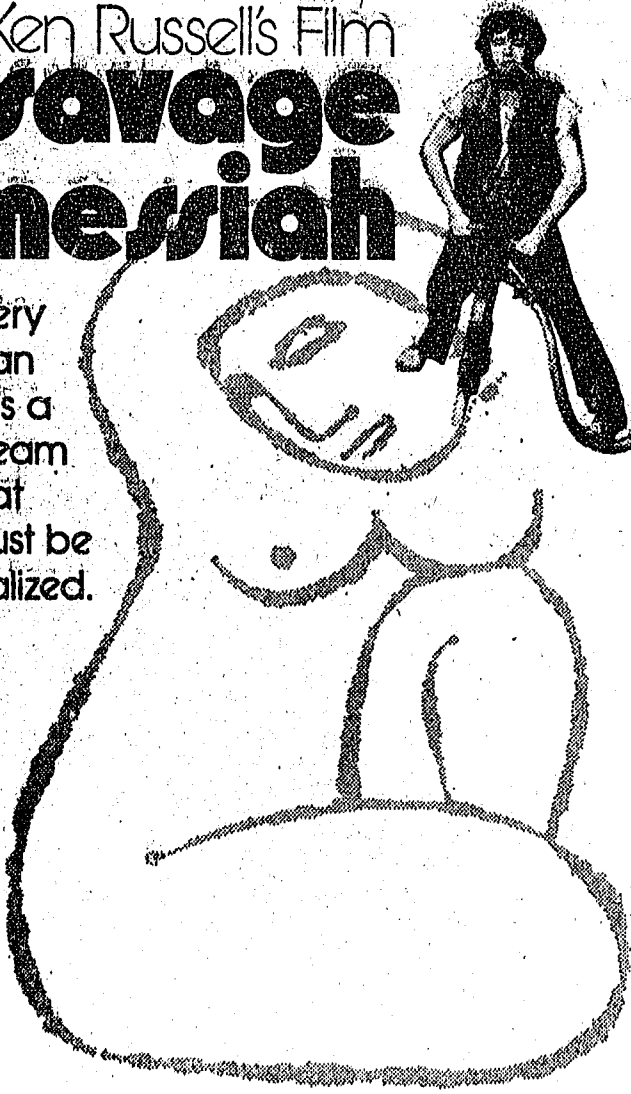
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Will we continue to nod away
Our lives in the broken down hallways
of our minds
While we shoot dope into the veins
of our future
Will we continue to watch passively
As the man sells 35¢ tokens to
take a ride through the subways
of our souls
Can we ever discover the meaning
of pride which has been buried with the
ruins of our civilization
Can you, black man, teach me
the meaning of true black love
Or am I to be a quick sweep under the
rug of your ill spent passions
Will we keep reaching for sunlight
As the raindrops of misery drench our past
Will the tears that you and I shed
form a sea of hate and drown us all
Or will we decide to live like the kings
and queens we are destined to be and
take our place upon the throne
and rule our own destinies
Yesterday I dreamed of holding you close.
And your closeness filled my soul
As we drifted off into eternity.
Yesterday I sang a song
whose words I could not understand
but oh how beautiful they seemed to be
I was so sure they were written
for me
Yesterday I ran through the fields
and picked the blossoming flowers
of joy.
As the wind played upon the trees
And called me to his side
Yesterday I danced, a dance of a fool
enacting the part of someone he is not
and could never be
Yesterday I saw all my todays and
tomorrows leap into a flaming fire
As the ashes of all my hopes were
caught up in his grasp, the wind
looked at me and laughed because
he knew
Yesterday I dreamed I was free

— Corrine Williford

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Medallion Cabs

(Continued from Page 1)
 you out because they think your meter's running too fast. They want to take you all over the place and want you to wait while they make a whole bunch of stops. Most people think that at least you're making money while you wait for them; but they don't realize the only way for you to make money is for you to get as many fares as you possibly can while you are out. That meter doesn't move half as fast when you're sitting there waiting for somebody as when you're out on the road moving."

The problem of crime in the ghetto is a harsh reality to these men who are in such a vulnerable position. As one driver put it, "I've been held up twice. Both times it was uptown. Now I tell you, when you've been hit twice, you think twice. Even if business was better uptown I still would be careful who I picked up." Another driver nodding his head in agreement chimed in, "I was once stopped at a light over in Soundview when this guy came up and stuck a gun

to my head. He took a good look at me and said, 'Aw shit, you can go on. I'm waiting for a white driver.' Now I was lucky there, but you know if that was a junkie and he needed money for his stuff he wouldn't have given a damn what color I was."

The drivers I talked to were fairly unanimous in their opinions on gypsy cabs. None of them felt that the gypsies should be prevented from working; but virtually all felt that they should be regulated. "Let's face it," stated the only Black owner-driver I ran across. "You know that the white cabbies are not going to work in the ghettos. So without the gypsies the people living in these areas would not have enough cabs. But I feel that a uniform standard should apply to all. They should not be allowed to operate unless they follow the law, which they're not doing now." Another driver, who had himself driven a gypsy for a little more than a year before switching over to drive a yellow cab said, "They got to get better cars. Right now anyone can get \$300, buy himself an old second hand car, put "L" plates on it and start working.

If the gypsies were to be placed under one head, maybe a sort of gypsy cab union to insure high standards, they could probably drive some of these smaller yellow cab companies out of business."

The Black Medallion cab drivers as a group thus represent one of the more conservative elements within the Black community. They see themselves as hard working men who respect the law as it exist and are devoted to working within the system, in this case a system in which they have invested quite a number of years and not a little energy. Prospects for changing their heads around do not seem to be very great.

Announcements

A group of CCNY students have organized a bail fund drive. Collections will take place the Thanksgiving Holiday. The primary objective will be bailing people in jail who cannot afford to bail themselves out.

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