

# Editorials & Comments

## Welfare Reform- An Overdue Need

By Hoye H. Martin Sr.  
Post Executive Editor

Bayard Rustin, president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, has written recently that one of the little known or little observed contemporary economic facts is that hard working black Americans with stable families are the most unrecognized and underpraised group in our society. They are given little credit for their efforts by black and white leaders, instead, poor blacks are given the lion's share of the attention which tends to stereotype all blacks.

With some exceptions, an example of this stereotyping was evident in a January issue of BUSINESS WEEK magazine. The cover story was titled, "The \$60 Billion Welfare Failure" and showed a painting of a black mother with two children. Such a cover reinforces the already existing myth in the minds of most middle-income taxpayers that most welfare recipients are black.

The fact is, according to U.S. Census data, poor black families make up only one-third of all the poor. Furthermore, among poor families headed by working women, 22 percent of the black women work as compared to only six percent of the white women. Also, the Census points out that in 1975 the total number of poor white families was 3,800,000 as compared to only 1,500,000 black families. However, we must hastily note that this data is largely misleading when it is realized that the 1.5 million blacks represent 27.1 percent of all poor black families while 3.8 million whites represent only 7.7 of all poor white families. The significance of this is that a black American faces a greater possibility of being poor than does a white American.

### Existing Myths

We have made these racial comparisons simply to help clarify a myth, a myth that reinforces considerable deep-seated racism within many whites who want to believe that blacks are lazy, irresponsible parasites living off the backs of middle-class taxpayers.

Racial matters aside, the "welfare mess" is appropriately named because it is wasteful, inefficient, unmanageable and, as President Carter has noted, "an insult to those who pay the bill and those who honestly need help." Underlying this "mess," BUSINESS WEEK points out "is a philosophical question: How should a society take care of its losers when it depends on market forces to allocate incomes and wealth...?" The problems with contemporary ideas on welfare reform are in this question itself, that is, market forces have not been able to adequately allocate income and wealth for at least the last six years. There

are in effect what economists call structural market problems that are at the root of the problem.

The Washington Post's William Raspberry clearly stated the structural problem when he wrote, "A look at that 7.1 million on the jobless list drives home the fact that the absence of skills is not the major cause of joblessness. It is the absence of jobs. It is folly," Raspberry continues, "to suppose that a semi-literate welfare recipient can find a decent job after six weeks of training when the employment offices are full of people who can't find work with six years of college."

### Inescapable Fact

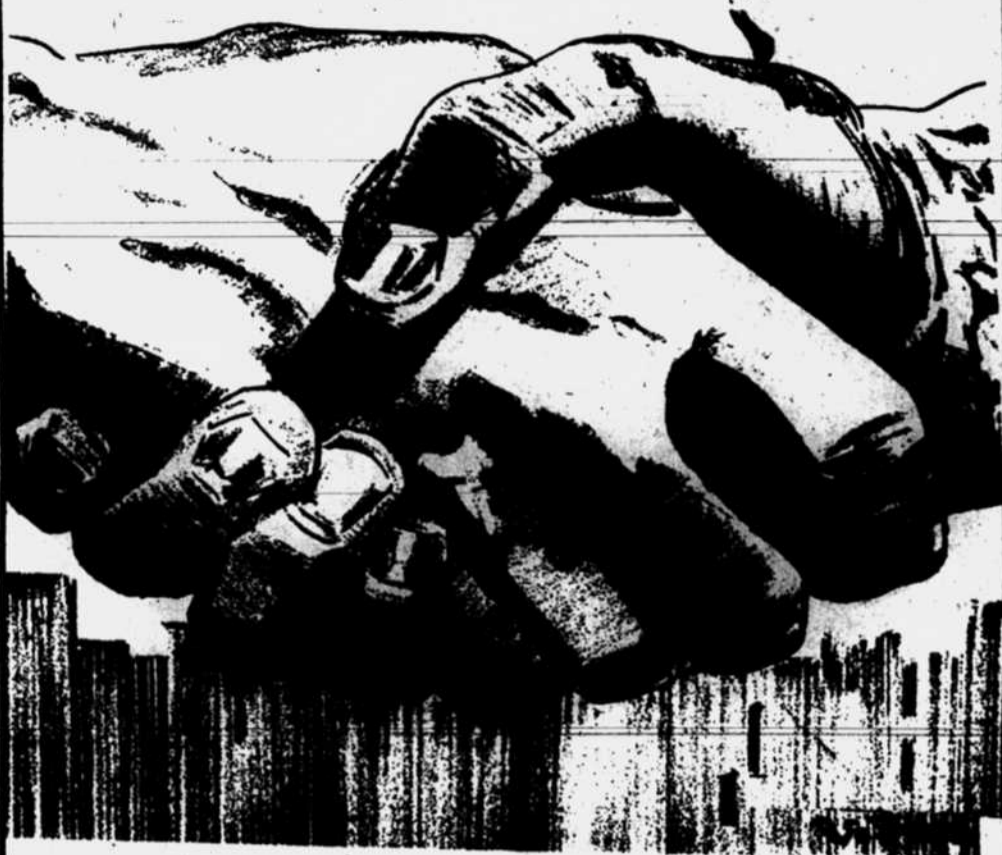
Underlying Mr. Raspberry comment is the inescapable fact that capitalism or the market system can no longer respond to the needs of the American people. However, to accept this as truth means to accept the need for a new ism, a new economic order. Yet, since most Americans assume incorrectly that the only alternative to our now inadequate economic system is distasteful socialism, the nation will probably stumble along with a bigger "welfare mess" as the years go by. Thus, as long as the welfare system, with all of its inadequacies can continue to regulate the growing pool of marginal skilled and unskilled labor and maintain civil order, little in the way of significant welfare reform will occur.

However, as the tensions and disorders characteristic of the 1960s begin to re-appear accompanied by a semi-permanent unemployed force of 10 to 15 million people or welfare roles that threaten to reach 50 to 60 million, then and only then, will the nation demand and get a meaningful guaranteed income program accompanied by the absence of the stigma of unemployment, a new value interpretation of the work ethic and a stripped down manageable welfare bureaucracy.

This probably sounds like a harsh if not radical approach to welfare reform. It is harsh and it is radical because President Carter's attempts to solve the welfare problem will fail if he depends on jobs and work incentive programs because the jobs are simply not there. Furthermore, the nearly one-third of a million workers in the welfare bureaucracy at all levels of government who have considerable political influence will hamper Carter's efforts to institute change.

Since jobs, or a lack of them, was listed as the number one concern at the London meeting of the worlds seven leading industrial democracies earlier this week, America must indeed resolve quickly the manwork relationship philosophical question or freedom as we know it may be endangered.

## BLACK COMMUNITY SELF HELP - MUTUAL AID - SELF IMPROVEMENT - COOPERATION



Blacks' Destiny In Own Hands.....



By D. Marie Washington

### Coping With Corporal Punishment

Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell, in writing the majority opinion on the decision concerning corporal punishment in the schools, stated that the school child had little need for the protection of the Eighth Amendment since the "openness of the public school and its supervision by the community affords significant safeguards."

Parents who are poor and who belong to minorities, however, have not been able to exercise very much supervision or control over some of the public schools. The fact that abusive punishment occurs seems to indicate that the "openness" of the school and its "supervision" by the community does not afford significant safeguards to protect the children against abuse.

In Chicago, where corporal punishment is banned but widely used, a group of parents met to discuss the problem of abusive treatment of the children at their particular school. Parents had a general feeling of powerlessness as many of them told how teachers would deny having struck the child, and how the principals would support, defend and protect the teachers. Since it usually turned out to be a case of weighing the

child's word against the word of adults who were in authority, many parents felt that it was perhaps better not to risk making things worse for the child by confronting school authorities with the issue.

A teacher who was present at the meeting, however, pointed out that those children whose parents came to the school to see about them were much less likely to receive corporal punishment than those children whose parents were never seen at the school. He also pointed out that the children who had received the most abusive treatment had not had any "visible" parents around, either before or after the act.

The leader of the parents' group summed the problem up as follows: "When a parent fails to show up after a child has received corporal punishment, it gives the wrong impression to both the teacher and the child. The teacher feels that he has to control the child all by himself and that he is therefore justified in using any means which he deems necessary. On the other hand, the child feels that no one cares what happens to him and he feels justified in defending himself by any means

necessary. Thus, even small conflicts involving corporal punishment, if left unnoticed and unattended, can soon develop into a full-scale war between teachers and students."

Parents were urged to make a follow-up visit to the school whenever a child had been physically punished in order to find out the cause of the conflict which led to the punishment and to make sure that all parties involved were aware that physical punishment was being closely watched. It was stressed that it is always better for a parent to know a child's teacher before any trouble arises, as this lessens the likelihood of trouble.

The result of this concentrated effort in making visits to the school was that as parents and teachers began talking to each other more frequently, they developed mutual understanding which decreased the need for corporal punishment in the school.

Both parents and teachers must remember that parents are obligated to investigate whenever corporal punishment is used, as it can rapidly develop into child abuse when left unnoticed and unchecked.

## TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

### Energy Program Hurts Poor

President Carter's energy program represents the first serious attempt to deal with a situation long labeled a crisis, yet largely ignored by previous leaders. By making energy a major national issue and by putting forth a set of hard-nosed proposals to deal with energy needs, the President performs an important service and demonstrates leadership.

The energy plan is a long, complicated proposal with something for just about everyone, with the exception of one major group. That's right, once again the interests of poor people have been largely ignored.

The poor haven't been completely neglected. There's a section of the Administration's explanation of the effects of its proposal that deals with low-income families. But in contrast to the detailed nature of the rest of the plan, that section is vague and sketchy, perhaps because the net result of the energy proposals may be to make the poor poorer.

There is no question about the need to make sacrifices and reduce reliance on high-priced, scarce energy resources. But the real question is: who will make the sacrifices? The proposed package of taxes and price hikes may mean that the sacrifices will be squeezed out of the poor. That's the group that always is asked to make sacrifices for the national good. If inflation is high, unemployment is artificially induced to dampen it. If government spending is too high, welfare and medical aid is cut.

So when I hear about the need for sacrifices I immediately begin to get suspicious about just who will be the sacrificial lamb. And as I read the prospects, it looks like the poor will get it in the neck this time, too.

As it now stands, there's nothing in the Administration's plan to protect poor people who must use their cars to get to work.

In that vague section on assistance to low-income people, the plan suggests that long-run protection from increased energy costs will wait until reform of the welfare system. That's a slim reed on which to hang hopes. In effect, it says we're going to raise your cost of living right now, but don't worry, someday there may be welfare reform and that might help. And of course, that doesn't begin to deal with the terrible problems facing people who earn too much to get welfare assistance but not enough to live decently.

Last week the Labor Department released figures that an urban family of four needs over \$10,000 just to survive on what it calls "an austere budget" - basic living costs and no frills. It takes over \$16,000 to maintain a "moderate" living standard. What happens to people earning less than those figures once gas, rent, food and other energy-based prices increase?

We've got to stop being a nation of energy junkies; other countries maintain a comparable standard of living on half the energy. But any sacrifices will have to be evenly spread, major assistance to poor families will have to be built into the energy program, and the plan must not worsen our economic and urban problem.

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## as i see it

### Integration Crunches Role Of Black Colleges

By Gerald Johnson

The effect integration has had on predominantly Black institutions of higher learning is beginning to surface. Unfortunately the smell is not coming up roses.

The well prepared black students coming out of high school are heavily recruited by the better facilitated white universities. After the smoke clears what is left is recruited by the Black Institutions.

Black institutions of higher learning have found themselves with the unenviable task of spending a lot of time and energy in preparing remedial programs.

I find it unfortunate that many funding institutions have used the above problem as a reason for discrediting Black institutions instead of a cause to help strengthen them.

Before continuing I think a complete description of the problem is in order. Since Blacks have been able to eat at any restaurant, stay at any hotel and all the other goodies that came along with integration. Blacks have been able to send their children to Institutions of higher learning of their choice. Hence, Blacks

with money ultimately send their kids to the Dukes, Harvards, Yales, University of Penns, and the like. Those Black parents who were fortunate enough to have children that were academically or athletically gifted didn't even have to worry. The white institutions supplied ample monies to cover the cost of an education. If you were really gifted you could even get a couple of cars, girls, the works, thrown in on the deal. Coupling this with the fact that these white institutions have all the facilities, the best professors, what else can I tell you.

So then who is left to go to the Balck Institutions? I thought you'd never ask. The Black Institutions thereby has to recruit those students that probably otherwise wouldn't have attended college at all. The average parental income of these students ranges from \$4,000 - \$6,000 dollars per annum. The average scholastic aptitude test score is less than 500. These students are recruited by Black Institutions under the name of "open admissions," meaning that no minimum criteria is needed to be admitted. So, students



Gerald Johnson

come to school who can't afford it. This student needs special educational attention, special counseling - you name it and he needs it - special. Yet he has no money to pay the special needs.

Therefore, Black Institutions are forced to go out and request funds to educate these students from funding institutions, federal and state government, church associations, and industry.

Whenever funding institutions decide to tighten the old purse string, the Black Institutions are the ones to catch it first. This is odd because total

funding to all Black institutions is less than one tenth of one percent of total funds allotted for education by the funding institutions. It seems useless in trying to keep and overloaded plane from crashing by emptying the ashtrays out the window. Because of "open admission" funding institutions are constantly pressuring Black institutions to become lower divisional schools (two year institutions) or merge with a nearby institution.

It seems to me that funding institutions are insensitive to a critical social problem that minimum funding will not solve. Black institutions were born out of a need to educate Black people. At one time they were the only institutions to educate Black people. Even then it was done with a minimum amount of money. The change in society has shifted the role of Black institutions to a special purpose institution. Its job becomes that of giving those people a chance who 5 years ago would not have had that chance. But funding institutions must realize that an acceleration of funds and not a deceleration is what is needed to help these institu-

tions meet the challenges. Laws must be instituted to better regulate financial aid to students, a topic I will discuss further at a later date. Thus Black institutions are just as important now as they were in

the past. However, the challenge that faces these institutions is a demanding one. Few are prepared to meet the challenge. I will discuss this at length in an article titled "What Black Institutions Must Do."

### Carter Gets High Marks

Continued from Page 1

can forgive and forget."

"Now my son can come home if he wants," a woman from Mecklenburg County said. But another woman from New Hanover County, said, "I oppose it because I lost my husband in the war."

Carter's strongest support on both questions came from two groups, people under 30 and blacks. Three-quarters of poll participants in these two demographic subgroups gave him good ratings on job performance, and slightly more than 40 percent of both groups expressed approval of his pardon.

Carter was also more popular with women than with men. Thirty-seven percent of female respondents supported his pardon, compared with 28 percent of the men. Seventy

percent of the women said he had done a good job as president; 66 percent of the men in the poll gave him a favorable rating.

Respondents with varying education levels and from different types of communities responded similarly to poll questions.

Names of the people contacted in the poll were chosen randomly from current published N.C. telephone directories. Because homes without telephones were excluded, the poll slightly underrepresented blacks, people with low education and people in rural areas. Interviewing was done between March 15 and March 31.

Results of a survey of this type are accurate to within 4 or 5 percentage points in at least 95 surveys out of 100.