

Nuclear Power—A Disastrous Time Bomb
BY ADA M. FISHER

Already there has been a death possibly related to attempts at information suppression regarding nuclear power plants. Pennsylvania is now in a state of outrage by the explosion of a reactor with nuclear leaks in the Three Mile Island community of Harrisburg. A suit is pending by a survivor of the A-bomb testings during WWII stating that his leukemia is the result of that test. And there is a growing stockpile of evidence that residents who live as far as twenty miles away from underground nuclear testing facilities in Nevada, have a seven times higher incidence of cancer than is normally found in the population at-large.

Nuclear energy is a time bomb and do not let anyone convince you otherwise. The environmentalists are right—nuclear power plants should not be built without more understanding of what we are doing to our future gene pool and environment. Why? 1) We have no acceptable methods to handle the potentially lethal radioactive waste which will insure the avoidance of harm to man and the surrounding environment. The half-life of the material (meaning the time it takes for the material to lose half of its radioactivity) is often longer than the life expectancy of the containers in which it is stored. This may mean that if the container is damaged or decomposes, the material, within it is still potentially lethal and may seep into the environment. 2) The energy generated by the plants requires cooling apparatuses which companies have often been unwilling to invest in; hence water from community rivers, lakes, and streams is being used. Water thus used may be contaminat-

SPECTACLES..

A Closer Look

By ADA M. FISHER



ed or heated artificially above what may be healthy for aquatic life. The marine residents may die or live to contaminate us when we eat them. 3) There is the potential of neoplastic (cancerous) growth in those exposed to radioactive matter. This is not the type of thing which is seen immediately and often takes five to thirty years or more before the correlations can be shown. 4) No safeguards to effectively protect the health of employees can be determined since no one knows how much exposure it takes to cause cancer and there are no assurances that these workers will be compensated in the event that they acquire a rare disease or a form of cancer.

The need for new energy sources does not justify the rapid growth of the power plants. We must have safeguards to protect the citizens' health and environment. The electric companies want nuclear power plants because they

can control the flow of energy and the flow of money. It is sheer greed and scientific laziness which is preventing the exploration of alternative safer sources of energy from the sun, the wind, and the waters of earth. Rumor has it the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has developed a solar panel the size of a piece of linoleum tile which can collect enough solar energy for the average American home. Why then is this type of avenue not explored? Mainly because the energy companies can't control the sun or make as much money from it. You see, big business reflects the greed of the average citizen who won't turn the thermostat down, who will ride when he can walk, who must have every electrical convenience when manual (hand) power works just as well. Big Business has also failed to learn that there is money in safety, there is money in efficiency,

and there is money in the unthinkable. I think they play us cheap, for most reasonable people would be willing to pay for safer, more efficient sources of energy.

Nuclear energy is not yet the answer to our energy needs for its danger to the health of citizens in very real and evident.

Now that I've said just this bit, many black people will be saying it doesn't affect us. But you're wrong. Nuclear energy will most affect those with the poorest economic status and the most limited access to health care. It is in our communities that chemical waste and power plants will most likely be built for our lack of concern about the environment and our eagerness for jobs means we will open the door for them to come in. It will be on roads through our neighborhoods that trucks carrying chemical and nuclear waste will pass, for the white citizens councils will already have their consciousness raised and be out demonstrating to have the trucks, trains, etc. sent through other routes. It will benefit us to be highly selective in what industries we let into our communities and where we choose to work. Though they may pay us \$10 per hour to work at power plants, the risk to our health in the near future isn't worth the job. Though we may be promised long term insurance and pie in the sky, is it worth not seeing our children grow or passing along altered genes to the next generation? Black people wake up! Look around you, for 1984 is almost here and if we are not more selective and informed about the world around us, our ignorance will continue to kill us.

A.M.F.

The competency tests cropping up around the country could doom black colleges.

For the last 25 years, since the advent of so-called educational integration, black colleges have survived mostly because a fair number of black high school graduates still want to attend black colleges.

But unfortunately, these students are usually not in the top 10 per cent of their graduating class. A majority of them need remedial work in college to be able to pass.

Making college education available for this group of high school graduates has been a role that black colleges have excelled in over the years.

But now come the competency tests, a systemized way to label a person who finished 12 years of school a non-high school graduate if he or she flunks the test.

All that is needed for that is a law, state or federal, that limits college education to high school graduates.

If we continue to let our children flunk these damnable competency tests while we complain about how unfair they are, I fear that we acquiesce to the doom of black colleges.

Additionally, we have a hand in writing the lables that describe our children as functional failures in our modern, highly technological society.

So what must we do?

Do we become righteously indignant because of our oppressive history in this country?

Do we take the state education systems to court to argue that the competency test is a plot to wreck educational genocide upon black people?

Do we march, demonstrate and generally raise Cain against a test to determine whether we are educationally competent to function in this modern America?

I say "No."

The Black Beat

By MILTON JORDAN



Some say the tests are culturally biased. What cultural bias is there in a math problem that asks you to determine the amount of sales tax at 4 per cent on an item that costs \$9.85? But even if there are questions on the test which favor white rather than black culture, then I say we must become expert in white culture.

It frankly doesn't matter who wrote the test, or what standards are used to determine competency. The fact is, whatever standards the larger society agrees upon, those are the ones we must deal with.

For those opponents to the competency tests, who contend that blacks should have a part in writing the examinations, I ask: how would you determine a high schooler's ability to function effectively in the 21st century?

To oppose the concept of minimal academic competency is ridiculous. The concept isn't new. It is simply another way of saying "qualified," a nemesis we've wrestled with for years. The bottom line is this: If we put ourselves in the position of defending incompetence we lose.

Sadly, it seems that many young people are doing now what more than three centuries of slavery, oppression and

racism failed to make their ancestors do. Too many of them seem willing to say to hell with work, sacrifice and struggle.

Worse, too many of our recently modernized crop of sophisticated, educated and in many ways compromised adults are aiding this sellout.

Many of these so-called leaders are parroting the excuses of cultural and economic deprivation as reasons for our children's poor showings. These excuses make little sense when you consider that most blacks are culturally and economically deprived. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Dr. Charles Drew, Sammy Davis, Jr., John H. Johnson, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ralph Bunche, Elizabeth Koomt and Cardiss Collins, all black, all were deprived. But they prevailed.

Many of us are so wrapped in self-pity that we know little of our history and our heroes. I continually hear about how we need more role models. I say we have a lot of role models if we learn to use them.

Our history is replete with stories of accomplishment despite long odds. Black people have always had ample reason to surrender. But we haven't. We fought on.

What if Denmark Vassie, who planned a slave revolt in

Charleston, or Phyllis Wheatley, who taught herself to read and write, or Frederick Douglass, who labored hard for black liberation, or any other of hundreds of blacks who fought and died to get us to today, were resurrected today?

I think they'd be shocked and angry. I think they'd be discouraged to find that in 1979, when conditions for black people are immeasurably better than they ever knew, we are complaining instead of doing.

In 1979, so-called enlightened leaders are advocating opposition to competency. In many southern cities black preachers, and to a lesser degree, black politicians, are advocating that schools either drop the tests, or parents should have their children boycott the exam.

I know, now everyone will trot out all their studies, all their justifications that lay this sickening mess at the door of white folks. They will tell how unfair it is to suggest that we labor under all this duress, strain and stress.

But I say that doesn't change a thing. No matter how many reasons we have for failure, this fact remains: When blacks fail, blacks suffer for it.

We must become the masters of our own destinies. We must accept full blame for our failures. Only then can we begin accepting full credit for our successes.

Instead of opposing the competency tests, let's conquer it. Let's make sure our children pass it.

If they write it in Greek, let's teach black kids Greek.

If they give it at night, let's build our supply of NoDoz.

If they give the test outside in subzero weather, let's buy a bunch of quilts.

Whatever we have to do let's do it. Black people can't afford to enter the 21st century rated "incompetent."

Next week, I'll have a brief message for black writers. See you then.

IS CONGRESS MATURE ENOUGH TO NATIONALLY HONOR A BLACK MAN

In this 96th Congress as in previous congresses there is another bill before it S.25 and H.R. 15 to make Martin Luther King's birthday a legal holiday. Senator Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee held a joint hearing on the issue. The bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Birch Bayh in the House of Representatives by John Conyers. Both Senator Bayh and Representative Conyers spoke of how enthusiasm is increasing for the holiday. They say daily, more congressmen are becoming converted to the idea and that people across the country are exhibiting favorable inclinations.

Senator Bob Dole who is one of the sponsors of S.25 spoke of how Dr. King's vision of equality and brotherhood moved an entire generation. He said King's goals are primarily those of our founding fathers of establishing for all Americans equal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. He lauded the non-violent method that Dr. King used.

Representative Garcia said that although he never met Dr. King, and being the representative of a deprived area, the legacy of hope Dr. King left has greatly inspired him and the young people of his South Bronx district.

Senator Storm Thurmond, the ranking republican on the Judiciary committee, stated that designation of national holidays should be given only after the person's place in history is clearly determined. He further said that the United States has only two people being honored by having a national holiday in their names. They are Christo-

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

By ALFREDA L. MADISON

pher Columbus and George Washington. Both of whom equality and justice upon which the nation was founded represent the origin of our country. Thurmond said (1) public holidays should be the responsibility of the states; (2) Dr. King, although being a dynamic and charismatic person, his place has not yet been established in history. He also stated that every holiday costs the Federal government \$195 million a day because of employees' non-work compensation. Senator Kennedy answered Thurmond by stating that stores report that their total sales are \$22 million beyond the amount of government loss and that in balancing cost profits, all factors are considered.

Ambassador Andrew Young said it is right that there should be a national holiday to honor Columbus who discovered physical America and Washington who founded it, and that Dr. King should be honored because he discovered the soul of America, and that he made the principles of

a conscious reality. The Ambassador was the administration's representative.

Mrs. King said that the anti-war movement owes a great deal of its success to the non-violent movement as well as Dr. King's active leadership of the peace movement beginning in 1967. She said that her husband's achievements greatly strengthened our country and that they have done much to set it on the correct course for a beloved community. She stated that the holiday movement is not to honor just a man, but an idea.

Representative John Conyers said, Dr. King's stature rests on a singular self discipline and steadiness an unshakable faith in the basic goodness of human beings, a single-minded dedication to raising up the lives of the disadvantaged through his inspiring speech and exceptional courage.

Ms. Patricia Brown, an elementary school teacher, spoke of how Dr. King's life gives both white and black children

a sense of pride and aspiration. It lets black children know that one of their own race has risen to the world's highest summit, and it gives white children the knowledge that blacks are among the world's greatest and most honored people. She also said that Dr. King was the youngest person who has ever received the Noble Peace Prize.

Rev. Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was most eloquent in his presentation. He ended by saying that in passing his legislation "it will be in the hope—that we will carry on the struggle toward that day when the halls of social and economic justice—color will be irrelevant; toward the day when black will not be asked to move back; brown can stick around; red can get ahead—and white will act all right."

In calling on Stanley Rittenhouse who was placed at the end of the hearing, Senator Kennedy said Mr. Thurmond asked him to testify. Upon that, Thurmond quickly disassociated himself from Mr. Rittenhouse by saying: "I didn't ask him He asked to testify." Then everyone the committee walked out except Congressman Couter, and Kennedy told Mr. Rittenhouse to read his statement while they were out. It was the most vitriolic and hate-filled statement I've ever heard. All reporters closed their pads, the televisions and radios were shut off. Congressman Garcia returned near the end of Rittenhouse's testimony, and at the end of the statement Mr. Garcia said, "In a democracy, one has the right to express his opinion even when it is filled with hate like yours. Now the hearing is adjourned." No reporters or anyone else said anything to Mr. Rittenhouse. He seemed very much a loner.

The Black Side of Washington

By SHERMAN BRISCOE
NNPA

Racism Behind Draft Resumption

An undeclared war is going on in the Pentagon between Secretary of the Army Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., and Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, the Army chief of staff. It's about

resumption of the draft. No one will admit this, not even Alexander, but the fight is really over the large number of blacks in the Armed Forces. More than a 4th of the Army is now black—black youth, who are unable to find

jobs in the private sector, gravitate toward the military. Alexander says this is o.k. and we don't need the draft. But General Rogers and all the other top brass are yelling, "Draft."

Hispanic of New York City. Now that Dr. Randolph Blackwell has been promoted to a Commerce Department post in Atlanta as director of the Office of Minority Enterprise Program Development, a new unit, the guessing has begun as to who will succeed him at OMBE. Some say it will be Allen A. Stephenson, now acting director; others say it will be C. Robert Kemp, a former California executive who is executive director of Commerce's Interagency Council for Minority Business Enterprise. Both are black. But still others have their fingers crossed.

OPINION
BY RALPH WILLIAMS

It is time for us to stand behind our leaders. The Durham City School board has demonstrated, that it is concerned with improving the lives of Durham City School children, creating and developing programs to develop and preserve a better way of living.

It is up to the citizenry of Durham City to support our board's stand and unite behind them to make this one of the finest school systems in the nation.

No longer should we be parent or teacher only, but from this day on our roles should be so entwined, that no one would be able to tell where teacher begins and where parent ends.

This would enable us to develop a strong school system, to keep your system strong, we have to have strong families.

A strong family is not just parents and children, but a strong family is people caring about children and what happens to our children. It is my neighbor seeing to the safety and welfare of my children, if I'm not around. It is you and I fighting to give our children values and ethics.

In sustaining our institutions, the noblest of them all, we will go forward and develop a strong community.

A strong school will teach our children to know, to think and to aspire and to have a positive identity that will inspire them to achieve through thought and action. To achieve a sense of purpose, a sense of fulfillment will aid us in making contributions to the world and helping to make it more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it.

The end is just the beginning.

It wouldn't be good politics or human relations for the Pentagon to yell, "We got too many blacks!" So it complains that we are not getting enough personnel through the voluntary process. Through the resumption of the draft, everyone in a certain age span can be called up. With such a manpower pool, the military could select 10% blacks and 90% nonblacks. OK?

Are Blacks Slipping Back?
Two years ago, Benjamin Holman, black, was director of the Community Relations Service, a civil rights oriented agency of the Justice Department; and John Buggs, also black, was staff director of the Civil Rights Commission. Both have been replaced.

Holman, now a professor of journalism at the University of Maryland, was replaced by Gilbert Pompa, an Hispanic of San Antonio, immediately after Carter took office; and Buggs, who retired some months ago because of illness, was succeeded last week by Louis Nunez, an

Mississippi's Rising Star
There is a rising star in Bolivar County, Miss., where Senator Blanche K. Bruce got his star over 100 years ago. The new star is Gunison Mayor Violet Leggett, a University of Illinois-trained librarian. She beat out the white incumbent for the mayor's job. Predictions are that she will go far.

South Africa Is Slick
While able Dr. Leon Sullivan of OIC pleads with big business to crush apartheid in South Africa, the racist country is passing out millions to U.S. politicians, editors, and o' pinion

molders to maintain the status quo.

Preliminary
Continued from page 1
go toward his medical costs.

Prior to Judge McMillan's ruling, a bill was introduced in the General Assembly which would discontinue a spouse's responsibility for his or her partner's medical costs six months after the spouse enters a nursing home.

Ms. Hayes says she does not support or approve of the six months provision. "I support Judge McMillan's position which does not allow the regulation to be imposed at all."

A final ruling in the case is not expected before next fall.

Legal Services of Southern Piedmont and Wake-Harnett-Johnston Legal Services are funded by the National Legal Services Corporation to provide free civil legal assistance to low-income people. They are two of 14 such programs in the state.

The average helicopter can cruise one mile every 48 seconds.

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