

Editorials & Comments

What Price Energy Conservation?

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

After the long awaited announcement concerning a proposed comprehensive energy policy, President Carter launched a drive for the program's acceptance. He said, "Our solutions must ask equal sacrifices from every region, every class of people, every interest group." Carter's apparently strong commitment to this policy and his sincerity in asking "equal sacrifices" caused him to predict accurately that his own popularity would drop by at least 10 percent.

While many consumer advocate groups are generally satisfied with the energy proposal, they contend that the plan probably contains some inequities in spite of Carter's claim of "equal sacrifices." The apparent inequities in the plan have caused some to believe that the somewhat difficult to understand energy proposal will affect middle to lower income groups the most. Since these are the income levels that most blacks are in, what does the energy plan mean for their pocket-books?

First, the energy plan calls for taxing fuel cost. This includes a standby tax on gasoline that could gradually raise taxes by 5-cents per gallon beginning in 1979 and reaching 50-cents by 1988 if the nation failed to meet the goal of a 10 percent reduction in consumption. The inequity arises in the fact that 60 percent of all gasoline used in transportation is used to transport

people to and from their places of employment. This means that those dependent on their automobiles will be hurt the most.

Secondly, tax credits will be given to those who insulate or weather strip their homes. Is this fair to the person who simply cannot afford the \$500 plus cost to weather-strip?

Thirdly, some energy experts contend, and we agree, that the proposal's tax structure is inherently regressive, that is, it takes more money proportionately from the lower income groups.

Furthermore, the energy package might be questioned because it lacks any emphasis on improved public transportation as a conservation move.

Finally, to off-set these apparent disproportionate tax burdens on certain income groups, Carter proposes to use the estimated \$50 billion per year (by 1980) tax revenue to deliver on his campaign commitments to welfare and tax reform. While we hate to see a delay in these desperately needed reforms, we recognize the significance of the need for energy conservation and therefore the general acceptance of the President's energy plan. We trust that all Americans will see the wisdom in Carter's energy program because it represents the first attempt at a long overdue energy policy. More significantly, the sacrifices and costs we need to accept now are meager compared to what they will be if we continue our wasteful energy consumption habits as we have in the past.

"Roots" Symbolism Of History

Since the beginning of recorded events, societies, ethnic and religious groups have used history as an instrument for instilling loyalties, pride, cultural awareness and civic responsibilities within their inhabitants. Alex Haley's legendary work "Roots" undoubtedly is the most recent confirmation of this meaning of historical events. Therefore, there is reason for concern when two apparently respected black writers have attempted to tarnish Haley's contribution by accusing him of plagiarism and faulty research.

Since Haley labored 12 years to research and write his book, we won't dignify the pathetic allegations of plagiarism by commenting further on the point. However, the charges do cause us to think more deeply about the meaning of history.

"Roots," like Lerone Bennett's "Before the Mayflower" and Walter Rodney's "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa," has contributed to an ending of the "white conspiracy" evidenced in the distortions, omissions and myths that have appeared in American history and have created a sense of inferiority,

frustration and a lack of self identity among black people. Such distortions have arisen, historian Robert Daniels has written, because too often "the writing of national history has been chauvinistic, justifying that nation's achievements and ambitions and glossing over or explaining away its shortcomings and failures."

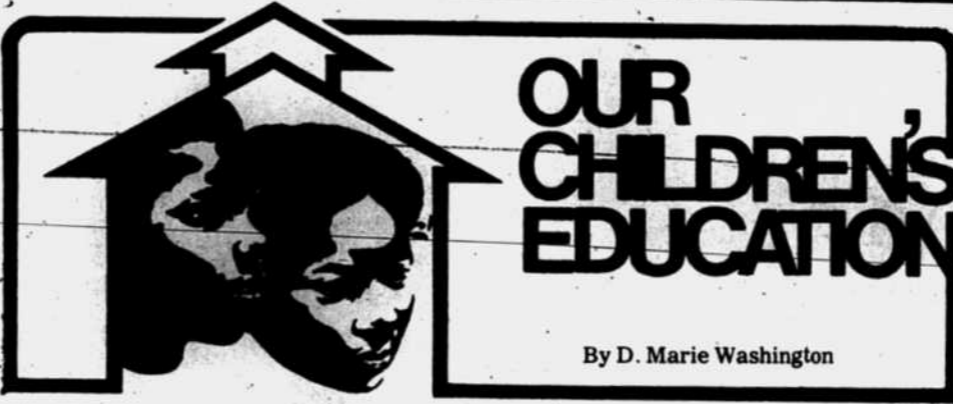
Haley's search for his roots cut through the nation's "glossing over" and found the true history of a proud and determined people. Equally significant, his "Roots" has inspired in black Americans a renewed spirit to create and identify their traditions of value to their own sense of dignity as well as to receiving a new respect from others.

Finally, if our democratic society is to survive, it must unconditionally accept blacks as equals. A major step in this direction for most Americans, both black and white, to gain a knowledge of the black man's true past. Haley's "Roots" has given us this knowledge and has thus taken us all a step closer to the world's first biracial democracy in human history.



CRIME IS BECOMING A WAY OF LIFE

Blacks Must Help To Stop Crime



By D. Marie Washington

Corporal Punishment

The Supreme Court's recent decision to uphold corporal punishment in the schools has left a wide gap of divided opinion in its wake. Much of the debate over whether the decision was a good one or a bad one depends upon what one means by "corporal punishment."

People who were brought up in communities where parents and teachers shared the same expectations and goals for the children consider corporal punishment to be nothing more than a rather bitter dose of very necessary medicine. They remember the teacher's ruler coming down across an outstretched hand for so many "licks," or they remember a teacher's paddle landing on the backside for a couple of "whacks." These punishments were, at the most, just stinging reminders to the children to stay within the bounds of good behavior. As a rule, they were not severe enough to cause physical or mental harm to the child, and they were not given out of hatred, contempt, prejudice or egotripping, but from a genuine concern for the child's well-being.

Parents generally did not object to the schools adminis-

tering this kind of corporal punishment. The tight bonds of mutual respect which existed between parents and the school made it permissible and kept it within reasonable limits. As a matter of fact, parents were often so supportive of the school that they would give the child another punishment at home if they learned that the child's conduct warranted a spanking at school.

School systems today, however, do not have the same close relationship which once existed between the school and the home. In many instances, a wide gulf of hostility exists between the two, and the growing inability of parents to exercise control over the school has frequently allowed teacher behaviors to get out of hand. The result is that in too many schools, the meaning of corporal punishment has changed from reasonable force to excessive force, and it has become something altogether different from what most of us remember it to be.

The kind of corporal punishment which prompted parents to bring suit against the Drew Junior High School of Miami, Florida is the same kind of corporal punishment which

students in many inner city schools have been receiving for years. In the Drew Junior High School case, it was brought out that a student had been hit in the head with a wooden paddle; that they had been spanked so hard that they coughed up blood or could not sit down for weeks, and other incidents of brutality which were so severe as to require medical attention.

Clearly, corporal punishment in cases such as these has outgrown such innocent labels as "padding," "spankings" or "lickings." This kind of treatment which the students at the Drew Junior High School received is no less than child abuse. While people may be divided over the issues of corporal punishment when it is defined as reasonable force, surely no decent-minded person can condone child abuse, regardless of where it takes place or who commits the act.

There are many arguments which can be made against the use of corporal punishment, but our inability to keep "reasonable force" from turning into "child abuse" is surely one of the strongest reasons why it should be banned from the schools altogether.

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Spokesman For Freedom

To listen to the howls of some editorialists, you'd think Andrew Young has been making awful diplomatic gaffes. Actually, he's only been telling the truth. The truth often hurts, and that accounts for all the heat America's spokesman for freedom has been getting.

When Young accepted the post of US Ambassador of the UN, he said he wanted to be the Administration's "Point man" -- to occupy the most advanced and dangerous positions. In fulfilling the role, he has said some things that are not popular in some circles, or are more usually said with so much caution that nobody gets the message.

By gutting the doubletalk that usually infects public comments of officials, and by telling some home truths in a refreshingly open style, Ambassador Young is serving his Administration, the country, and the people, who ought to become involved in foreign policy discussions to a far greater degree.

But what exactly is it that Ambassador Young has said that gets so many people upset? The most recent statement to unleash criticism was that the South African government is "illegitimate."

Now who can argue with that? What is morally legitimate about a white minority government that rules over a large black minority denied any semblance of a stake in that society. The South African situation is simply not comparable to any other. There may be countries ruled by dictators which deny democratic rights, but such governments reflect the society they rule.

In South Africa a minority white population rules over a majority black population, which is compelled to be a cheap labor source, denied basic civil rights, forbidden the right to own property or to live in sections of the country, and even denied citizenship.

South Africans who are black are presumed to be citizens of arbitrarily defined "homelands" and are treated as foreign contract laborers in their own land. In the eyes of the white government, they are not "South Africans" at all.

So how can a government representing 2.3 million people in a country of 26 million be considered legitimate? Why should an American newly concerned about human rights go along with the fiction of South Africa's supposed legitimacy? Ambassador Young was right on target in his definition of that country's government.

Another statement that drew criticism was that Britain is "a little chicken" on race. Well, the language may be a bit more colorful than that of most diplomats, but again, it's true. Britain, from the hey-day of its empire to the present, has always exhibited a casual racism. Of course it is not alone in this; our own country along with many others share this disease.

Ambassador Young was referring to the Rhodesian situation when he said that. Can anyone deny that if a black colony declared unilateral independence and proceeded to defy legality and to subjugate whites, as Rhodesia oppressed its black majority, that the British would have acted differently?

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as i see it

Good And Bad Points Of District Representation

By Gerald O. Johnson

Now that district representation has passed, and all the folks on the Westside are whooping it up, let us stop and consider some of the finer points about it.

The one good thing about this so called victory for us black folks is that it took the political dominance of Charlotte out of the hands of Southeast Charlotte. At least it appears to look that way.

So far, this is the only real good point about district representation, as I see it, that can be pin pointed.

Now for the bad points. But let me add that these bad points are only bad because they can be ambiguous in scope. As I talk about the bad points, I hope this becomes clear.

First, most people feel that district representation will allow more blacks to participate in the political process directly. In other words there will be more blacks on the council.

This assumption is based on illogical premises, consequently the results are bound to be unsound.

1) It is not true that a black can better represent blacks.

Being black myself it is nothing I like better than seeing a black make it, whether it be in politics or anything else. But to see a black make it simply because he is black and not because he is qualified is asinine. Hence I would rather be represented by a representative rather than a black; meaning it is not the color, but the ability of the individual that should be important.

2) It is not true that district representation will allow more blacks to participate. One point that was not brought out convincingly enough is that the city council has the power to redraw district boundaries. This is a necessity because as the city expands new boundaries have to be drawn to keep a uniform balance among the districts. However, this point can be abused. It is conceivable that new lines could be drawn to bisect or even tri-sect predominantly black districts and add them to predominantly white districts. If this happens then the power which we thought we were achieving would, in fact, be diminishing.

3) Finally, district representation will create a disunity



Gerald O. Johnson

among blacks in Charlotte. An area like Charlotte that has a disunited black community already really doesn't need anything that will create more dissension. But now even if district representation would allow more than one black to be seated on the council, it could cause more trouble than one anticipates. For example, Harvey Gantt is looked upon as a representative of the black community. Most blacks in Charlotte pull together to back Mr. Gantt in his endeavors for the city. But under district representation Harvey Gantt wouldn't in-

deed he couldn't, be looked upon as a representative of the black community, but as a representative of the particular district which elected him. This is a major consequence in the black struggle for power in Charlotte. This point is the most serious consequence in the program. It will be touched upon again in the second bad point about district representation.

Secondly, most people feel that district representation will move Charlotte more progressively for all of its constituents. This premise, though not illogical, is inaccurately analyzed: for it will produce the direct opposite of what people thought.

Because the council will be broken up into factions, each district representative will be fighting for what he feels is right for his district. It is conceivable that all districts could differ on an issue in some respect. Consequently, the four at-large members will determine the outcome of the issue. This boils down to the current system. We will have four at-large members determining policy while seven districts members bicker among

themselves. The results will mean Charlotte will make less progress and the individual districts will not get served.

Of course, all of this is based upon hypotheses. It is quite possible that the district representation plan will work fine in Charlotte. This is just the point. Only time will tell.

But there is a yardstick that can be used to measure the possible success of the program. Gastonia is a nearby town that uses the district plan. Gastonia is a mess as far as towns go. Districts in Gastonia are set up so that two blacks are seated on a council of seven.

It is said that on several occasions two or three good people ran for a seat in the same district while other districts seated garbage. Also, while the individual council members bicker for their respective districts, Gastonia is going to hell.

Several other cities in North Carolina use district representation and all are not as messed up as Gastonia. Hence, there is hope that it can work in Charlotte.

All this is to say that rather than applaud for victory we

should prepare for the responsibility that will surely fall on the citizenry of Charlotte.

How Much Do You Weigh In

Kilograms?

How much do you weigh in kilograms? Citizens of Charlotte will have an opportunity to find out what their metric weight is by visiting the "Metric Awareness Exhibit" on display at Eastland Mall April 12-24.

The exhibit is being sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction to make citizens aware of ways the metric system affects them in everyday living. It depicts the use of metric measurement in carpentry, auto mechanics, sewing, distance, foods, business, industry, and everyday household tasks.

A metric height chart and a set of metric bathroom scales accompanies the main exhibit to give citizens an opportunity to measure their weight in kilograms and their height in centimeters.