

Robeson, Forerunner in Civil Rights



"ONE OF THE NATIONS GREATEST MEN, AN INDIVIDUAL WHOSE TIME ON EARTH HAS BEEN SPENT IN THE PER-SUIT OF JUSTICE FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS AND TOWARD THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF MEN AND WOMEN THE WORLD OVER."

EDITORIALS

Roberson--A Man Before His Time

Paul Robeson was a man before his time. When he died last month in Philadelphia, the country and the world lost a great citizen. Robeson was great primarily because of his undeviating integrity and wide range of talents. Admitted to Rutgers University at a time when black men on a major campus were a rarity, he excelled in every area, earning a Phi Beta Kappa Key in addition to becoming an all-American grid player, and a star baseball and track as well.

Recognizing the evil of racism, this sensitive, creative leader began early to speak out against Jim Crow and racial oppression even during his recitals. He saw racism for what it was when other Americans were enchanted by Hitler and Mussolini. And when he visited Socialist countries, he was impressed with what he found there and had the courage to say so. He is revered and honored in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries where schools and other buildings are named in his honor.

When Robeson urged coexistence or detente a quarter of a century ago, he was criticized and ostracized. But when arch conservative and Red-baiter Richard Nixon did the same thing in the 1970's it was hailed as a cornerstone of America's foreign policy.

Yes, during the Joseph McCarthy cold-war era, Robeson became a victim of the thoughtless hysteria. Denied the concert state in America, he was forced to decline opportunities to appear abroad by his government which seized his passport. He never overcame the vicious smear and lived out the remainder of his life in obscurity.

However bloodied his statuesque head, it remained unbowed to the end, while most Americans, even black Americans, washed their hands of him like modern-day Pontius Pilates. It's an old story that goes back 1,976 years. The continuing shame of it is that we still permit such tragedies to happen.

The Faces of the Unemployed Change

The many calls for public service jobs or employment to help in the declining economy is beginning to take on a new and changing face in the labor force as the increasing and large number of applicants seeking jobs are women and youth, both black and white.

Many people are beginning to feel that it is not only the slow stop-gap approach of the Ford Administration, by his incentives to big business and the private sector, or the policies favored by the Democratic majority in its clamor for public service jobs.

Since 1947 the increase in the number of women has grown enormously. From 16.6 million women in the immediate postwar years holding jobs, the number has now doubled to more than 37.1 million as of last year.

Where most of the women workers were approximately 45 years of age and older, after World War II, the high increase of employed women now include younger women with children of school and pre-school age. Three times as many women as men entered the labor market last year.

Of even greater concern has been the

lack of jobs for teen-agers, especially black teenagers, with the current high rate of unemployment which has tripled that of white youth.

The Civil Rights movement has made all persons more aware of job rights, women and minorities as well.

Further, white women as well as black women, now account for the high increase in women's participation in the labor force.

A permanent public service jobs program would help many of the now unemployed. It would help the millions of poor who are ill-housed, ill-fed, and ill-clothed, who often face a lack of medical care sorely needed.

For the changing faces of our labor force, and especially the teenage group without skills, a permanent Federal program in public agencies such as health, education and welfare, along with community-based organizations would render a basic service and provide some employment.

It is now a fact that women of all groups are in the labor market to stay and some planning should be advanced for this continuing trend.

The Lesson of Leadbelly

"Leadbelly," actually lived in this century. His music became legend. When he left his humble home, he carried all that he owned on his back. This included his guitar. Leadbelly hoped to sing his way into the hearts of the habitués of Shreveport's Fannin Street. He did just that with his "back country blues" ringing out from brothel and bar until hard luck caught up with him and the singer ended up on a chain gang.

From here on, the story is one of If one didn't know it already, one look at the opening scenes of "Leadbelly," the new Paramount Pictures film, tells you that the director must be someone special. That "special" person is Gordon Parks, the celebrated and talented artist who has contributed so much to photography, literature, and

film making. Because of this, reports surrounding this film about the Louisiana farm boy, who journeyed to Shreveport at the turn of the century, are disturbing. These reports are that Paramount is exhibiting something less than enthusiasm for the promotion and exploitation of the Parks film.

prejudice, hatred and hostility. The various circumstances surrounding Leadbelly's life are well woven into a sensitive film. Park's work demonstrates his own sensitivity. It has violence, but not that of the black exploitation films now glutting the market. Dope and sex are not glamorized in "Leadbelly." The film portrays the frustration of a black man attempting to buck a system that slowly tends to wear him down.

That is much of what could happen

Economic Situation For Blacks In America Not Good

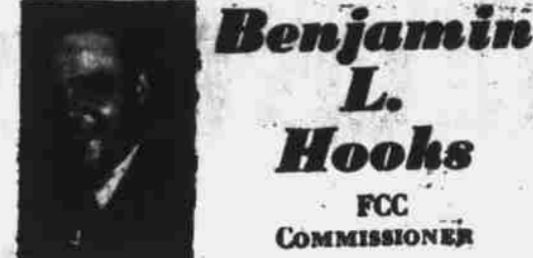
In order to become a viable community-extricating ourselves from the beggar and welfare class it seems to me we black folks will have to begin to exhibit more of the kind of disciplined determination that characterized the A. P. Giannini family in California.

In my address to the National Newspaper Publishers Association Mid-Winter Workshop in St. Thomas, recently, I alluded to this Italian immigrant family who founded a bank of its own after the dominant culture refused to lend money with which to operate their grape farms. This bank has become the largest in the world, The Bank of America.

Certainly, a set of favorable circumstances had to be operative in order for that bank to have succeeded so phenomenally - California banking laws which permits the establishment of several branch banks (taking the banks to the people); other grape growers and farmers throwing their support to this bank which seemed concerned with their needs while most established banks did not, etc.

But the most important element here, I believe, was the family's disciplined determination to make the bank a success. This kind of determined discipline is not foreign to the black community. Blacks have established some towering financial empires such as The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co. of Durham; Supreme Life in Chicago; Atlanta Life in Atlanta; and Golden State in California; Universal Life in Memphis, to name a few.

And other huge fortunes have been and are being made in publishing, newspapers and magazines; and in cosmetics, etc. But it is a shame



Benjamin L. Hooks FCC Commissioner

as Dr. Berkeley Burrell, inestimable president of the National Business League, tells us, that if we combined the total assets of our leading businesses, it is doubtful that this combined but hybrid entity could make the bottom rung of Fortune Magazine's top 500 U. S. business list.

We are truly hurting, economically. The economic situation in America is not good; for Black America it is disastrous. Whites fleeing our large cities have left behind the poorest citizens, the majority of which is black. And with their flight has gone much of the economic tax base that goes a long way toward making a city financially viable. Yet, as one observer says, as cities become black and black administrations take over the financially decaying municipalities, this is no indication that black political stewardship is faulty. More likely it means that blacks are taking over moribund cities resulting from more than 100 years of white mismanagement.

In February issue of Ebony, Chicago millionaire realtor Dempsey Travis tells how to get rich in real estate and is optimistic about decaying inner cities. He sincerely believes that new and exciting ways of renovating buildings and utilizing real estate will be the wave of the future, and that black

businessmen can and will be at the helm of this future change.

I love this kind of optimism. For it depresses me to visit city after city and find there is not one black bank with capital assets of \$100 million. I am even more depressed to discover that the small businesses blacks used to own seem to be disappearing and the goods and services black folks used to find in their communities must be sought outside their areas or in the white suburbs.

Washington, D. C., with a population of more than 700,000 that is 71 per cent black, has one of the highest literacy rates in the world among blacks, yet it is a depressing example in respect to blacks not utilizing their enormous majority to effect economic change.

Of course, we are just a little more than 100 years removed from chattel slavery; certainly white racism is a cruel and oppressive abattoir around our necks. But there is also the matter of free will.

I remember hearing this story when I was growing up in Memphis, Tenn. A mother dressed her young son in a fancy new brown suit and sent him to play with a warning, "don't fall in the mud." A short time later she looked out the window and saw that not only had he fallen in a mud puddle but he was flopping around in it. She brought him into the house and whaled the daylight out of him declaring: "This whippin' ain't for falling in the mud, but for wallowing in it."

We blacks should take a cue: nobody in our community is to blame for our past misery; but it is nobody's fault but our own if we allow this past to shackle efforts to improve our lives.(NNPA)

Sabotaging Unemployed Homeowners

TO BE EQUAL

By VERNON E. JORDAN

Executive Director National Urban League

The obvious choice would be to take HUD on. Mortgagees have little incentive to advance money; they could probably make more by foreclosing. In the case of mortgages already insured by HUD, a lender could get back almost all the money due by foreclosing since HUD will pay him. Again, no incentive not to foreclose.

What this means is that for the program to work, HUD would have to put out the money to keep unemployed homeowners afloat. In the case of homes already insured by HUD, the government would have to pay anyway if the mortgagee forecloses. For such homes, it makes even more sense for HUD to lend the homeowner his monthly payments. Even if it saves only a small percentage of such homes, HUD will wind up way ahead in costs since it would have to pay out much more in the case of foreclosure.

Despite this, HUD officials have written

regulations that make it unlikely for the emergency loan program to work.

For one thing, the loans would be triggered only if the overall delinquency rate goes to 1.20 percent, a level never reached in our history. Even then, the Secretary has the option not to start the program.

Another regulation says that the direct loans to the homeowners will be made only when the mortgage can't make an emergency loan. That effectively strips homeowners of the option Congress carefully gave them. [These and other regulations suggest that HUD will never implement an emergency law Congress passed in the best interests of the nation to save the homes of people who have lost their jobs in this Depression.

HUD has moved to strengthen its monitoring of the way federally insured mortgages service homeowners and that's a step forward.

But it is no substitute for immediate implementation of the Emergency Homeowners' Relief Act.

All too often Congress passes a law, appropriates money, and then has its intentions frustrated by the way the law is interpreted or enforced by the relevant Department. This is a good case in point.

Homeowners who qualify for aid under the Act now find the law is meaningless for their needs. They're asking HUD why they can't get emergency aid.

Perhaps they ought to be asking their Congressman why the law is not being implemented.

Brother, Can You Spare A Dime? ?

Congressman

Hawkins'

Column



Roosevelt created an economic atmosphere in which business began to rejuvenate its plants, borrow money, increase productivity, put people to work, develop payrolls, and sell its goods.

For those who couldn't find jobs in the private sector, Roosevelt created jobs in the public sector.

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The construction industry boomed. Dams, hospitals, schools and other public buildings were built.

Art flourished. Artists produced great works, writers wrote, musicians created and performed. Americans looked to their historic past and recorded it, thus leaving an invaluable legacy of our heritage.

People began to hope because it was possible for hope to exist and for dreams to be realized.

There's a lesson in all of this, which so far has totally escaped President Ford.

He agrees with Herbert Hoover, and therefore he has developed an iron willed pig-headedness about what's good for America.

But the Ford plan for America is not good for what ails America, simply because the Ford plan means that the hopelessness and despair of the thirties will continue through the seventies.

America deserves better. I keep saying, we need a change in the White House - it's truer now than ever.

And I don't mean Ronnie-baby!

Things You Should Know

Daniel Hale WILLIAMS

1858 - 1931

BORN IN HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA. HE MOVED TO JAMESVILLE, WISCONSIN. HIS FATHER DIED LEAVING A LARGE FAMILY IN POVERTY. WILLIAMS ENTERED MEDICAL SCHOOL AT NORTH-WESTERN UNIV. HE GRADUATED IN 1885, BUT STAYED THERE AS AN ANATOMY INSTRUCTOR. IN 1891 HE FOUNDED FREEDMAN HOSPITAL IN CHICAGO, HELPING TO SET UP THE FIRST TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NEGRO NURSES. LATER, PRESIDENT GROVER CLEVELAND APPOINTED HIM TO HEAD FREEDMAN HOSPITAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

