

# Editorials & Comments

## Homeownership - The Elusive Dream!

A month ago the Charlotte Board of Realtors reported that less than nine percent of the potential first-time homeowners in Charlotte-Mecklenburg can afford to purchase a new home. The Board's year-end residential unit sales figures placed the average 1980 cost of a house at \$61,104. Board president David A. Reule reportedly said "current prices force most homebuyers out of the market."

This week the Board said the average cost of a single family house in January 1981 had climbed to \$66,037 - up nearly \$5,000 over the year-end average of 1980.

Reports of this nature remind us all too well that the American sense of entitlement to a new home has now become the elusive dream, a dream that a growing number of families may never realize.

Even with the variety of innovative financing plans by savings and loan associations and commercial banks, people who want, or more significantly need homes, cannot get them. The problem, is particularly hard on black people when it is noted that market rate housing is primarily in response to the income of white Americans.

## New York Symbolizes Hope

New York, the nation's largest city, saved from bankruptcy six years ago by a combination of federal aid and painful belt-tightening, may finish the current fiscal year with a surplus in its treasury.

The Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics has announced that New York may finish fiscal year 1981 with a surplus of \$200 million. This would indicate that the "Big Apple," as New York City is often called, will have fared better than the nation as a whole.

New York's mayor Edward Koch claims the city's economic upswing arose from the theatre industry boom on Broadway, Wall Street's record trading and the burst of foreign tourism. Furthermore, revenues from stock transfers and more personal income and corporate tax revenues also played a part in the city's revival.

Not to be overlooked should also be the rebirth of Brooklyn, one of New York City's five boroughs with 2.2 million inhabitants. It began with the big push now under way to restore the once-vibrant shopping areas like downtown Fulton Street and Flatbush Avenue. The rebirth has resulted in the creation of thousands of new jobs.

"New people are coming to Brooklyn," said on borough official. European immigrants are moving into neighborhoods in transition and revitalizing the commercial and housing sectors.

More important is the fact that black people earned 61 percent of that of whites in 1970 and that percentage has fallen to only 57 percent in 1980.

Black people's housing problems are difficult enough with massive inflation and high interest rates. Yet, they have to also cope with a 14 percent unemployment rate which means it is a struggle just to keep a rental unit roof over their heads.

Here in Charlotte blacks make up 28.7 percent (89,201) of the total population and occupy 28.8 percent (33,788) of the households. However, of the 16,000 households in need of housing assistance in the city, 44.7 percent of those households are black citizens. Thus, as we get concerned generally about the housing problem, let us not forget that locally a substantial number of black citizens are on the edge of an on-going housing crisis.

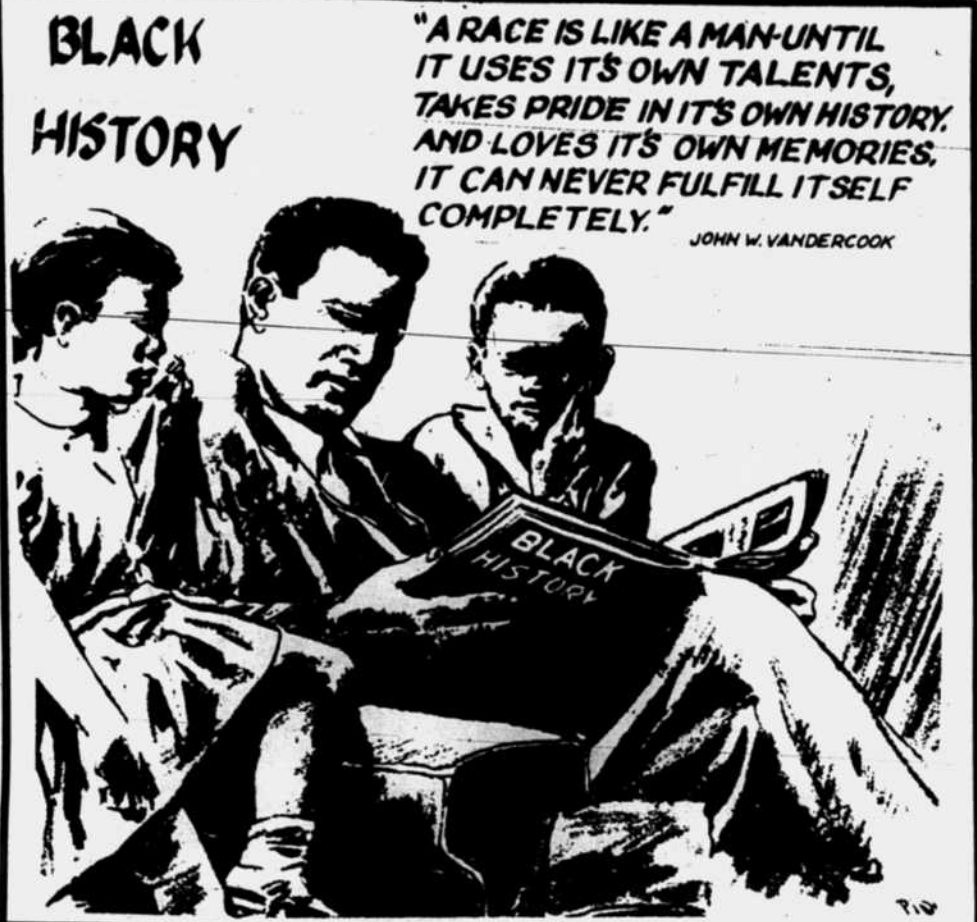
The only way to deal effectively with such a crisis is to get involved with programs such as FOCUS to find out what the problems are and to work through the political process economic system to seek solutions.

This has also revitalized another of Brooklyn's characteristics, that is, a melting pot of a multinational, multiracial, integrated population. This includes about 400,000 undocumented aliens and thousands of legal immigrants - Greeks, Italians and Chinese - to name a few - who arrived since the early 1970s.

In addition to the thousands of blacks and Spanish-speaking residents, Brooklyn has also attracted many wealthy Manhattanites, another borough, who have become weary of high rents and small apartments. Ironically, too, these more well-to-do whites are even buying homes in formerly all-black impoverished neighborhoods such as Fort Green (site of a large public housing project) and Bedford-Stuyvesant.

What is encouraging about all this is that there are some in the nation's capitol who have said the nation should abandon the metropolitan cities of the northeast as hopeless and concentrate on other areas of the nation.

Maybe its too early to make a judgement about what is really happening in New York City. However, it's worth taking a look at as others may learn a lesson in survival and the role of togetherness - racial, national and cultural, in making it work. This is what America is all about. Let's adopt New York City as a symbol of hope.



## Letters To The Editor

### A Slap In The Face!

Dear Editor:  
It has always been said that children are far more crueler to one another than adults are to one another. Witness the ending to the 44 days of captivity of our 52 American hostages. The action of the Iranians refute this belief. To delay the transfer of the hostages until after President Carter was no longer president was perhaps the cruelest blow of all - the last of many slaps in the face to be dealt to James Earl Carter by his enemies. The sound reverberated like a "shot heard around the world."

We have been deluged by the media of all that transpired on that fateful, great day - January 20, 1981. We saw a former President of the United States return to his home in Plains, Ga. and announce with only one break in his voice, the release of the hostages - hours after - it has been officially announced by the new President of the United States, Ronald Wilson Reagan.

One can only imagine the fierce stress and tension President Carter was operating under as he left office, knowing all the facts but bound not to make them public until after the hostages had left Iranian air space.

For his careful and unrelenting patience in overseeing the hostage negotiations, the former President was bestowed the privilege of greeting the returning hostages as citizen Carter. Thanks to the 40th President of the United States, who nobly announced he was designating the outgoing President as a special envoy just hours before his own swearing-in ceremony.

This magnanimous gesture made by President Reagan and accepted so jubilantly by citizen Carter could easily be construed as another slap in the face or as the magnificent gesture it portends to be.

While James Earl Carter

will certainly take his place in the history books as one of the most patient, concerned, religious, and God-fearing Presidents of the United States, he like the lack-luster pro fighter "lacked the killer punch."

Unfortunately, the gentleman in Mr. Carter could not be subjugated by the politician in Mr. Carter. Was that good or bad? Only history will tell.

It is rather ironic that while the nation was deeply concerned about the safety of 52 U.S. citizens, one of the first official acts performed by President Reagan after his swearing-in was to sign into law a

freeze on government hiring. My God, does that bring back memories. I can remember over 28 years ago sitting at home and waiting for the letter that would send me to Washington, D.C. to work in the Treasury Department. It was Inauguration Day 1953 Dwight D. Eisenhower furloughed 15,000 government workers. One month later he furloughed another 15,000 workers. I never did get that letter.

Very truly yours,  
Jacquelyn C. Moore  
National Editor  
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees

### Understanding The History Of Blacks

Dear Sir:  
All Americans can be proud of the accomplishments and goals of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. Knowledge of our past is one of our most treasured possessions, for only with an accurate picture of where we have been can we see where we must go.

The observance of Afro-American (Black) History Month serves to focus national attention on an endeavor of awareness that should follow us throughout the year. Understanding the history of black Americans is a key to understanding the strength of our nation. Their struggles, achievements and perseverance help us understand the moral fiber of America and our commitment to freedom, equality and justice.

This month's theme of "Black History: Role Model For Youth" goes to the very heart of our best hope for the future of our nation. We will hand to the youth of this nation the responsibility of preserving our heritage for future generations. The minds be-

ing shaped today in classrooms around the country must be fully enriched. The achievements and courage of individuals provide an inspiring example of the essence of the American spirit.

I urge all Americans, particularly those in our schools and civic groups, to study our history and incorporate in their activities projects to help us all understand those individuals who played so great a part in our development. We must ensure that the gains of the past are not lost in the future, and in so doing we can look to tomorrow with confidence.

Ronald Reagan  
President of the U.S.

AMERICA IS SICK

Dear Editor:  
The Lord has spoken to me, the verse below and told me to put it in the papers. Will you please publish it in your paper. Many thanks for your help in advance.

God said America is sick, God said America needs to go to the emergency room and have heart surgery.

Stated by Minister Benkie McKinney

# Affirmative Action

## Racism, The Struggle Continues

It has become fashionable in certain circles to frown upon the mention of the word "racism." The underlying idea is that the mere use of this term is inflammatory and constitutes some form of "baiting." One who charges racism is frequently told that he/she is "paranoid" or "too sensitive." As is readily apparent, it is easy to understand why the thief would yell "Stop Thief" and try to deflect attention from his misdeeds. And in an era when a right-wing celluloid cowboy can become president, raising the cry of racism will not be universally popular.

Yet it would take a peculiar ostrich with head buried quite deep in the sand to ignore the disproportionate number of blacks on death row or the higher infant mortality rates or lower life expectancy or higher rates of unemployment in the black community. Are the voluminous statistics, reports, studies, etc. detailing the parlous nature of the black condition merely accidental or coincidental? Or are more sinister forces and elements - e.g., racists and racism - at play? Yes, history is not conspiracy but there decidedly ARE conspiracies in history and it would be naive to ignore the fact that it is in the economic interest of some to, for example, pay blacks at a lower wage rate than whites.

All this serves as a backdrop to an examination of the question of blacks and prisons, for this lamentable situation serves as a microcosm for the entire community.

For here are "dumped" the blacks that the economy cannot absorb in an era when robots and computers are rapidly replacing human beings. It is accidental that there are more blacks in California prisons than colleges or that in the large prisons from Soledad to Attica there is a disproportionate number of people of color? This volatile bundle of contradictions recently came to a boil in Marion, Ill., where the longest work stoppage by inmates in the history of the federal prison system recently came to a screeching halt.

The strike began last September when inmates refused to report to job assignments in the prison print shop and furniture factory. It is virtually astonishing that inmates working in prison industry earn wages ranging from 43 cents to 94 cents an hour.

Some might argue that this is only a just way of inmates "repaying their debt to society" but when one considers not only the fact that many of the inmates - especially the black ones - are incarcerated principally because they couldn't afford a lawyer and are most likely innocent but that in an era of unemployment a "reserve army of labor" working for peanuts presents a grave threat to all those who work for a living. It should be obvious that it makes sense from an employer's point of view to seek employees at 50 cents an hour rather than \$4.50 or \$9.50 an hour; hence, this is a material, objective force propelling so many to prison.

It was this recognition that fueled the bitter struggle at the turn of the century to abolish the notorious "convict-lease" system which allowed inmates to work in the mines, on the farms, etc. and drove the labor movement to virtual starvation.

Apartheid South Africa, whose history is so similar to that of the United States, also offers instructive parallels. Blacks there must carry a "passbook," i.e., an ID card at all times and the slightest violation leads straight to prison.

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## From Capitol Hill Black Caucus Communicates Strong Position To Reagan

Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post

President Reagan, with the hope of fertilizing the ground for planting his economic program has been meeting with various groups, among these was the Congressional Black Caucus. The Caucus met at this particular time at the request of the President. Fourteen of the members met with Mr. Reagan, while four did not attend. Among the Caucus' absentees was Representative Louis Stokes who had death in his family.

Representative Ronald Dellums said that he is with the Black Caucus in the objectives of making the administration aware of the needs of the poor and minorities. However, he felt that there was no real specific reasons to talk about at this time, since the President had not presented his economic policies. A later meeting would be more effective.

Congressman Harold Washington of Chicago stated that his commitment to Caucus Chairman



Alfreda L. Madison

Fauntroy, of his full support of the Black Caucus ideas was adequate. So he decided that he could and should boycott the Reagan-Caucus meeting as a symbolic gesture of the President's anti-black and anti-poor concerns. Mr. Washington feels that the President should abandon his anti-employment economic programs and make full employment a top priority, take steps to ease extra-inflation burden, which falls on low income people, especially in energy. He should preserve and expand economical programs; food stamps, social security and unem-

ployment insurance and reaffirm a strong commitment to affirmative action.

Representative Augustus Savage of Chicago gave very strong specific reasons why he refused to attend the Reagan's Caucus meeting. He stated that the Administration's pronouncements thus far have been anti-black, anti-people, anti-worker and anti-prosperity. Mr. Savage feels that public relations posturing will only cloud black's general disagreement and hamper the development of specific agreements. He says that black-members of congress should develop specific proposals and programs and communicate those to their constituents in such a manner as to mobilize mass support, without which Reagan will not move.

Representative Fauntroy, Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, stated that in the meeting the Caucus members presented the case of twenty-six million black Americans and millions of other Americans who have been

hardest hit by economic woes of the nation and who have the highest stake in the proposed policies and implementation of them. They informed the President that full employment and balanced growth will always be their highest priority; that they are gravely concerned that the federal budget is not balanced on the backs of the poor. The Caucus told Mr. Reagan that defense spending is the most inflationary of all federal government spending. These congress persons strongly emphasized the need for affirmative action which increases black participation in all areas of American life. Representative William Gray said that tobacco subsidies are also inflationary.

President Reagan promised to meet with the Caucus again in about a month, and that black congress members who are on committees relative to Cabinet Departments, will meet with Cabinet heads on issues as they affect minorities and the poor.

The first of these meetings will be with Mr. Stockmen of OMB. The members meeting with him are: Representatives Julian Dixon, William Gray, Parren Mitchell and Louis Stokes - all but Parren Mitchell are members of the Appropriations Committee and Mr. Mitchell is Chairman of Small Business Committee.

There will also be meetings in the very near future with other Cabinet Secretaries by various Caucus members. It was strongly expressed to the President that the Congressional Black Caucus intends to be deeply involved in all issues affecting the nation, uttering the cause of minorities and the poor.

### Pistol Is Not The Answer

Continued From page 1.  
Fifth Amendment.

"The Ku Klux Klan in Greensboro are not put under surveillance because it would violate their civil rights when they are known to carry weapons," she charged.

Her attempts to contact people were peaceful, Mrs. McKoy said.

An item Mrs. McKoy has included with some of the letters was a copy of a "Reader's Digest" article "Why Crooked Lawyers Go Free." Using the N.Y. State Bar Grievance Com-

mittee for the investigation, numerous cases were cited in which serious complaints - theft of client funds, neglect of cases, excessive fees and incompetence were dismissed without any investigation.

Mrs. McKoy now hopes to raise public awareness that corrupt lawyers do exist, even in Charlotte.

