

Editorials & Comments

Christmas Forever

by Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.
Post Editorial Writer

Nearly 2,000 years ago, God sent His greatest gift to mankind. As a forerunner to this, the Greatest Event in human history, God commissioned an angel to tell the troubled world, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11).

"Suddenly," THE LIVING BIBLE tells us, "the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,' they sang, 'and peace on earth for all those pleasing Him!'" (Luke 2:13-14).

In spite of this background and these meaningful Biblical words, modern man's general attitude toward his fellowman is one of scorn for the needy, the institutionalization of the oppressed, balking at the creativity of the young, and in general, offering expressions of selfishness, hostility, and apathy toward his fellowman for all but the few days each year during the Christmas season.

Upon a second look, we should realize that the historical setting from which our Biblical phrases come is one of leading 20th century man to say in this season that recognizes the birth of the Christ, "Peace on Earth and Goodwill Toward Men." This phrase, in a practical sense, means that during the Christmas season, we give to the needy, sing carols to the oppressed, encourage the young to laugh, and in

general, offer affectionate expressions of togetherness, forgiveness and thankfulness. These can be summarized in the word "brotherhood."

"Human brotherhood," the late John F. Kennedy said, "is not just a goal—it is a condition on which our way of life depends."

"The question for our time," Kennedy continues, "is not whether all men are brothers. That question has been answered by the God who placed us on this earth together. The question is whether we have the strength and the will to make the brotherhood of man the guiding principle of our daily lives."

It is the latter part of Mr. Kennedy's statement, "the guiding principle of our daily lives," that should cause us some concern during this, the 1978 Christmas season. This concern should center around the fact that true brotherhood—concern for the needy, oppressed and the young—cannot be limited to a few days anchored around the birth date of Jesus Christ. Brotherhood must be "the guiding principle of our daily lives." Thus, in the Christmas season, compassionate feelings for others must be extended to being year-round, that is, Christmas forever.

To do less would be to degrade the meaning of Christmas and to reject the love of Jesus, a love without which there can be no brotherhood, and without brotherhood there can be no Christmas. Let's practice brotherhood, let's have Christmas forever.

The Economy: Up Or Down?

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO), has projected a decline in the nation's output of goods and services during the second half of 1979, thus, resulting in a recession. Noted economist, Alan Greenspan has also predicted a recession, but he views it as occurring in mid year.

Two local economists, NCNB's Alfred G. Smith and First Union's G.B. Carrier, Jr., taking a cue from the CBO also, concluded that the prospects of a recession in 1979 are about 50-50.

Concerned that predictions by private economists that the recession is eminent in 1979 led President Carter to state last week that such statements may become "a self-fulfilling prophecy" if the American people believe them. Then the President said bluntly, "We do not anticipate a recession next year... our nation is strong."

The observation about the economy reveals three important things about political economy or economics.

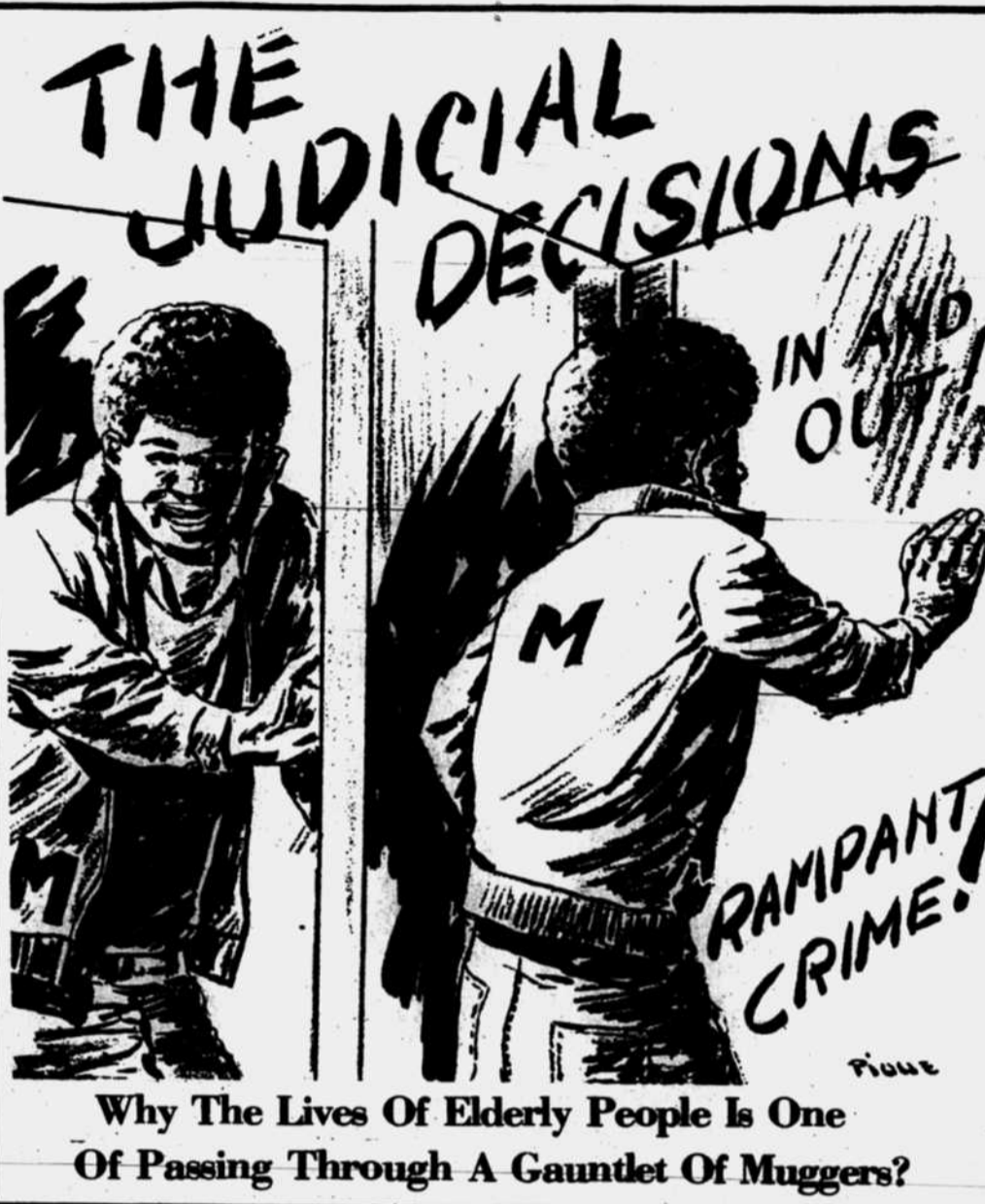
First, there's the ever present difference between the views of private economists and those employed by government who must keep their views within the context of the administration it works for.

Secondly, for obvious reasons, the administration in Washington, regardless of the political party in power, will rarely if ever, admit that the economy is not responding to the going monetary and fiscal which is supposed to keep the economy in a state of progress.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the psychological theory of the business cycle suggests that recessions, and likewise prosperity, are caused in part by the mental attitudes and human emotions of people. Thus, general optimism, based upon favorable economic conditions, could stimulate economic activity.

On the other hand, pessimistic views about the economy's output such as noted here by private economists tend to cause consumers to act more conservatively, thus aggravating and possibly creating the development of a recession. Therefore, it behooves the consumer

to gain sufficient information and understanding about the economy to make his or her own economic decisions. This is the American way. It is at least partly your decision to determine whether we have a recession or reasonable levels of prosperity.



Why The Lives Of Elderly People Is One Of Passing Through A Gauntlet Of Muggers?

Carter's Budget Proposals

Carter's Inflation Program:

by Bayard Rustin
Special To The Post

President Carter's anti-inflation program, to put it rather bluntly, suffers from a warped sense of fairness. Instead of coping with the real sources of inflation, the President's approach penalizes—unintentionally, I believe—the most brutalized and most defenseless victims of steadily rising prices. Rather than offer hope and aid to poor people, workers, and the unemployed, the President's strategy increases the already heavy burden shouldered by these groups. By comparison, business groups and wealthy individuals — those who suffer least from inflation — are asked to do little or nothing. Once again, their victims are blamed for their own victimization.

By saying all this, I am not suggesting that the Carter Administration is mean-spirited, insensitive, or a willing tool of business interests. On the contrary, I believe that President Carter has made a sincere effort to deal with inflation, a dangerous problem that especially torments working people and the poor. But while I refuse to question President Carter's good intentions, I do not refuse to question the wisdom of his economic policies as they relate to blacks and workers. Those policies, to be blunt once again, are disastrous.

While the Carter Administration certainly took precautions to insure that its anti-inflation program would be just and workable, it seems to me that its strategy has three serious and potentially fatal flaws; first, it is a voluntary

program; second, it seems to assume that wage increases are the principal, if not exclusive cause of inflation; and, third, the proposal for fiscal "austerity" will have an especially disproportionate impact on individuals and groups least responsible for inflation.

By its very nature, a purely voluntary system of wage-price controls—as proposed by President Carter—results in major inequities, and places a disproportionate burden on workers. Under the proposed guidelines, wage increases are capped at 7 percent. But the formula for regulating price increases is nebulous and confused. Without some sort of simple and easily enforceable price guidelines—like those in force during World War II—workers receive virtually nothing in

return for their sacrifices. Moreover, a system widely perceived as unjust will breed even more distrust, resentment, and political cynicism.

Considering the weakness of Carter price controls it seems fair to conclude that the Administration—has bought the idea that wage increases have been the leading cause of inflation. While that analysis surely has wide popularity, an examination of recent economic trends clearly indicates that inflation has other less obvious sources. And by concentrating attention on wages, the easiest target, we ignore the far more troublesome sources of inflation especially in the areas of interest rates, food, housing, energy and health care costs. Wage increases have had little or no effect in boosting the costs of

those goods and services.

In light of all this it seems somewhat misguided to place such a strong emphasis on a 7 percent cap when, in fact, inflation arises from predominantly non-wage sources. Wage guidelines without strong price controls — especially in the problem areas I mentioned—will simply prevent workers and poor people from making up lost income. And since real wages (in terms of 1967 dollars) are already significantly lower than they were in 1972, employer-enforced wage limits will only increase the frustration so keenly felt by the victims of the economic diseases that seem to permanently afflict our system.

President Carter's proposal for fiscal austerity makes his overall strategy even less attractive. For whenever we hear about "austerity budgets" it means austerity for the poor. It means, quite simply, that those who have the least in our society will be asked to sacrifice the most. If one believes the recent hints from various Administration officials, next year's federal budget will probably have about \$15 billion less for social programs and jobs. And those programs are already scandalously under-financed.

If Carter's program is inadequate, what can replace it? To begin with, we will never control inflation unless we have a program viewed as equitable and effective. President Carter has produced a set of proposals that have been rejected by the key constituencies that elected him, blacks and labor.

By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

TO BE EQUAL



A Time For Coming Together

Christmas, a time for coming together, for sharing joys and comforts, arrives this year as the nation seems trapped in a sullen mood.

Americans and their leaders seem to be enmeshed in daily problems whose magnitude is sometimes blown out of all proportion. This is a good time to reflect that the faith and dedication to the ideals of freedom that made this country great, can keep it great—if we don't abandon our best instincts as a people.

To hear some people talk, America is supposed to be a pitiful giant, weak at home and weak abroad. The dollar is laggard, inflation is rampant, taxes are high, the Russians are strong.

Well, maybe the prophets of doom are right but I won't buy that package of despair. Some of the problems they identify are the wrong ones, and none of them squares with the truth—that this Christmas finds us in full possession of the capabilities of righting what's with us.

Inflation worries many of the pessimists, and bothers everyone else, especially anyone who's been out shopping for Christmas presents and remembers what last year's prices were like.

But our inflation rate is low compared with that of some other countries. And given a spirit of cooperation and a determination to get a handle on the problem without imposing unjust burdens on poor and moderate income people is well within our society's means.

But to do so, we've got to come together as a people and work together constructively. In other words, a little more of the Christmas spirit all year round is needed. Too many of us spend the rest of the year looking out for ourselves and forgetting the obligation to help others.

The spirit of selfishness is behind a lot of our nation's problems. When people are saying, "I've got mine, I don't care about you," the stage is set for trouble. And that's what's been happening. Those who have, want more—and they're not concerned about those who have nothing.

So the spirit of Scrooge is abroad in the land. People vote for tax cuts, not caring that essential public services will have a shut-down—as long as they've got their personal transportation, their private schools, and their high incomes. So why care about those who depend on public transport, public schools, and subsidized services?

Maybe this Christmas some of those people will take a long, hard look at their priorities and responsibilities. Maybe they'll come to realize that a society is made up of all kinds of people living in a state of interdependence with others.

Maybe they'll reflect a bit on the principle of "goodwill to all men and peace on earth," and come to see that the real problems of our society are not the ones that get the biggest press play and media coverage.

Inflation, taxes and reviving the Cold War are the chief issues in the rightward drift in our country. But ending unemployment, providing necessary social services, ending discrimination, and saving our cities are the real problems that beset us.

And all of those problems can be licked if we recapture the sense of shared responsibilities and a common destiny. Overcoming selfishness, racism, and anti-social attitudes are never easy. But if we are to come out of this period of national drift, all segments of our society will have to pull together.

Our New Day Begun

Significance Of National Monuments

by Benjamin L. Hooks
Special To The Post

For Black Americans, ever so preoccupied with the consuming struggle for civil rights, jobs and equality, recreational pastimes such as visiting national parks and monuments often seem a luxury that are hardly worth the effort. The simple task of scraping a living leaves little energy, money or desire to do anything else than meet in a neighborhood bar, on a street corner or visit friends and relatives. But the cultural and educational loss, as Ira Hutchinson, deputy director of the National Parks Service, noted, is real.

Commenting on this gap in the lives of so many people, Mr. Hutchinson suggested recently that a national conference be called to determine why blacks do not visit these areas as much as whites.

Some people might not be willing to go as far as calling for such a conference, seeing no immediate material gain. Nevertheless, Mr. Hutchinson's observations do merit serious consideration.

Most significant in the continuing cultural development of blacks, the traditional victims of racism and deprivat-



Benjamin L. Hooks... Executive Director

ion, is the mere presence of Mr. Hutchinson in a high policy-making position in the Department of the Interior. Federal agencies such as Interior, Agriculture and State have for too long been regarded as white preserves.

So his presence here, as well as that of James A. Joseph, undersecretary of Interior, should be applauded. Their positions underscore President Carter's desire to bring more minorities into policy-making within his administration. That Mr. Hutchinson has been able to direct attention to the need for blacks to visit America's national parks and monuments in the capacity as

an official of Interior provides even more reason why demands should be intensified for more appointments of this kind.

At the same time, one is reminded of other painful aspects of the American dilemma. One is the history of Jim Crow and its continuing psychological impact on so many American citizens. No doubt, this history of humiliation affected the way people continue to behave and the heritage that is transmitted to upcoming generations.

It was only a few short years ago that blacks were barred by law, custom and fear from drinking at water fountains reserved for whites, staying at white hotels, and sharing most other public facilities that were designated for whites. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 changed that.

But up until then, blacks were limited in their travel by the mere logistics of having to plan for rest stops where they knew they would be accepted. For blacks, the mere use of toilet facilities was a trip (pun intended). Even the lowly service station most often offered no comfort. The attendant, of course, would sell blacks gasoline. But they were barred

from using restrooms.

Worth mentioning, also, is the severe flaw in American history. So much of constructive involvement and contributions by blacks have been washed out of U.S. history, that few national shrines or public monuments have any relevance or provide an emot-

Burrell Presses For Controls

Special To The Post
Washington, D.C.—"Wage and price controls may not be a long term solution, but people eat in the short run," declared National Business League President Dr. Berkeley G. Burrell, in a recent public statement about the nation's number one economic problem inflation. Delivering the

keynote address to a capacity crowd at the Ninth Annual Awards Banquet of the Metropolitan Business League in Richmond, Va., Dr. Burrell urged the imposition of mandatory wage and price controls as the only way to halt inflation now. Already on record in support of controls, Dr. Burrell reiterated his view that "People are afraid of the term, but love the results."

ional upliftment for blacks. When it is remembered, also, that much of American history contains another type of pain for blacks—the pain of slavery and centuries of discrimination — one is left to marvel that blacks really bother to visit some of these monuments at all.

Further explaining his position, the leader of the nation's oldest business association said: "Voluntary wage and price guidelines do not protect the disadvantaged. Without mandatory wage and price controls, Blacks and other minorities cannot afford to eat, let alone catch up with the free market economy."

In reference to a recent White House meeting between the President and members of the Black Leadership forum, Burrell warned that "this Administration seems prepared to fight inflation at the expense of minorities and the poor." According to Burrell, the impending cuts in social welfare programs mean that "the disadvantaged sectors of our society are being told to bear the brunt of the anti-in-

flation fight. In our view, we must devise programs that are equitable for all segments of the nation, and more importantly, we must seek the adoption of measures that clearly address the needs and protect the interests of our people."

Burrell continued: "Like other members of the Black Leadership Forum, I am disturbed by what we heard at the White House.



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