

# Editorials & Comments

## Give Crime Victims A Break!

There is no doubt that most Americans regard crime as the most significant problem facing the country today. Recent public opinion polls have indicated that millions of Americans are even more concerned about crime than they are about the economy. By the same token, the most serious aspect of the crime problem is the hard-core repeater. A recent study has shown that about 90 per cent of all adults imprisoned for serious crimes have been jailed at least once before.

Time Magazine in a recent cover story on crime pointed out that many repeat offenders are on parole or probation at the time of re-arrest. "One man in Houston," Time stated, "was arrested for theft and released 11 times in 18 months without ever going to trial." Another study showed that 627 out of 10,000 young people in Philadelphia became chronic offenders, responsible for two-thirds of all violent crimes committed in the city by those 10,000 persons over an eight-year period.

How is this problem to be solved? Obviously, both the problem and the solution are extremely complicated and cannot be covered in a brief editorial. Nevertheless, U. S. Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) recently introduced a comprehensive piece of legislation-S. 1880 (the Violent Crime and Repeat Offender Act of 1975)- which could provide some of the answers. Among other things the bill includes the following provisions:

- It limits the availability of small, easily hidden handguns.
- It provides mandatory penalties for the commission of crimes involving guns.
- It provides mandatory penalties for the illegal purchase of guns by persons with criminal records.

Guest editorial - The Philadelphia Tribune

## Too Many Crimes Committed By Blacks Against Blacks

Recent reports from the Charlotte Police Department cited the high degree of crime against persons and properties in the Black communities. According to the report, these crimes were committed by Blacks against Blacks. Since it is not a problem caused by someone or something outside the Black community, the cause must be within the Black community.

The Post believe that cause to be fear, along with a lack of concern for fellow community members. A criminal cannot exist within a community whose members have decided to be without crime. A criminal can exist within a community only when he is allowed to do so.

Each member of the Black community must be made aware of the fact that when the average community member is afraid to check, or question another community member, then criminal activity will have a high rate of occurrence also when the average community mem-

-It includes mandatory sentences for gun dealers who knowingly sell guns to convicted felons.

-It provides that licensed gun distributors or sellers must report all gun thefts.

-It provides mandatory penalties for the sale of firearms for illicit interstate purposes.

-It requires mandatory prison sentences for the manufacture, distribution or sale of heroin and morphine.

-It establishes as a Federal crime the robbery of a drug store for the purpose of obtaining dangerous, addictive drugs.

Once upon a time, such a Bill might have been severely criticized by white liberals and Blacks as a "law and order" attempt to punish poverty-stricken youths with no attempt to rehabilitate them. However, more and more people, both Black and white, are coming to realize that the victims of these youths are also poverty-stricken individuals who are entitled to a great deal more protection and consideration than they have received up to now.

Speaking about the Birch Bayh bill, former president judge of Common Pleas Court D. Donald Jamieson recently said, "Uniformity and certainty of punishment for the repeat offender and for the robber who risks another's life by using a gun, is what the public wants. It is also right. The public is entitled to be protected from the multiple and would-be violent offender by taking such individuals off the street."

Giving such multiple-offenders a "slap on the wrist" is merely to encourage them to commit more crimes. It's about time the victims of crime got a break.



## Dues Owed Black Press

By Benjamin L. Hooks  
FCC Commissioner  
Special To The Post

One of the more significant speeches made recently in respect to the importance of the Black Press working in harmony with the black community was that of Carlton B. Goodlett's before a workshop media panel of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Dr. Goodlett, who is publisher of the San Francisco Sun-Reporter and president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a consortium of black newspapers, stressed the historic importance of the role played by the Black Press in keeping alive a sense of community among America's oppressed blacks.

But Dr. Goodlett was not content to rest his case on history. His aim was far more aggressive and bold. He laid down a challenge to the Congressional Black Caucus and black political officials everywhere in the U. S., that it is, indeed, "time for black officials to pay their dues" to black people an their communications instrument, the Black Press.

"If they fail to pay these dues, and the black community should band together and rid the community of these black officials who play the safe rules of the game by not rocking the boat and following orders of their white masters."

Said he: "From this day on, the NNPA is going to demand that its member papers start telling it like it is without fear or favor. The Black Press has been a light in the darkness for years and now that a few selected blacks are getting a little coverage in white papers and on radio and television, let's not get cocky and turn our backs on the Black Press."

One of my constant themes in talks to groups, young and old, male

and female, is: "Don't forget from whence you came." Indeed, I have taken a vow that I would not permit Potomac Fever (ambition for power and the good life of Washington, D.C.) to cloud my vision, mute my efforts for or stay my hand in the round-the-clock struggle for equality and justice for blacks and other minorities. In short, I will never forget from whence I came.

Mrs. Coretta Scott King, widow of our beloved martyr, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., recently observed that there are some folks who seriously believe that a politician cannot be both moral and a politician. She says she does not subscribe to that view and points to Rep. Walter Fauntroy of Washington, D. C., and Rep. Andrew Young of Georgia as cases in point, and adds there are others.

To say that both are ministers is to beg the question. For both are politicians as well and, as Bill Strickland a fellow of the Institute of the Black World said recently in Black World Magazine, "Blacks...have a different legacy."

We belong to the tradition of America's victims, a tradition which has given us a particular angle of vision largely at odds with America, a tradition which has led to the repudiation, ridicule, exile and assassination of our prophets by a society determined to deny the validity of their vision and the truth of our history."

He adds, however, that this "black vision has survived. It has sustained us throughout the years, anchoring us in a reality far different from Dick and Jane's, and protecting us, when we have let it, from the most dangerous fantasies America has had about itself."

## TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

## Amnesty Still An Issue

The Presidential Clemency Board, created a year ago to help Vietnam war resisters clear their records, is no longer in existence.

My experience as a member of that Board had a great influence on my thinking about how best to heal the scars left by the war in Vietnam.

When I was appointed to the Board, I agreed with its basic mission—to sift the records of war resisters, deserters and others and recommend alternate civilian service to earn Presidential clemency.

It didn't take too many weeks of service for me to see that there was a lot more to it. The conventional image of the spoiled rich kid who ran away to Canada to beat the draft just didn't hold true for most cases.

The great majority of cases before the Board involved young people who were denied their rights as conscientious objectors, who deserted for compelling personal reasons unrecognized by their superior officers, or who simply should never have been drafted to begin with.

The typical case involved someone who was poor, not rich; who was victimized by arbitrary and unfair rulings by his officer, or who could not articulate the views that got other, better educated young men, deferments.

Most were individuals who were helplessly caught up in the snares of a giant bureaucracy and, rightly or wrongly, chose to escape their situation in ways that the law defined as illegal. Not a few cases involved men who had served at the front and only after returning to the U. S. or Europe, deserted for personal reasons.

And we only got a fraction of the cases still on the books. Many men just didn't believe their resistance to an immoral war was wrong, and refused to apply for clemency. Others resented having to do alternate service, feeling they'd already paid their dues by being forced underground for such a long time.

So while the Board is no longer in existence, amnesty is still a hot issue; the hovering in the background of the discussions about clemency is the universal realization that the War was wrong.

It's time to finally end the war by declaring complete, immediate, universal and unconditional amnesty. In my year on the Board I learned that the case-by-case treatment just won't work. Let's wipe the slate clean and end the war still being waged against the draft resisters and offenders.

While most of the public's attention has been focused on 50,000 or so war resisters, total amnesty should include the more than 200,000 Vietnam-era veterans who hold less than honorable discharges, which amount to lifetime penalties keeping them from government and many private sector jobs, and from rights and benefits enjoyed by other veterans.

Bad discharges carry penalties absurdly inappropriate to the real or imagined offenses, often minor, that have sometimes been imposed for racially-inspired reasons. They continue to dog the lives of men who did serve and who risked their lives only to be busted out of the service for a host of reasons that would earn no penalty at all in a civilian setting.

The system is rigged against these men from the start. The discharge process is shot through with abuses of servicemen's rights and many bad discharges are given unfairly.

## as i see it

### Smiles, Talk, Much Money Lure Black Voters

By Sidney Moore Jr.  
Post Staff Writer

Many smiles, much talk and a lot of money was used to try to lure black voters to the polls during recently held city elections.

Those voters that came must feel some sense of accomplishment as their votes played a great part in the election of Harvey Gantt to city council and John Belk to the office of mayor.

Apparently, these voters feel candidate Robert "Bob" Walton has got to pay his political dues before they allow him the honor of their vote. So when the time comes, no doubt he will bask in the lime light of political success.

So now that the big show is over, the black voter will probably forget about politics until the next time they see the many smiles, much talk and results of the lot of money politicians will use in the next contest.

For black folks, it would seem, politics is like Sunday afternoon football. It is a spectator sport between superstars played in the arena of public consciousness.

Being young, I imagine there was a time when there was no National Football League. There was probably no television and the word spectator was very seldom used.

It would seem to me that in such an environment, people found many ways to entertain themselves. Most people at that time probably found ways to enjoy working, since most of their time was likely spent doing ordinary common everyday chores.

It is apparently an indication of how things change when you note that a word like chore, which was once used very often is now seldom used and that word spectator is now used constantly. Maybe this language thing would tell us much more about ourselves



Sidney Moore Jr.

and each other if we really took the time to listen.

But listening and reading and communicating are sports that must be participated in to be enjoyable. So before we get

involved in things that will make us have to work or understand to enjoy, we would rather find some means to be entertained. That way we can enjoy life, as a spectator as we imagine the rich folks do.

While we occupy our senses with rubbish, the rich and the powerful, smile, talk much and spend money to tell us that we are able to enjoy our spectacular lives because we have the right to vote for those who will represent us in government.

They tell us constantly of our democratic rights, so much so until we begin to think that we are doing our parts by simply watching what they do in the powerful seats of business, commerce industry and government. In fact, we think our only political actions in life are to vote. We fail to realize that our every action—in our homes, churches, schools, wherever—is political.

For politics is a means by

which we enable ourselves to keep order within groups. The kind of group does not matter. Chances are if you know church politics you can successfully speak about public policy issues. The principles of politics are universal in their use although styles are different.

Mankind developed politics to enable himself to do things an individual could not do alone. Such things and hunting for large animals to feed a tribe is an example.

A sport like football is political. Two teams vie for territory (yardage) under a set of rules. The process by which physical actions in football were allowed or disallowed was political. In each game, the acceptance of the authority of the referees to call the play is recognized because of the political process under which the rules of the game were written.

So even as a spectator, one cannot escape the workings of

politics in our society. We can imagine that as individuals and groups that the everyday burdens of survival can be left to someone else to decide, but sooner or later we will feel the effect of that other person's decisions.

Watergate, recently CIA revelations and the many other complexities our society now faces is an example of what happens when someone else is allowed to decide the future. So between now and the next time, it would seem the black voter in Charlotte and elsewhere has his job cut out for him.

The next time we see the smiles, hear the talk and are exposed to the effects of election money, maybe we will know what to do.

Note: I would like to extend my personal thanks to the many people who said they enjoyed last week's column.

**THE CHARLOTTE POST**  
"THE PEOPLES NEWSPAPER"  
Established 1918  
By A. M. Houston  
Published Every Thursday  
By The Charlotte Post Publishing Co., Inc.  
9139 Trinity Road - Charlotte, N. C. 28216  
Telephones (704) 392-1306 - 392-1307  
Circulation 11,000

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57 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

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Second Class Postage Paid at  
Charlotte, N. C. under the Act of March 3, 1878

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