

# Editorials & Comments

## Voter Apathy Aids "New Negativism"

by Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
Post Editorial Writer

Vernon E. Jordan Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, has referred to what many black leaders consider to be white America's shift to the right as an attitude of "new negativism," that is, a "basic reneging on the promises of the 1960s." Much of this attitude, the black leadership contends, is characterized by allegations of "reverse discrimination" against whites, the abandoning of our nation's urban centers by industry, thus fewer jobs for blacks, and the declining political potential of the black electorate.

At a recent gathering of the National Urban League's annual conference in Los Angeles, many black leaders blamed this sad state of black America's affairs on the nation's political leaders and what was referred to as the "do-nothing" Congress. This indifference by the largely white political leadership arises from the illusion that black people have made great progress when in fact they have not. Ironically, much of this illusion has been created by black people themselves. Bayard Rustin's article, "Black Votes Vs. Political Money," which appeared in the POST last week, tells us how Blacks have contributed to the illusion of progress.

Rustin points out that in the last ten years, the black vote has "declined at an alarming rate." In 1968, Presidential Election, Rustin reminds us, 58 percent of all eligible blacks voted. In 1973, only 52 percent voted and in 1976 only 50 percent voted. The voting figures for state and local elections were reportedly even lower. At the same time, many conservative groups, aided by some business interests, have been able to take advantage of the nation's conservative mood.

Rustin then notes that "Aside from formidable financial resources, business and conservative interest have another strategic advantage—mass apathy, especially among minorities..." This apathy is obviously reflected in the declining voter activity among blacks which in turn reflects the President and local elected officials across the nation.

Furthermore, as Rustin concludes "politicians must count votes as well as dollar bills." Thus, since blacks are giving few votes to our politicians and even fewer dollars, is there any wonder that a "new negativism" exist?

These observations clearly indicate that the gains that blacks have made with the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Act of the early 1960s are being lost as much by black apathy as might be expected by any other source.

It is therefore time, as we have noted frequently before, for Charlotte's black leadership to put aside their ideological differences and work to educate people and get them to vote and to vote for their convictions.

If there is one thing blacks in Charlotte need, it is a higher degree of political commitment, awareness and voting power. If we seriously want the vital issues of crime control, education, health, recreation and public services improved, we must demonstrate this by voting our concerns on election day, each and every election day.

Thus, blacks cannot blame the white politicians, or racist or the business community for all of the gains they have lost. They must assume that by their own inaction-voter apathy-political sources found no need to respond to black demands, concerns or specific interests.

To not vote is to lose what you have and to abandon your potential for the future. Let's let Charlotte and America know we are here by voting on election day in November. This is the only way to turn the tide of the "new negativism."



Blacks Must Not Become "Just Spectators" To Their Own Doom

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### To The Public

#### An Open Letter

Dear Sir:

It seems as though the few Black persons presently employed as media personalities would be more responsive to the Black community.

It is understood that each one could not possibly answer all the letters written to him-her, but if each person paid enough attention to the writers' names and found that one or two particular persons have attempted to make contact through letters three or four times, they could assume that those persistent writers are in need of their services. Media persons surely don't respond to messages.

But how they're in the limelight—their faces appear on the television, their voices on the radio and their names in the paper and they feel they are superstars...without a free moment to spare or share. This is what they'd have you think anyway.

They have time to sip cocktails with big executives or with their co-workers but not five minutes to return a phone call or to answer a letter. I wonder if they ever stop to think who's supporting them. They fail to imagine what they'd be doing if all Black persons would boycott the programs they

appear on. What would their ratings be?

Black television newscasters and talk show hosts, newspaper reporters and radio personalities alike should be responsive to the Black community. They have roles to play and they owe some allegiance to the black community—they have certain duties and obligations. They are in the public view as representatives of the Black community, yet they have no spare moments to share with us.

What do we have to be proud of?...A lot of pretty or handsome faces on the screen?... sexy voices on the radio? Popular in bylines?...or dedicated, concerned Black role models? Persons to be admired and respected and always appreciated?

I guess it's up to the individual. I don't need another pretty face—I need someone to prove that Blacks are capable of fulfilling their jobs...someone to pave the way for me and the children of the future. I need someone to demonstrate diligence and success, quality and responsiveness.

So to those Blacks whose foot fits this shoe—wear it and then pass it around, let your co-workers try it on. I am sure many of you will find that you wear the same size.

Mary Smith

### This Reader Enjoys The Charlotte Post

I read "The Charlotte Post" each week and enjoy being able to keep in touch with Charlotte and other places featured. Particularly, those by your son, Mr. Gerald Johnson, Mr. Martin's and Mr. Jordan's Articles.

The September 14, 1978 printing contains an article about my work. There are parts in the article which are misleading. The following is a correction which should be printed.

Recently, Captain Ronald

Kent Gray began a two year Obligated Volunteer Army Commitment at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. He is Chief of the Mental Hygiene Clinic, where he also functions as the Clinical Consultant to the Alcohol and Drug Program.

Dr. Gray also works as a part time Psychiatric Consultant to the Physician Assistant Program, in which he teaches P.A. students at Howard University.

He holds memberships in

the American Medical Association and The American Psychiatric Association.

Thank you for making these clarifications in "THE CHARLOTTE POST".

North PTA

The North Mecklenburg P.T.A. is sponsoring a barbecue on Friday, Oct. 15, in the school cafeteria from 11 a.m. til 8 p.m. The cost will be \$2.75 for a plate and \$.85 for a sandwich.

## Our New Day Begun Irrelevancy As School Doctrine

by Benjamin L. Hooks  
Special To The Post

Here we go again. That much heralded sociologist James A. Coleman, who authored a report in 1966 that said black children learned better in integrated settings, has again turned against his earlier findings. It is a "Mistaken belief," he said, that black children learn better in integrated schools.

For research over the past decade has shown that "it is not the case that school desegregation as it has been carried out in American school generally brings achievement benefits to disadvantaged (translating black) children." Integration, he has found, does not work. "Thus what once appeared to be fact is now known to be fiction."

Anyone who has seen, much less waded through, Mr. Coleman's voluminous report entitled, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," must therefore wonder what has happened between the period in which that research was done and the past decade on which the present study is based.

Have the basic foundations and attitudes on which American society is built changed so radically as to impel Mr. Coleman to reject the conclusions of his earlier studies?

We suspect not.

Or, was the University of Chicago sociologist merely riding the crest of national self-guilt when he conducted the study that Congress authorized under the 1964 Civil Rights Act and which was sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education? To understand Mr. Coleman's new wisdom, we must recognize that in recent years the segregation target has not been primarily the South but the North. South segregation, we should recall, was an easy and very profitable target for many northern liberals such as Mr. Coleman.

But now that the civil rights struggle has been carried into the North, we find that many of our former allies are acting no differently than southern red-necks of yester-year who bitterly opposed integration.

So, as with an earlier rejection of northern school desegregation that was voiced in 1975, the sociologist is now riding the conservative, racist crest that is no different in the North from the South. It is not surprising, therefore, that he finds that court-ordered school busing is "counter-productive."

In 1975, he charged that school busing had proved



counter-productive because it caused whites to flee the cities. Mr. Coleman, however, admitted then that his studies were not supported by data. The NAACP also showed that 20 of the largest cities he cited as having suffered from white flight had no court-ordered busing. What is overlooked in the attacks by white as well as some blacks on northern school desegregation efforts, are the reasons that led the Supreme Court to issue its 1954 Brown desegregation. At that time, the decision was regarded as truly revolutionary. Indeed, it was -- and still is. The court not only overturned the historic "separate but

equal" doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson, but as a result of voluminous studies and evidence that NAACP Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall amassed, it was able to find that segregated schools were inherently unequal.

This conclusion was based not on the belief that the schools were inferior merely

# TO BE EQUAL

## New "Bakke" Cases Coming Up

The Bakke case, as most people now realize, was just the first major challenge to affirmative action programs on the grounds they represent unconstitutional "reverse discrimination."

In contrast to the Bakke case, which was limited to college admissions programs, there are a number of major cases working their way through the courts dealing with economic opportunity. These cases are more important for the future of affirmative action than was the Bakke case.

The Court will soon decide whether to accept the crucial case of Weber v. Kaiser in the current term. Its decision will have a major impact on voluntary affirmative action programs.

Weber, a white employee of Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation's Gramercy, Louisiana plant, charges he is the victim of reverse discrimination. The company set up a training program, in agreement with the local union, that admitted blacks and women to half the available slots. Weber charges that since blacks with less seniority than he had won entry into the program, he was being discriminated against.

He sued the company and the union and won in lower court. A federal appeals court upheld that ruling by a 2-1 margin. Now it's up to the Supreme Court to decide the issue.

The reason for establishment of racial goals in the training program is clear. Blacks in Gramercy made up almost half the population and 39 percent of the town's work force. But at the Kaiser plant, only two percent of skilled workers were black.

To counter this, the company and the union voluntarily agreed to accelerate movement of blacks into the skills training program, even though some white applicants had greater seniority. White males occupied half the training slots, even with affirmative action.

The company itself does not admit to discrimination. Rather, it claims few blacks are in skilled trades as a result of general region-wide discriminatory practices and the results of a history of segregation and disadvantage. That's an unassailable legal point. Where courts or federal agencies have determined that company has a history of discrimination, even racial quotas are acceptable constitutional remedies. But companies don't want to admit to discrimination since they are vulnerable to lawsuits demanding compensation.

And the government can't police every factory in the country, documenting discriminatory practices. It counts on a few test cases to induce voluntary affirmative action.

So if the Court decides as the lower courts have, that Weber is right, voluntary compliance with executive orders mandating affirmative action will be in jeopardy.

Without official findings of past discrimination at the plant, there is a danger the affirmative action program will be overthrown. In the Bakke case, the Court seemed to put great weight on the general denials that the university has a history of discrimination.

It ignored the fact that the effects of general societal discrimination will not be overcome unless all aspects of our society take steps to broaden opportunities for people once denied them.

because they were black. Instead, the NAACP demonstrated that schools attended primarily by black children were willfully starved of equal funding, and adequate resources. Furthermore, by being singled out for segregation, black children were deliberately made to feel inferior—a psychological damage that was self-fulfilling.

Although he might still make The Washington Post front page, or generate some following among die-hard segregationists, Mr. Coleman's influence fortunately has run its course. He is generally considered irrelevant by his academic peers, not to mention lawyers.

## Business Activity Rose Modestly

The level of business activity in North Carolina rose modestly during August, according to the Wachovia Business Index. The index registered 152.4 for the month, a percentage gain of 0.1 percent above the revised July level. The business activity level was 3.3 percent above the level of August 1977.

Non-farm employment was down marginally from July, reflecting slight employment declines in both the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors. Durable goods employment rose 0.5 percent in August, while non-durable goods industries dipped 0.6 percent. A gain in the average workweek offset the loss in manufacturing employment to keep manufacturing man-hours stable for the month.

Average hourly earnings in manufacturing industries were up 1.1 percent.

In non-manufacturing sectors, employment in trade, services and construction showed gains, while government employment decreased slightly during August. The gain in construction employment stood out at 7.1 percent above the year ago level.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.2 percent in August compared to 4.1 percent in July. The national rate for August was 5.9 percent, compared to 6.2 percent in July. The unadjusted unemployment rate for North Carolina was 3.7 percent in August.

Car and truck sales both rose in August. Year to date 182,741 cars have been sold,

while truck sales have totaled 62,185 for the first eight months of 1978.

The Wachovia North Carolina Business Index measures the level of activity in North Carolina on a monthly basis. Using 1967 as the base of 100, it reflects indicators of employment, production and spending in the state's economy.



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