

THE VOICE

"SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES"
Volume 33, Number 8
March, 1979

Published twice monthly during the school year by students of Fayetteville State University. To receive THE VOICE please send \$4.00 for one year or \$16.00 for four years to THE VOICE, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, N.C. 28301 to cover mailing and handling costs.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

by Fidele Essono

Negro, Negre, Nigger or Black. There are various designations, more than words, in many languages for individuals that are solely dependent on looks, tone and pigment. History has emphatically dramatized the status of Blacks by constant condemnation.

FSU's Student Center has exhibited in its own way some of the black people who have, despite all barriers, forged a past blended with glory and pain: A Black World History celebrated, in many instances, in memory of ourselves, a deserving people, even in the midst of "frustration." Black History month or the celebration of the history of a people is just taking time to gather facts that we must remember and then to consider where we stand and our future.

Balancing wins and losses in perspective to coordinate the future from the actual experience, knowing where to go and how far to continue our long and unterminalable marathon to reach our goal is what this month is about. Our motivation must be greater than "I don't care" which is the lack of pride and our cultural preservation. The struggle is oriented for specific achievements. Our capability is immense and it's still badly accepted as evidence. Our success wherever it takes place is always unwelcomed unless we agree to be inferior. Even so, it is still a nightmare. The thesis of difference is the focus of conflict. The genius of black people has always been denied. Many times our glory

has changed into frustration. Witness Jesse Owens when he won three gold medals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The Furher refused to congratulate him because he was Negro. The world magnified Hitler's ignorance and relegated Owens to his place as a humble servant. A white spectator in Pretoria suffered a heart attack as he watched Roger Bourgarel play rugby against France's white team. A negro had never performed on the field before. The scientific world owes some black technical discoveries that have benefited all of humanity.

They have been used and are still being used throughout the world without segregation. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for justice from Florida to Maine and his voice was heard in Pretoria's apartheid leadership via Salisbury. It reminded a lot of Australian authorities that it was time for them to release Blacks from the "zoo" and time to stop the perpetuation of the primitive life of part of its populace and provide the resources for a conversion to modernity.

Black History Month is dedicated to all universal black communities for a destined reunion along with those who have shed tears for a life free of oppression. On the other hand, expressing the joy of being ourselves in the sounds of a melody blown by ourselves in memory of "Satchemo" who linked and broadcasted love among people of the world. Let's remember one more time our task, it's still hard but not far from possibility.



Letter

To Black Americans, and to everyone who supports full economic rights for all minorities:

I am asking the editor of this newspaper to share with you my thoughts about economic rights, and about full employment for all Americans, and to address some concerns that have been raised about the effectiveness of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill that just passed the Congress and which will probably be signed into law by the President by the time this letter is printed in your paper.

As many of you know, I have been carrying on my husband's work through the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change here in Atlanta. In the years just prior to Martin's death--with many of the battles for full civil and political rights behind us he devoted increasing attention to the more complex question of full economic rights. It was not enough that blacks and other minorities could now sit at lunch counters, now there was not enough money to buy a meal. Martin knew it would be a long and difficult struggle to effect the necessary political and economic changes in our system so that all Americans could share in the good life of our society. He knew it would not be easy to establish the principles that every person willing to work has a right to a decent job.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change has been involved in many important programs in the last ten years, but our most vital and sustained effort has been to continue the campaign for full economic rights for all Americans. We know jobs can be the key to breaking the grinding chain of poverty for our people. We know jobs can be the answer to solving all the other problems that plague our cities. We know that when the head of a family has a job, then we can hope to bring stability and peace and harmony to that family, and to that neighborhood, and to that city. We know joblessness breeds despair and triggers many of the social and economic ills that often run rampant in our ghettos.

And we know that any society which tolerates joblessness for large numbers of its youth is a society which is doomed to grapple with the flames of hatred and violence.

As unemployment rose to alarming heights during the Nixon-Ford administration, the King Center called an historic meeting in the Spring of 1974 to address the question of full employment. From that meeting sprang the Full Employment Action Council, which I have proudly served as one of two co-chairpersons. The Council is composed of 85



Lillie Booth
Editor

Note From The Editor

You've heard my complaint often enough: "People just aren't concerned about the paper and consequently they do not become involved with it." Today, however, I have news contrary to the above statement and I will gladly share it with you.

Seemingly the new year

national organizations, representing a broad cross-section of groups who care deeply about our people and about our country's future--women's groups, organized labor, religious organizations of every faith, civil rights groups, and others. This dynamic coalition brought together for the first time since the 1964 Civil Rights Act all of the progressive forces in our country, all concerned with establishing a true full employment economy.

Shortly after the coalition was formed, Representative Gus Hawkins of California and the late Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota introduced the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, commonly called the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. Our coalition has vigorously supported the bill at every step along its difficult path to passage. Unfortunately, the bill has undergone a number of revisions and changes since its introduction--some but not all for the better--and has also picked up a number of critics.

Some claim the bill will get government too involved in the free enterprise system and that the "solution" to full employment is to give corporations more tax relief and let the benefits of that tax relief "trickle down" to those at the bottom of the pyramid. History has shown, of course, that the "trickle down" theory simply doesn't work. That relief never gets down to the people who need it most.

Others, particularly our friends on the political left, complain the bill is not strong enough and that there are not enough specific programs within the legislation to get the job done. As many of you know, the bill was amended during the past few weeks as it went through the U.S. Senate. As a result, some people believe the final legislation is largely "symbolic" and that it will not be effective in the struggle to achieve full employment.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As one of the people who worked literally night and day during the past few weeks to bring Humphrey-Hawkins into law and as one of the persons who negotiated with our supporters and with our opponents and with the

did bring about some miraculous changes. Interest, participation and productivity have all improved an outstanding 100 percent. This issue reflects the hard work that was expended by the members of the staff. I will not single out anyone but simply say that each one is to be commended for their professionalism and dedication to THE VOICE. We have all agreed that the best way to get the job done is to work together. This attitude apparently seems to be paying off and hopefully it will continue to do so in order that we may serve you more effectively.

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Our motto, "Speaking For Ourselves," we take seriously.

We still have available copies of the pre-Christmas holiday edition, which many of you may have missed, and also our last edition. If you would like any of these past editions, please stop by the newspaper office and ask for one.

In the meantime, don't forget to speak for yourself. We look forward to hearing from you.

Democratic leadership to get the bill through, I can assure you that the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill is so significant that it rivals the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act in its importance to the nation.

Despite the criticisms of many who do not understand the bill and despite the fact that we did not always have the support of our political "friends" when we needed them, I believe the new legislation is a major achievement in the area of national economic planning.

For the first time ever in our nation's history, full employment is now a national priority. We have clearly established the principle that every American willing to work has a right to a job. Sure, we would have liked an even stronger bill, but this one is the best possible one we could get through this Congress. An alternative to Humphrey-Hawkins would have been no legislation at all.

In addition to establishing full employment as a national goal, the bill sets a specific target of three per cent adult unemployment and four per cent overall by 1983. Matched against current jobless futures, that means an additional three million Americans who are not now employed will be working within the next five years. The new law also requires the government to specify each year what steps it plans to take to reach these numerical goals. It also forces the Federal Reserve Board to work toward that employment objective. In the past, the Federal Reserve Board has often taken fiscal steps which forced up the jobless rate. Not any more.

I understand the unhappiness some of our coalition supporters have felt because the opposition succeeded in including specific targets for controlling inflation--without defining any program to achieve them--in an obvious effort to negate the bill's effectiveness. However, those inflation goals--while laudable objectives in their own right--do not have the same priority as the employment goals.

The important thing to remember is that it is necessary to start

(Continued on Page 3)