

# Editorials & Comments

## Its Our Bicentennial Too

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
Post Staff Writer

As we stand at the threshold of our nation's 200th birthday, debate continues over whether blacks should participate in the Bicentennial celebration.

For example, in a message to Black Americans during this, the Bicentennial year, over 100 educators, students, workers, professionals and several national black organizations, including the National Newspaper Publishers Association-Black Press of America, issued a "Declaration Against Imperialism."

The message and declaration suggest that since the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution ignored the fact of human bondage, blacks had "nothing to celebrate then - and there is little to celebrate now."

Furthermore, the anti-imperialism declaration quotes Frederick Douglass from a speech delivered on July 4, 1853 when he said, "What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham..."

The POST agrees that the Bicentennial is a reminder of black enslavement in 1776, the abandonment of Reconstruction in 1876, and the continued existence of economic and political discrimination and exploitation against blacks in 1976. However, the POST does not agree that these are reasons for ignoring the "sham" or having "little to celebrate" in this year of the nation's 200th birthday. For blacks to ignore the "Fourth" or feel that they have "little to celebrate" would be to deny a significant part of our nation's history - the contributions of blacks.

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., of the National Urban League articulated this when he said, "The Bicentennial offers us the occasion to educate the nation - and our own children - to the extraordinary role black people have played in building America. It was black musclepower that built the roads and toted the cotton and provided the basis for America's economic predominance. It was black brainpower that, in the face of obstacles unknown to other peoples, forged new discoveries in science, medicine, architecture and other basic fields. And it was black willpower that overcame discriminatory barriers and is today continuing to mark out a new place for black people in this nation. Ours is a past in which we may take great pride..."

Opting out of the Bicentennial would close to us the opportunity to use it for our own ends."

Furthermore, the POST believes that without black enthusiasm for the Bicentennial - in terms of its own achievements - there will be little motivation to study the issues raised

in the "Declaration Against Imperialism."

We would suggest too, that any introduction of the larger black community to the anti-imperialism declaration should begin with a basic introduction to Western economic analysis and concepts and, more specifically, to American capitalism - an is that by its very nature has continues to exploit black Americans.

### Average Americans

We make this suggestion for three reasons. First, the average American - black or white - does not "understand economics well enough to have intelligent opinions about inflation, tariffs - or even the purchase of a new car..." wrote former N.C. Governor Luther Hodges Sr. some years ago. Secondly, the historical sins of omission has enabled few people to understand that the American economic system has been built largely on a stand that the American economic system has been built largely on a foundation of African exploitation and the sweat and blood of black slaves.

Lastly, and particularly in the context of the subject of imperialism, blacks need to understand that Western economic analysis or American capitalism is very limited in its ability to provide solutions to the economic problems of the undeveloped nations of Africa as well as the ghettos of black America.

Finally, a recognition of the Bicentennial reminds us that in 1776 frustration and bitterness gripped the American people just as it does in 1976. Revolutionary Era Americans were disenchanted with their government and the prevailing economic system, they wanted change. Contemporary Americans too are disenchanted and they want change.

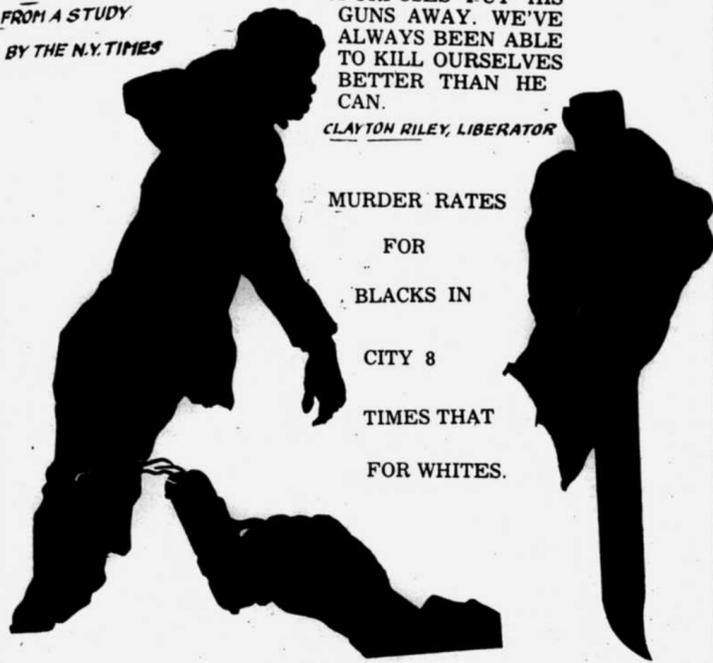
Change, as we see it, implies the need for a new ism, an ism that is neither capitalism nor socialism but one that may have some characteristics of each. In any event, the news ism must have the qualities that will allow for the elimination of imperialism - both foreign and domestic - and be able to deal effectively with economic and social injustice in any form.

The significance of the new ism is that white America of the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism is so absorbed in the partial truisms of the past, and the fantasies of the present, that it cannot accept the death of capitalism - an ism that has made America but cannot sustain America with its increasing concentrations of economic power and racial discrimination.

Yes, whether we like it or not, destiny and the invisible hand of time have made this our Bicentennial too.

66 percent of murders in 17 cities committed by blacks killing blacks.

FROM A STUDY  
BY THE N.Y. TIMES



WHITEY COULD, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES PUT HIS GUNS AWAY. WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO KILL OURSELVES BETTER THAN HE CAN.

CLAYTON RILEY, LIBERATOR

MURDER RATES FOR BLACKS IN CITY 8 TIMES THAT FOR WHITES.

## Helping To Resue "The Black Presence"

# Letters to the Editor

### Hunger Strike Continuation Of Spiritual Fast

Reverend Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.  
Wilmington, N.C. 10, Codependant  
North Carolina State Central Prison Hospital  
835 W. Morgan Street  
Raleigh, N.C. 17603  
June 14, 1976

"Continuation of Spiritual Fast and Political Hunger Strike For Justice and Human Rights"

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the thousands of supporters across the United States and from around the world who have sent letters, telegrams, and messages of solidarity to me as I continue to fast for justice and strike for human rights for all oppressed peoples.

Today marks the forty-fifth (45th) day that I have not eaten food in a non-violent moral effort to awaken the sleeping masses of Black and poor people to the ever increasing necessity to struggle against racism in all of its many forms.

Initially I began to fast on April 30, 1976 to protest the cruel and unusual treatment I was receiving from the N.C. Department of Corrections. The prison officials sought to isolate and punish me for political reasons - the officials feared that I would help fellow prisoners seek their human rights at Caledonia Prison Farm in Tillery, N. Carolina, consequently I was transferred to the State Prison Sanatorium, McCain Prison, in Mc-



Cain, N.C. Because of the unhealthy environment at McCain and after I found a large roach in my food for the second time I gave notice that I would not eat food until I would be transferred to a regular prison unit. On June 1, 1976, I finally was transferred away from McCain Prison Sanatorium to Central Prison. I consider the transfer a significant victory.

However, there is a greater need to further expose the reality of gross racial injustice in the United States even as we are in the midst of a

Bi-Centennial celebration.

Therefore my conscience compels me to continue fasting to emphasize and dramatize the following:

- a.) Freedom for all U.S. Political Prisoners in 1976.
- b.) Support for the Wilmington N.C. Community Involvement Commission's Black Freedom Festival, July 4, 1976.
- c.) Support for Dick Gregory's National cross-country "Run to End Hunger".
- d.) Support the National March for Human Rights and Labor Rights September 6, 1976 in Raleigh, N.C.
- e.) A call for universal love and peace among all peoples and nations.

I will continue to fast as long as I can. Only through constant struggle will the Wilmington Ten, the Charlotte Three and other political prisoners be rendered justice.

We shall overcome.  
Sincerely,  
Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.  
Central Prison Hospital  
Raleigh, N. C.

### Ms. Owens Seeks Lost Mother

To the Editor:  
I am writing to call on the people of Charlotte for help in locating my mother. She was last heard of in your city.

Her maiden name was Ruby Lee Mayo and she was originally from Lynchburg, Virginia. She was married to my father, James Weatherall, in 1945 or 1946. They were divorced in 1951 and she returned to the east coast. She later married a Mr. Weddington and

lived in Charlotte, N.C. after leaving California.

It has been 25 years since I have seen her, and I was only an infant. I do not wish to disrupt her life, only to establish communication with her. I ask that anyone recognizing her name or who has any information, please contact me.

Sharon Weatherall Owens  
607 So. Pine St. Apt. D  
Santa Maria, CA 93454

# as i see it

## Sports Have Changed Very Little Through The Years

By Gerald O. Johnson  
Post Staff Writer

According to Funk and Wagnalls Standard Edition Dictionary that word "Sport" means that which amuses in general. Well, today there is very little amusing about sports. In fact most of today's action in sports occurs in courts and not in the playing arena.

But what is amusing about sports is that very little has changed from days gone by and today.

Journey back with me if you will to those thrilling days of yesteryear when sports was as much of a racket then as it is now.

During the days of the Roman empire we had gladiators playing the role of athletes. The King acted out the part of our current day team owners. Of course the commoners played themselves...fans; just like today. The game was "kill". Every gladiator would be given a weapon and they would fight to the death. This made it easy to pick an all star team at the end of a season.

The pay for gladiators was food and a pseudo freedom.

Gladiators were slaves. Hence, they lived better than

other slaves while they lived. Eventually, when the gladiators were fed up with the self centered attitude for the King they would revolt. They would unite the slaves against the King's army.

Then, as now, the fan suffered through all of this.

Well, today the revolt takes on a passive role in the form of the players association. When players get fed up with the owner's self centered ways they take them to court.

The players are fighting for individual rights. The owners are fighting for self preservation. The consequence is an uneventful season.

The players refuse to play, the owners refuse to pay, the spectators have nothing to say.

The problem with sports today is it is a big business. Big business is not amusing.

Big business operates for profit not amusement.

Since athletes are no longer in slavery, another means of payment has to be conceived. Of course what this means is a paycheck. This is the modern



day means of making individuals compete to the death.

In the Roman days to pay a gladiator with food and a non-servant life wasn't to expensive.

But a paycheck!!! That's a different story. Present day owners have to pay present day gladiators cold cash.

Therefore owners made spectators pay to see the sport.

But spectators having to pay for the sport decided to pay for seeing only winning teams.

The owner, therefore, was forced to produce winning teams. To produce winning

teams the owner selected the best athletes he could find. Unfortunately for the owner good athletes are limited. Hence, all owners seek the same limited number of athletes.

Fortunately for the good athletes, good athletes are limited. Realizing their worth good athletes placed a high price tag on themselves. Eventually, all of the best players would be playing for one of two teams, that could afford the price tag.

This led to the draft and the hiring of a commissioner to oversee the league.

This organizational tactic was to eliminate the possibility of one team purchasing all of the best athletes. It was suppose to help equalize all of the teams in the league.

The league organization was good for the owner, and good for the spectator, but not so good for the athlete. The organization did away with much of his bargaining power.

It put him in the power of the owner. The owner could basically use the athlete as he saw fit. This was indeed how Kings used gladiators.

The athletes realizing that individually they were ruined,

# TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

## Blacks, The Bicentennial

July 4th finally upon us, the culmination of the months-old Bicentennial build-up largely devoid of content.

It's too bad, because flag-waving isn't enough, rampant commercialism that wraps products in red, white and blue, isn't enough, and pious declarations of a mythical past just aren't enough.

A proper Bicentennial observance would re-examine the ideals that led to the founding of his nation and the gap between those ideals and the reality of today. And a Bicentennial should be a time of national debate to formulate goals for the next century.

Very little of this kind of national self-examination has taken place. The old myths have been reinforced and the hypocrisy that was so blatant in our past and is so strong today has largely gone unchallenged.

It is almost forgotten that the Founding Fathers included a disproportionate number of slaveholders, including Jefferson, the man who wrote the immortal words of the Declaration of Independence: "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Small wonder then, that an Englishman of the period complained "How is it we hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the drivers of Negroes?"

The hypocrisy Samuel Johnson castigated continued as blacks were enslaved for almost the first hundred years of the nation's history and kept in peonage and second-class citizenship since then. Even the precious right to vote was denied blacks in the South until passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

But this does not dim the truth of the words enshrined in the Declaration, it only testifies to the immoralities of the men who shaped our constantly changing society. And it should not blind us to the tremendous impact the American Revolution has had on the world.

The Revolution fought for ideas of equality and for government based on the consent of the governed inspired the world-wide movement toward greater freedom and justice and today is an inspiration even to those revolutionaries in colonial countries whom our government has opposed.

Today, it is black people who have largely opted out of the nonsensical empty celebrations of the Bicentennial and instead have directed America's attention to its unfinished business, of construction a third century of national life built on the noble promises of 1776.

The way to celebrate the Bicentennial is with full employment, not firecrackers, with racial equality, not patriotic songs, and with social justice, not Fourth of July marches.

The Bicentennial could have been a truly constructive national experience and if it fails in that regard, it's not because black people did not try to make it one. This is the year the flag was used as a weapon in a racist attack on black men in Boston. It should have been the year the flag became a symbol of the one nation on earth to end poverty and racism.

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