

'Sons of Bakke' Attacked

NAACP Opposes Webber, Sears Suits

By John W. Templeton
Staff Writer

The national NAACP has launched a head-on attack against what some are calling the "Sons of Bakke," two suits which have the potential of upsetting the concept of affirmative action as a remedy for past discrimination.

The legal actions are the Webber vs. Kaiser suit, to be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court this week, and a class action suit by Sears, Roebuck and Company against the entire federal anti-discrimination apparatus.

Paul Brock, NAACP spokesman in New York, said the Webber case "could leave affirmative action in rags." He termed the Sears suit "the wrong case at the wrong time."

Webber is a white man who has charged he was discriminated against by Kaiser Aluminum Company when he was refused admittance to a special training program for minorities. The NAACP and other civil rights groups have filed friend of the court briefs in defense of affirmative action in this case.

Sears, the nation's largest retailer, has filed a class action suit on behalf of all retailers with more than 15 employees. The firm charges the federal government with "restricting the employment opportunities of American citizens" through past government preferences for veterans and uncoordinated and contradictory civil rights enforcement.

Plaintiffs in the suit include the Attorney General, Secretary of Labor, Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, Secretary of Commerce and six other federal officials or agencies with civil rights enforcement responsibilities.

Sears alleges that the government created an unbalanced work force by giving educational preferences and other benefits to veterans who were predominantly white and male, and is now attempting to hold employers responsible for discrimination.

The suit came after an EEOC finding that Sears had restricted blacks and Hispanics to lower paying jobs, and had failed to hire minorities in certain stores in proportion to their rate of application.

While the Sears suit is couched in an appealing factual manner, we are not misled," said Brock. "This is an unwarranted frontal attack on the entire apparatus for dealing with discrimination."

Brock said the lack of coordination complained of by Sears had been addressed by the Civil Rights Reorganization Act of 1978, which clarified authority for civil rights enforcement.

The NAACP spokesman dismissed the suit as a "public relations ploy," but said that the NAACP would likely join the case if the federal government is not able to have the suit dismissed.



Rep. Mitchell

S. Africa

Inquiry Sought

WASHINGTON - Rep. Parren J. Mitchell (D - Md.), a long time foe of South Africa's apartheid system, has called upon the Congress to investigate allegations that South Africa sought to bribe American officials. The alleged bribe attempts were linked to efforts to have American officials ignore or go soft on the apartheid system.

Mitchell has written the Chairman of the International Relations Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate. In both letters, the Maryland Congressman called for public disclosure of any information relating to the allegations made by Eschel M. Rhodie to the effect that the bribery scheme was a part of the South Africa Information Ministry's secret projects which were approved by former Prime Minister John Vorster in 1974.

Press Urged to Fight Backlash

By Harry Amana
Special to the Chronicle

CHAPEL HILL - Robert Williams, 53-year-old North Carolina activist of the 1950s whose call for armed self defense led to attacks which forced him into exile to Cuba and China, called on the Black press this weekend to "fire up its courage" and lead the fight against "Bakkeism" and the "tip toe journalism" that characterizes too much of the writing of today's Black journalists.

Williams, former editor

of the Crusader, spoke Saturday to a group of journalism students, educators and Black newspeople at the Governor's Inn in the Research Triangle as the keynote speaker at a Black press workshop sponsored by the Southeastern Black Press Institute of the University of North Carolina.

Williams said the Black press has been considered "subversive and provocative by the white power structure. Blacks subscribed to it at the peril of live and limb."

Black journalists must

"re-educate and unbrainwash our people," Williams said. "Time is running out. We cannot wait for a Savior. Our leadership must be collective."

Williams said the country now suffers from a dearth of quality Black leadership which has "cast its lot with (Jimmy Carter) the peanut man and peanuts is all we can expect."

We must take all the blame, he said. "I, for one, plead guilty that my generation has failed to pass on the mantle of our recent history and struggle to the present generation."

"There are young girls who live within blocks of Mrs. Rosa Parks and they think she lived in the days of Harriet Tubman."

Williams, who fled the country in 1961 after organizing self defense militia units in Monroe County to protect residents against KKK attacks, did not return to this country until 1969 after living for two years in Cuba and six years in China. Things are too different in the U.S. today, he said.

"After a few too meager civil rights gains were made, just like some Jews thought they had it made in Hitler's Germany," said Williams who then turned his attention to the topic of the workshop: "Can the Black press defeat the S.O.B. - the Sons of Bakke?"

The Black press is especially needed today, he said, because Blacks find themselves under "the

menacing clouds of Bakkeism...which call for the forces of reaction to rally for an all-out assault on the Black Man's survival."

Williams said Black Americans could learn a lesson from the Chinese. At the entrance to a park in China, Williams said, a weather-beaten sign still stands which says "no dogs or Chinese allowed," the British had put it there.

"The Chinese had preserved it for their young generation to see and to know what their past had been. When the Jim Crow signs came down in this country, we did not preserve a single one for our posterity," Williams said. "Now the same ill wind blows our way again and our youth are ill prepared to cope with it."

Williams concluded that the "alternative to violence" in America is "fast narrowing...It is one minute to zero. Our Black journals can again become our voice and thunder our demands and aspirations to the whole world."

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U.S. Regulations Knocked

TUSKEGEE, Ala. - State and federal regulations are hampering the development of water and sewer systems in predominately black localities in the South, said participants in the Water and Sewer Policy Board meeting of the National Conference of Black Mayors.

J. Stanley Alexander, coordinator of the conference's National Demonstration Water Project, said "State and federal regulations and requirements should be simplified to help towns provide basic water and sewer services to their constituents."

"The unhealthy conditions which exist in many communities could be eliminated with more cooperation between federal and state officials on funding criteria for water and sewer systems in rural towns," Alexander added.

Grambling, La. Mayor, Andrew K. Mansfield, said, "Blacks are experiencing serious problems in obtaining public financing of water and/or sewer systems. Many predominately black towns don't have an adequate water supply to sustain a healthy community environment."

Mansfield, elected chairman of the board at its February meeting, said the group will study those regulations which impede the development of water and sewer systems in rural towns.

The National Conference of Black Mayors represents 171 mayors, mostly from small Southern towns.

Plan Shows Growth

DURHAM, N.C. - Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina reports that its plans protected a third of North Carolina's population during 1978.

The statewide health service organization ended 1978 with a total enrollment of 970,427 subscribers, a net gain of 41,124 over 1977. Including dependents, this brought the total number of persons protected by the Plan at year's end to 1,925,223 or 33.7 percent of the state's total population.

During 1978, the Plan paid 3,213,055 claims for its participants, exceeding \$375 million in total benefits. While claims paid increased over the previous year by almost 400,000, the average cost of processing them was decreased by four percent. The increased claims were processed in an average of 13.5 calendar days at an accuracy level of 96.4 percent.

Benefits paid for Medicare part A--which BCBSNC administers for the Social Security Administration in North Carolina--exceeded \$350 million. Combined benefits paid for underwritten and government administered programs topped \$726 million, up 14 percent from 1977.

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