

# EDITORIALS & COMMENT

## A New Spirit For '76

"The Bicentennial will not merely be a time for reviewing past glories: it will also be a time for looking to the future, for building upon the ideals of the founding fathers and for keeping the spirit of the American Revolution alive. By working together to meet this unique challenge, we can make 1976 as memorable as was the year 1776—for America, and for the world."

—Richard Nixon  
Washington, D. C.  
April 15, 1973

The foregoing quote is the second paragraph of "A Presidential Call To Action" sent to our Nation's communications media by the National Bicentennial Organization as it "revs up its engines" in preparation for the two hundredth birthday anniversary party.

This newspaper agrees that it is both nice and necessary to look back on past glories. It is nice to look to the future, it is nice to talk about building upon the ideas of the founding fathers of this nation, it is nice to talk about keeping the spirit of the American Revolution alive. This newspaper also believes that the time has come for all men, women and children in this nation, irrespective of station in life, to put less effort into rhetoric and more energy into working toward realization of the great American ideas for the countless oppressed among us, the countless mistreated among us, the

countless hungry among us, the countless functional illiterate among us, the countless ill-housed among us. We would like to see some of the billions earmarked for the "big party" redirected toward making the great American dream come true.

There is no denying that the "big party" is in order, but what do we plan to do about the thousands among us who are not "invited" to the party because their backs are too weary, they lack energy and interest because they are hungry and hurt, they cannot read the invitation or they have no address to which it can be sent?

It seems somewhat difficult to get excited about "the party" when we see such flagrant and numerous examples of human hopelessness and suffering around us. It also seems ironic that we gear the nation up to celebrate two hundred years while we allow OEO to drown struggling for breath.

We would like to urge that the "New Spirit of '76" become one of real commitment and dedication by all Americans to the realization of the ideals of democracy. We call upon all Americans, and particularly black Americans, to get involved in the bicentennial celebration and use their influence, energies and whatever tactics are necessary to insure that a "new spirit of '76" will mean improving the quality of life in the years to come for ALL Americans. Perhaps then, when time comes for the third century celebration, it will not be soured by evidences of injustices in every walk of life.

## Abuse of Sterilization Authority

A flagrant abuse of sterilization authority seems to be cropping up in sections of the nation and it does not appear to have ensured that the rights of the individual were paramount, always observed and always secure.

The real issues involved in the sterilization cases in Alabama and North Carolina appears to be the flagrant abuse and unconcern for those who do not and, because of their minor age, cannot make decisions in planning the sterilization operations. Further these decisions, it seems, depends upon the securing of needed welfare aid and help for their families and the use of moral judgments by those in power to render such necessary help.

When divisiveness and racist policies in top echelons permeate to the detriment of blacks and the illiterate poor, you will find many such actions taking place.

Recent reports in the press state that there have been thousands of cases of so-called involuntary sterilizations of women and men in North Carolina. It is possible in other sections as well.

We wonder how many of these cases involved those largely illiterate families, who in many cases, it appears, that for the sake of some type of welfare aid, surrendered their God-given rights, the right to reproduction, to the "do good" advice of welfare officials who sought only to cut down such aid or help by any means possible.

Coming on the heels of the infamous Tuskegee experiment on blacks, one wonders if this is not just the example held by some federal officials that the poor and of course, this includes blacks, are just a distinct class which cannot be helped by a political or economic means and the social programs must be cut down by any means possible.

It may be recalled only too well that during the years of the planned extermination of Jewish persons by the Nazi regime, under Hitler such programs took on similar beginnings.

Such callous officiousness by local, state or federal authorities should not be allowed to continue in the name of the poor who may need help and services.

Many groups have raised the outcry against such unconcern, but the damage has already been done and every precaution must be taken to prevent such callousness from happening again.

Again, one sees the limitation of education on such subjects in our schools and it is increasingly difficult to place any curricula dealing with the pros and cons of planned methods of birth control in some of the low educational level states in the nation.

It would seem to suggest that if the same eagerness used in planning such sterilizations by some social workers were used in truly

educating the millions of illiterate families on what is really happening when one has such operations, we are certain there would be fewer instances of such illegal behavior.

The HEW guidelines, found stored away in a storage room, should be dispatched post-haste to all social services agencies and their medical boards. It is an easy matter to do this since HEW had already prepared guidelines for sterilization operations on planned parenthood and mental defectives.

From these guidelines—coupled with better educational knowledge, every individual, parent, social worker and clinical personnel would know clearly what is going to happen before they suggest that a particular individual undergo sterilization operation.

In any case, the sterilization operation should not ever become a condition precedent to welfare aid or help for any low-income family as has been reportedly done.

### LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

ALCORN A&M COLLEGE is the oldest traditionally BLACK LAND GRANT College in the United States. It began in 1830 as OAKLAND COLLEGE, a Presbyterian school for white males, and closed with the advent of the Civil War. The plant was sold to the state of Mississippi to educate its Negro citizens.

The first black to be elected to the U. S. Senate, HIRAM R. REVELS of Mississippi, resigned his seat to become Alcorn's first president in 1877.

The UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BUFF, (formerly Arkansas AM&N) was established by the Arkansas Legislature in 1973 as a branch of the University of Arkansas. Under the supervision of J. C. Corbin, a BLACK man, and with only seven students, the state supported land-grant institution was originally called the BRANCH NORMAL COLLEGE.

BOWIE STATE COLLEGE owes its origin to a bequest made by Nelson Wells, who died in 1850, and left his estate to be used in establishing a school to train "NEGRO TEACHERS."

The school was started in 1867 by J. M. Cushing and a group of associates who persuaded the General Assembly of Maryland of 1908 to appropriate \$5,000 for the support of the young institution.

### DO YOU KNOW THAT?

Of the total 54.4 million, 30.7 million families, or 58.4 per cent, earned more than \$10,000 last year. Seventeen per cent had incomes between \$7,000 and \$10,000.

## Only Black In Watergate Is The Guard That Caught The Burglars

**'I WANT TO THANK THE PRESIDENT FOR NOT LETTING BLACKS PARTICIPATE IN THE WATERGATE AFFAIR.'**

VERNON JORDAN  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE



## Roy Wilkins Speaks

Executive Secretary of NAACP



ROY WILKINS

## REP. CHISHOLM A LEADER

Representative Shirley Chisholm was the leader in unpublicized hard and tedious work that resulted in domestic workers being included in the House bill increasing the minimum wage to \$2.20 an hour.

The news story declares that Mrs. Chisholm's role was one of "uncharacteristic anonymity" and so it was. Not many persons—and certainly not the general public—know of the key part of her office was playing in getting a higher minimum wage for about 1,000,000 domestics, many of whom are black.

Representative Chisholm is not known for hiding her light under a bushel and most newspaper people expect her conduct at all times to be what the kindest of them describe as "outgoing."

But sources in Representative Chisholm's Brooklyn (that which there is no more individualistic city in the nation) join the sources in Washington in agreeing that the first black woman elected to Congress was as busy as a bee in pursuit of her goal. She was not working strictly for Brooklyn domestic workers, but for every domestic in each one of the 50 states.

This took time and care and a fitting together of the attitudes and aspirations of disparate groups. Observers agree that the main task was the uniting of women's groups and the powerful labor movement, which had opposed certain goals of the women's movements. Mrs. Chisholm used her office, mailed appeals for support, made telephone round-ups, met with endless committees and groups, consulted leaders in the House, got petitions signed and made herself available to household workers and their lobbyists.

One of her efforts before the bill reached the floor was to get Representative Edith Green of Oregon and Representative Martha W. Griffiths of Michigan, two seniors among women House members, to speak for the bill during debate. Representative Chisholm whose

mother was a domestic worker, also spoke for the bill, but her political sense and her "woman sense" told her that speeches by these two powerful women members would help the bill to victory.

In her passionate appeal for passage, Mrs. Chisholm echoed the tales that are told and "warnings" that meet embattled black people from one end of the country to the other. "When this House," she said, "was debating the anti-poverty and welfare bills, all the fervent speeches dealt with the work ethic. Today, the House has heard warnings of inflation. When will the House apply the same standards to the poor as they apply to themselves?"

The battle was won by a vote of 287 to 130. During the two months of work that preceded the floor debate, all black members signed a petition for the bill and all but two women members signed up. As an indication of the excuses used by all members at one time or another, one woman refused to sign because Representative Chisholm had been cool to her urging that the Labor Department relax its safeguards on admitting foreign domestic workers. Both she and the other non-signer later voted for the bill.

Mrs. Chisholm has shown superlatively what representatives can do for the forgotten wage earners in their districts and throughout the country. If the black members of Congress, the black state legislators and city council members will remember that they are human beings first and blacks second, they may yet return the nation to "government by consent of the governed."

The black mayors, struggling with all the municipal problems, including those of race, learned this in their first days in office. They are wrestling with ethnic groups, taxation, sewers, schools, various municipal service personnel, state legislatures, appointments, greetings, ad infinitum. Representative Chisholm has shown them one way to operate.

## Things You Should Know

**William Wells BROWN**

...THE FIRST NEGRO NOVELIST IN AMERICA / HE TRAINED AS A PRINTER WITH ABOLITIONIST EDITOR ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY & BECAME AN AGENT OF THE WESTERN MASSACHU-

SETTS ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY / HIS BOOK, "CLOTEL" ON THE

PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER" WAS PUBLISHED IN LONDON IN 1853, IN THE U.S. IN 1864, AND WAS WIDELY READ / CONTINENTAL FEATURES



## TO BE EQUAL

By VERNON JORDAN

Executive Director, National Urban League

## Everybody Hurt

Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev did what nothing else has been able to do for weeks—he bumped Watergate off the front pages. Now that we know it can be done, it gives heart to those of us who feel that, important as Watergate is, it should not be allowed to obscure the larger issues of domestic social policy that have an immediate, direct impact on every single person in the country.

In the past few weeks several important things have occurred that point up the mistaken federal domestic policies and the need for re-ordered priorities.

ONE WAS THE MEETING of the nation's mayors in San Francisco. The mayors, including officials of both parties, complained bitterly that special revenue sharing only shared problems, not solutions, with the cities.

Nearly all said that they would lose resources because the present federally-administered programs in health, housing and manpower pumped more money into their cities than the proposed special revenue sharing would. It's hard enough trying to cope with the special problems of the cities now, the mayors said, but it will be worse after federally-funded programs end.

A SECOND NOTABLE event was the release of a survey by the Federal Revenue Sharing Office of how funds already given cities under general revenue sharing were spent. Over five billion out of a projected 30 billion has already been sent to local governments.

The federal report documented what many have suspected all along. The money has been used for building and for hiring more police and firemen. In some localities, it's been used to reduce taxes and to build golf courses and tennis courts. Social services for the poor and the aged ranked last among the priorities of the local governments—only eight percent mentioned it as a top priority. So what justification can be made for confidence in local ability to deal with national social goals?

ANOTHER RECENT EVENT buried by Watergate publicity was a special Senate hearing on the budget, called to put a spotlight on the proposed end of important federal social service programs.

I went to Washington to testify before this Committee and among the things I pointed out was a special little secret too long kept from the American people. You may recall that a while back two writers, Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, made a well-publicized charge that black leaders were keeping significant black progress a big secret. Well, it seems that white leadership is keeping an even bigger secret—that the social service programs have benefited whites far more than they have blacks.

JUST CONSIDER: THE MAJORITY of welfare recipients are white; two out of three families that got housing under the now-frozen 235 subsidy program were white; three out of four On-the-Job Training program participants are white; four out of five people employed in the Public Employment Program are white.

These are all programs that are either frozen or due for cuts or for transfer to local, and less effective, control. The silent white majority may be reluctant to help black people and may tolerate the death of these programs because they think they are for blacks, but the big secret today is that these programs have primarily benefited whites and whites will not be helped by the termination of these programs.

CONGRESS WILL HAVE TO fill the vacuum created by Watergate and there are some small signs that it may do so. It passed, by overwhelming majorities, extensions of some federal health programs slated for extinction. These may still be sabotaged by executive impoundment and by bureaucrat's failure to administer the programs properly but it shows that faith in Congress is not misplaced. There seems nowhere else to turn these days.



## Tan Topics



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