

# EDITORIALS & COMMENT

"If you will protest courageously and yet with dignity and Christian Love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historian will have to pause and say, 'There lived a great people—a black people who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.' This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility." — Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Grade Crossings -- A Public Responsibility

Billions of dollars are spent every year toward achieving the goal of highway safety. Paradoxically, one phase of highway safety efforts—that having to do with rail grade crossing accidents—has been neglected. Possibly the reason for this has been a misinformed belief that grade crossing protective measures are a responsibility of railroads. But that is far from the case. A trend toward public responsibility for highway grade crossing safety began with a U. S. Supreme Court decision in 1877. That decision held that the rights and obligations of a railroad company and those of a public highway user were "mutual and reciprocal." Then in 1935, in another milestone case, the Supreme Court held that grade crossing protection should be primarily a public responsibility rather than an equal one. Justice Brandeis, in handing down the Court's opinion, wrote . . . "The railroad has ceased to be the prime instrument of danger and the main cause of accidents. It is the railroad which now requires protec-

tion from danger incident to motor transportation." Subsequent to the 1935 Court decision, federal highway appropriations have allocated certain percentages of road construction funds to removal of grade crossing hazards. In the 51 years, from 1920 through 1970, more than 86,000 people were killed and almost 230,000 injured in accidents at grade crossings. It is noted that the "grade crossings are the single most readily identifiable location of highway . . ." according to Association of American Railroads and only about 20 percent of the total now have protective devices. Greater support for federal programs to improve grade crossings are needed and it is a small price to pay for the substantial benefits to be derived." The tragedies and inconvenience which mark the meeting of every railroad and highway emphasize the urgency of making grade crossing protection a number one priority in the overall goal of highway safety.

## Tests and Cultural Biases

For many years leading educators and others have pointed out the unfairness and cultural bias present in many tests administered to students and others. As such, these substantive and methodical errors were again attacked by several educators, scientists and public social workers recently in Atlanta. (See Article elsewhere on Tests and Tests). Dr. Leon Kamin, Chairman of Experimental Psychology Department at Princeton University, pointed out that even in early 1920's certain classes of immigrants were kept out of the United States and certain lines of employment by so called I. Q. tests. Such standardized tests do indeed offer the danger of giving

God-like powers over the public will being to a group of test makers. For the past two or three decades the black minority has been the most studied sector of the American population. Certainly by now, with the wealth of knowledge and materials produced from these studies, it would seem to be an easy matter to devise and grade tests that are designed to reflect certain cultural difference. In this respect, the 1920's that Dr. Kamin speaks of may not be materially different from the 1970's. We certainly look to the day when factors other than just test scores will be the genuine criteria for evaluating individuals in all areas of educational development and economic permutation.

## Lead Poisoning Campaign

The announcement by three major health organizations calling for a concerted public awareness campaign to eliminate the problems of lead based poisoning against babies and children through the cooperative efforts of both federal and local levels is long overdue. It is important and timely that P. L. 91-695 be re-instated as needed legislation to effect this vital campaign. Public awareness and mobilization of the health community to seek total eradication of the use of lead based paint is being urged by the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Public Health Association and the National Environmental Health Association. The needless waste of human life and potential caused by this serious crippling malady is long overdue. The children, babies and toddlers must be located and treated before they suffer effects that will last a lifetime. Reports show that in 1972 one

child died every 36 hours of lead poisoning and more than 110,000 children suffered from actual disease and an additional 600,000 had dangerously high blood levels of lead. Among the disorders caused by lead based paint poisoning, if the children survive are that many of them are often left mentally retarded or suffer from cerebral palsy, convulsive disorders, blindness, learning defects, kidney diseases and other handicaps. This danger of lead based poisoning to babies and toddlers have long been pointed out in rent strikes and tenant organizations in large metropolitan areas and even within our own communities. The urgency in projecting this program must no longer be delayed if we are to effectively work to eliminate the needless waste of human life and potential. The medical community is to be commended for this planned and cooperative assignment to help eradicate the danger to babies and children.

## Things You Should Know

THE MYSTIC "Sojourner TRUTH" BORN ISABELLA BAUMFREE AROUND 1797, SLAVE OF A DUTCHMAN IN N.Y. CITY/SHE WAS SOLD MANY TIMES 'TIL STATE FREED ALL SLAVES IN 1827/IN 1843 SHE ANSWERED THE CALL & BECAME A MISSIONARY FOR ABOLITION, TEMPERANCE, PRISON

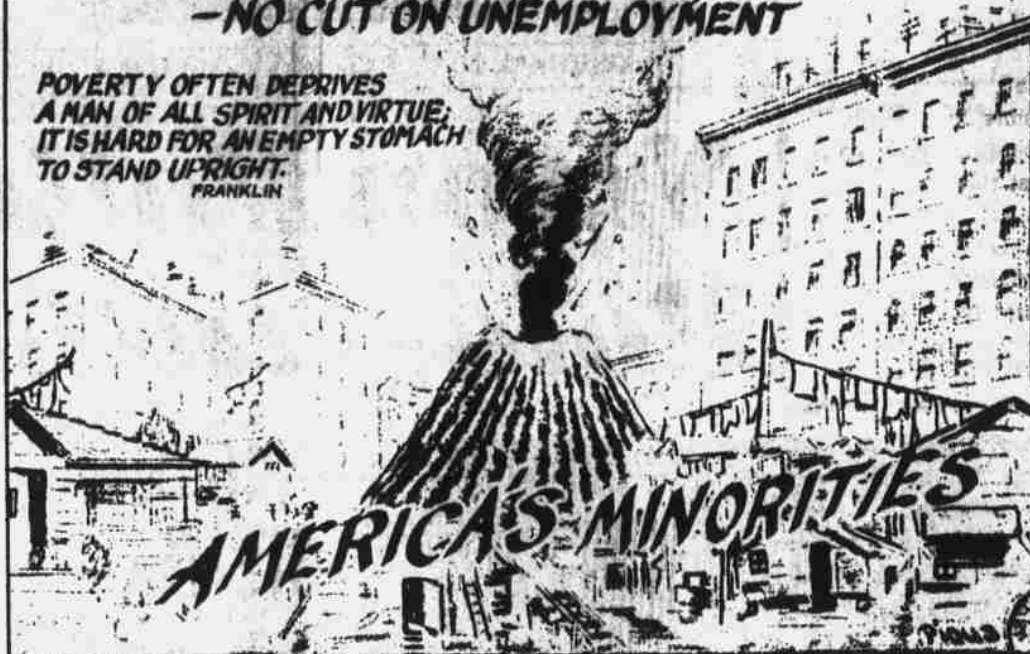


## Seeds Of A Hot Summer . . . ?

### CUT-BACKS

- DAY CARE CENTERS
POVERTY PROGRAM
HOUSING
YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAM
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
WELFARE AID
SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM
—NO CUT ON UNEMPLOYMENT

POVERTY OFTEN DEPRIVES A MAN OF ALL SPIRIT AND VIRTUE. IT IS HARD FOR AN EMPTY STOMACH TO STAND UPRIGHT. FRANKLIN



## TESTS, TESTS, TESTS

### Where to Without Test? The Bathroom?

By CHARLES SEABROOK Before you enter college, you have to take a test. Before you go to work for the government, you have to take a Civil Service exam. Before you get any kind of job, you usually have to take a test of some sort. "The bathroom is about the only place you can go to these days without taking a test," says a South Carolina school teacher. America is becoming "test oriented," and several educators, scientists, and public social workers who gathered in Atlanta this past week say they are "sick of all the tests." "Public policy makers, who are currently proposing drastic changes in public support for social programs, are being supported by spurious evidence obtained from all these tests," says Dr. Leon Kamin, chairman of the experimental psychology department at Princeton University.

KAMIN SAYS he has uncovered "substantive and methodological errors in the data supporting IQ tests, which have for years been used to measure human intelligence." The professor said persons from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds simply cannot be expected to perform the same on a standardized I.Q. (intelligence quotient) test. The Princeton psychologist says it is true that blacks and several other ethnic racial minorities as a rule perform more poorly on IQ tests than whites. "And this has led to the prevalent belief that these minority groups are mentally and genetically inferior to whites," he said. "But there is no evidence to convince a reasonably prudent man that this is true." The belief that certain minorities are mentally inferior to whites was used in devising laws to keep certain classes of immigrants out of the United States in the early 1920's. "And today the same belief in the results of IQ tests is keeping members of several minority groups out of schools, industry, and government," he said. Kamin says he sees "absolutely no good in IQ tests, and they should be done away with."

## This Week In Negro History

One hundred and forty-two years ago (1831) on Monday this week the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church died. He was Richard Allen who was the first bishop of the church. Other events this week of historical interest are as follows: MARCH 27 — Negroes as seamen, soldiers and explorers were brought to America as early as 1591. MARCH 28 — Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), British abolitionist, born. MARCH 29 — Archdeacon James S. Russell (1857-1935), founder of the principal of St. Paul Normal and Industrial School now Saint Paul's College at Lawrenceville, Va., died. MARCH 30 — The Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1870. The amendment says the right to vote shall not be denied to any citizen on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. There was a provision that Congress had the responsibility to enact any law or act to see that the amendment was enforced. But little was done by Congress until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed which strengthened the previous acts of 1867 and 1870. MARCH 31 — Jack Johnson (1878-1946), first Negro heavyweight champion of the world, born. APRIL 1 — Thomas Powell Buxton (1786-1848), British emancipationist, born. A program to preserve Venice is begun. Runaway prices jolt three Latin nations.

## Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor: A white widow sitting by throughout the trial, twenty-two minutes deliberation by a jury in a widow's behalf, and another black man is convicted. All parties satisfied but those who don't count. It has a long and obvious pattern, especially in the South. Only the degree of sophistication represents novelty, the creativity of the imagination of a new "old South." James Sneed was found guilty of killing a white state trooper. Aside from the sort of attention given in the case by the newspapers initially and recently, several questions remain. A rather self-righteous jury bent on "fulfilling its duty" to a white widow, and a jury whose composition (I will suppose was by and large, if not entirely white (since the Durham Herald's article does not mention "those facts") regarding this. In the light of any jury composition we cannot help but recognize racial and cultural factors present. The fact that many southerners, perhaps most in a small town, may know one another—even on a first name basis, have grown up together, etc. One recognizes ethno-cultural factors adversely affecting a member of any "outside" group, especially the black. To say a "fair trial" is impossible in America may require stiff argument; to say a "fair trial" was not given Mr. Sneed is to state what is most obvious to almost any casual black observer. The verdict returned in the Sneed case was not a new one that has never been transcended by the South. Sincerely, Walter W. Burgord

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## What Other Editors are Saying



From The Desk of The Editor J. Lowell Ware

## The President's Code Words

President Nixon's call last week for stepped up law and order and a hardline, get-tough policy on certain criminal acts—including restoration of the death penalty and a change of the U. S. criminal code—was confusing. Mr. Nixon denounced anyone who saw the action as signals of increased oppression and bigotry and reasoned instead that they were code words for "goodness and decency." That just won't get it. In the first place, there were other code words mentioned in the address -- airline hijackers, attackers of prison guards, perpetrators of certain other federal crimes, street corner drug pushers -- all of these were among the code words used by the chief executive which in most instances translate simply into a single word -- Blacks.

And, in another sense, all of them have traditionally been code words for pushing the brunt of the problems they represent off of the real cause -- the criminal -- and blaming and subsequently punishing instead the victims of society.

What made the law and order call most interesting was that it followed a declaration of only a week earlier that the urban crisis was over and that the quality of life was on the upswing. If this is true, why go to such drastic measures in deterring crime already apparently on the way down?

There is no consistency to the logic here. The President should make up his mind. He cannot have his cake and eat it, too.

If he wishes to believe that the urban crisis is over, so crisis oriented social services programs can be legitimately eliminated, that's one thing. But to then turn around and say that though things are getting better, they're also getting out of hand . . . well, that just doesn't make too much sense. According to Nixon logic, America will become the only state in the world where at the same time that there is a marked improvement in the quality of life, there is a corresponding improvement in the quality of death. That seems to be a total contradiction in essence and a code word for confusion.

Will the real condition of America please stand-up and be translated? The President's code words are turning into meaningless babble.

ATLANTA VOICE

## TO BE EQUAL

By VERNON JORDAN Executive Director, National Urban League

## Children In Year 2,000

A national magazine recently featured a cover story-symposium on the subject: "How Will We Raise Our Children in the Year 2000?" The participants covered a wide range of viewpoints, from social futurists to more realistic proposals. It is a subject we all ought to be thinking about since our children are our most precious natural resource.

Children need security, and that means economic security as well as the security of knowing that their parents love them. For millions of American children, such security does not exist. They go to bed with hunger in their stomachs, and they are aware at too early an age of the struggles their parents go through for the barest subsistence.

SO THE FIRST STEP IN ASSURING all children a humane existence is to end the poverty that afflicts their parents. The time is long past when one nation must recognize that it is wasting its precious future, its children, by tolerating the poverty, shame and hunger that is the lot of so many families. In effect, many such children have their childhood stolen from them as they are forced to bear burdens of responsibility at an early age. While middle-class children play with their new toys poor kids have to take care for younger siblings and have to cope with the pressures of slum living and crime-and-dope-infested neighborhoods. Is anyone doing anything at all to insure the same situation won't exist in 2000?

OUR SOCIETY MUST ALSO EVOLVE to the point where it can overcome the bigotry and narrowness so characteristic of so many areas, and imbue its children with the pluralistic experience of the many cultures that make up the world in which we live. The globe has shrunk in the past thirty years and it will shrink still further in the next three decades. Yet children today are taught to fear and to hate people of different colors and backgrounds. What are those children whose parents shut the schools of Canarsie in protest against admission of black pupils going to think of the three-fourths non-white world in which they'll have to function?

All this means that we must fashion an educational system that projects humane values, teaches the worth of the individual and of the groups that make up mankind, and acts as a corrective to the institutions in our society that encourage racial antagonism and class condescension.

TOO MANY PEOPLE COMPLACENTLY assume that schools cannot overcome the effects of the society in which they function, so if the society is racist or elitist, if it conditions people to be mindless consumers, if it discourages independent thinking, then the schools cannot rise above this. This kind of thinking has resulted in an educational system that is mind-destroying and deadening.

Schools and teachers have to see themselves as primarily concerned with the welfare of the children in their charge, and as possessing the truth and enlightenment that will overcome the limitations of the society.

WE SHOULD BECOME A NATION oriented toward its children, a nation of day-care centers, of good schools, of social justice and equal opportunities, of healthy diversity and cultural pluralism. In short, a nation unlike the one in which we still struggle for elementary human rights.

And if we hope to create a society that frees its children from the chains of racial antagonism and economic insecurity, we've got to start now. For it is not we who will raise our children in 2000—it is our children who will be raising our grandchildren. And it is our children who are now growing up in an atmosphere of regression in a country that, after a few short years of social reforms, slumped back, morally exhausted, to reneg on its promise of freedom and racial equality.

LET US PRAY THAT OUR children can overcome this bitter heritage and raise their own children to function in a more humane society.