

# EDITORIALS

## 'You're A Part Of The Solution, Or You're A Part Of The Problem'

THE VIEWS OF THE WRITER'S ARE NOT ALWAYS THOSE OF THE PAPER'S

### Black Caucus Points Out Why Membership Denied

#### From THE WILINGTON JOURNAL GUEST EDITORIALS Bayard Rustin Says

Liberalism has developed in recent years a new cultural attitude toward working people, particularly white working people, that marks a distinct break with past liberal beliefs.

During the 1930s, 1940s, and even 1950s working people were looked on with respect as hard working, decent individuals whose values were as worthy as those of the rest of society. Contrast this with the current liberal attitude towards teachers, policemen, and construction workers. As individuals these working people are no longer accorded respect in liberal opinion; as for the unions representing these people, liberals often lump them together with corporations as comprising vast and powerful "vested interests" that operate against the public interest. The goals and the influence of a teachers' union are thus equated with those of the oil lobby.

To maintain any semblance of public dignity, then, working people find that they must identify, not with their job or class background, but rather with their racial, ethnic, or sexual heritage. It appears that liberals have to a significant extent accepted the myth of America as the affluent society in which the role of the working class has been minimized or abolished altogether.

Thus workers are no longer valued in terms of their economic roles, but are accepted only in the light of their biological or racial ancestry. To be a Jew or a Negro or an Irish-American is to bear the dignity conferred by a unique historical tradition set apart from the mainstream; to be a worker, on the other hand, is to bear the scorn of society more than its respect.

It is this refusal to view social phenomena in terms of their economic roots that led in the late 1960s to much of the confusion over the direction of the civil rights agenda. And to the extent that many of the Negro's traditional allies in the liberal community believed individual white racism - not the economic system - to be at the heart of racial inequality,

to that degree they postponed the implementation of massive social and economic reforms which would, in fact, have helped transform the ghetto.

For individual prejudice is not the root cause of black poverty, but rather the discriminatory functioning of a free-enterprise system which makes it unprofitable to build low-cost housing, encourages the exodus of jobs from the inner cities to the suburbs, discourages full employment, and fails to take into consideration the trauma and disruption of cybernetics and automation. To blame white racism for the Negro's plight is not simply to forestall the possibility of fundamental economic transformation, it is also to imply that white working people - particularly those whose economic situation is little different from that of blacks - are in large measure responsible for racial inequality. This, of course, makes cooperation and political alliance between white and black workers that much more difficult.

It has taken up an unemployment rate in excess of nine percent, the highest of the post-war era, to demonstrate that lifestyle and liberation are not the central issues of our time, except insofar as everyone's lifestyle and freedom is threatened by the persisting failures of the economic system.

Thus it is essential that liberals rethink their basic attitudes - towards the state, towards their programmatic priorities, and most importantly, towards the working class. Liberals have played a central role in the struggles for social progress in America, but they have done so only in partnership with other progressive forces, particularly with the civil rights movement and the mass constituency of labor. Failure to understand this fundamental point will not only perpetuate the crisis of liberalism, it will certainly mean the continuation and worsening of the infinitely deeper crisis that America, and much of the rest of the world, is undergoing.

The Congressional Black Caucus has released its answer in response to Congressman F. H. Stark's (D-Calif) request for admission as a member of the Caucus. Congressman Rangel, the Chairman, pointed out in his letter that "the Caucus symbolizes black political development in this country." "We feel that maintaining this symbolism is critical at this juncture in our development", he said.

The Congressional Black Caucus was created in 1970 as a forum which would allow Black members of Congress to discuss proposals and strategy on issues related to the interests of Black and poor citizens.

Since its beginning, the Caucus has recognized that the problems of black Americans are inextricably tied to the needs of all Americans. The Caucus had always drawn upon a significant number of non-blacks, as well as black technical resource persons, many of whom now serve as staff for the individual members.

The Caucus stated that "just as the Democratic and Republican Caucuses have unique interests to protect and project and would not include non-party members in their respective groups, we too, have the same needs and concerns." In addition, the Caucus members stressed the fact that

numerous forums already exist for non-black members of Congress to address the needs of their low income and minority constituents.

Congressman Rangel's letter suggested that representatives should pursue the interests of poor and minority people more aggressively within existing formal groups, such as the Democratic Caucus, the Democratic Study Group, Republican Caucus and the various state delegations.

The Congressional Black Caucus expressed a willingness to discuss with Congressman Stark and others "the development of an alternative Congressional vehicle for addressing the critical concerns embodied in the Caucus 'Legislative Agenda'."

Such a vehicle would provide members an opportunity to come together across racial,

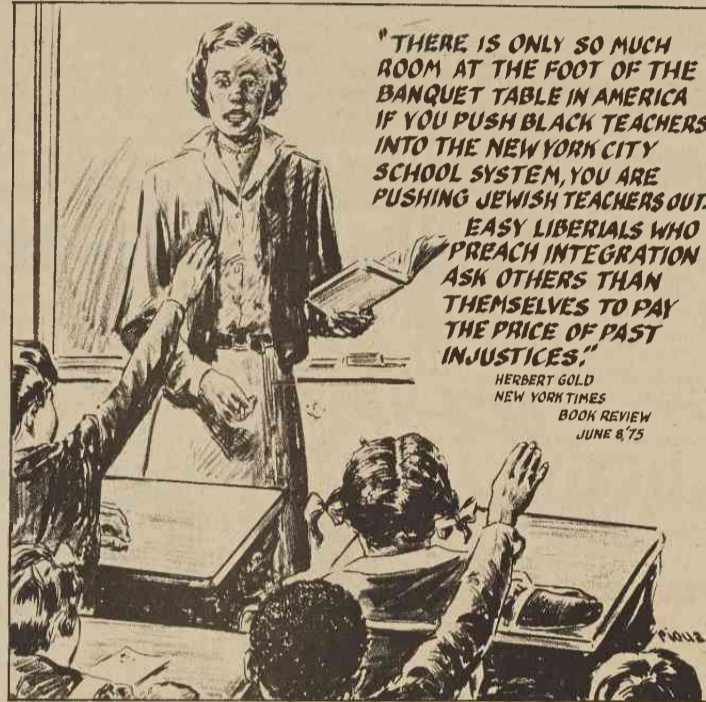
geographic, ethnic, sex and party lines to discuss and advocate positions and take actions that ensure passage of legislation responsive to human needs.

The Caucus further pointed out that there were numerous congressional districts throughout the country where non-black members represented significant numbers of poor and black constituents. Many of these members have frequently voted contrary to the positions taken by the Congressional Black Caucus.

It was thus, that Rep. Stark's major rationale for requesting membership in the Caucus, the size of his minority constituency is not in itself, sufficient reason to admit him.

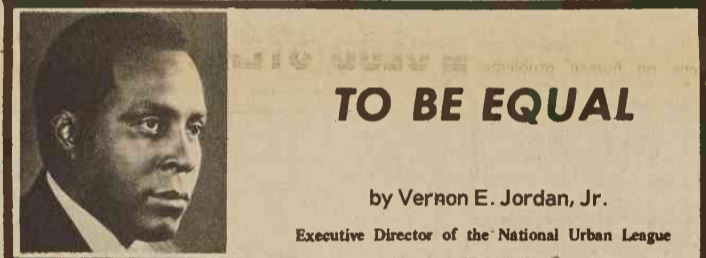
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#### HOW ELSE CAN BLACKS UNDO THE DAMAGE OF HISTORY?



"THERE IS ONLY SO MUCH ROOM AT THE FOOT OF THE BANQUET TABLE IN AMERICA IF YOU PUSH BLACK TEACHERS INTO THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM, YOU ARE PUSHING JEWISH TEACHERS OUT. EASY LIBERALS WHO PREACH INTEGRATION ASK OTHERS THAN THEMSELVES TO PAY THE PRICE OF PAST INJUSTICES."

HERBERT GOLD NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW JUNE 8, 75



#### TO BE EQUAL

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

Executive Director of the National Urban League

#### Crime Code A Danger

Revision and reform of federal criminal law is long overdue, but the proposed new federal criminal code represents a major threat to civil liberties.

A federal commission, back in 1971, proposed pulling together the vast body of federal criminal laws into one criminal code that would reform and relax many existing statutes.

But from that promising beginning has come a suggested criminal code that Congress will deal with this summer. Under the pretense of reform and revision it contains provisions that reflect strongly hawkish law and order views at the expense of precious constitutional guarantees.

Although the Supreme Court has ruled the death sentence unconstitutional as it is applied by the courts and is now considering whether to ban it entirely as a constitutionally-prohibited "cruel and unusual punishment", the suggested new code would restore the death penalty.

While the original commission recommended relaxing many laws, the code lengthens prison sentences for some crimes. This, at a time when many people are questioning whether longer prison terms have any effect on the crime rate, and when prison terms in this country are already much longer than those elsewhere.

In the wake of the Watergate scandal that demonstrated the dangers inherent in federal police powers, the code would actually extend authority for bugging and wiretapping. It also contains provisions that would have made it impossible to prosecute some of the officials convicted of Watergate-related crimes.

Proposed restrictions on activities that interfere with government functions could be used to prevent picketing, sitdowns, and other peaceful protests guaranteed by the Constitution.

Freedom of the press would be damaged by instituting, for the first time in American history, a sort of official secrets act, that would penalize reporters and publishers for printing classified information. Had this

been law a few years ago, the Pentagon Papers would never have seen the light of day. Some press spokesmen claim the proposed law is so broad that they'd only be able to publish official versions of defense and diplomatic news.

Other provisions aren't bad at all, such as allowing appeals of overly lengthy sentences and providing compensation for victims of violent crimes. And most of it is innocuous enough -- simple codification of existing laws.

But the whole package is a Pandora's Box. It doesn't do what it claims to be doing --streamlining the criminal code - and it contains many provisions that would seriously endanger civil liberties.

It is possible that many people will be stampeded into supporting this new program because of the need to "do something" about the rising crime rate. But the crime rate isn't rising because the present laws need to be toughened; it's rising because the Depression has widened the gap between the affluent and the poor, while depriving many people of the opportunity to earn an honest piece of bread.

The crime rate is on the upswing in cities with the highest unemployment, it's moderate in those few places where employment is still high. A full employment policy is still the best anti-crime measure around, but it seems to lack the sex appeal of going all out for "law and order" rhetoric.

Gun control is another way to cut crime, but many of the same people who are so anxious to restrict civil liberties in the name of fighting crime, refuse to back sensible restrictions on personal use of handguns.

It's a mistake to stuff a sensible codification of the existing criminal law with all sorts of provisions that trample on the Constitution without making our streets safer.

It is ironic that while the country celebrates its 200th anniversary and lauds its freedoms, it prepares to destroy many of those freedoms under the guise of a discredited "law and order" pose that represents bad law and insures disorder.



#### INSIGHT: For Teens Only

by Miller Carter, Jr.

#### A Better Understanding

All during the time I have been writing this column in the paper, I have received numerous compliments on my writing ability. I have also received some complaints. Though the compliments are more numerous than the complaints, the complaints are what I would like to talk about this week.

The most common complaint that I have received is that even though my articles are good - "I don't practice what I preach." Though some may still have this opinion after reading this article, I would still like to say something in my defense. First of all, I have never claimed to be "Mr. Perfect". I know that I don't do everything right; but I do try to diligently better myself.

So many times I have heard from my ex-band director, "Miller, I read your articles each week and you sound as if you know what you are talking about, but you don't practice what you preach."

To this statement I'd like to say, again, that I DO try. At least I do realize "where" my mistakes lie and know "how" to keep them under control; but whether I control them or not, it's up to me. This is more than I can say for some of the other teens AND adults in this community.

There is another side of my defense that should be considered. I am young and I am entitled to make mistakes - but I LEARN from my mistakes. This is why I write this column. I have made mistakes (and I am still making them) and I want the young people to learn to avoid these same mistakes.

I'm not trying to cover up or make excuses for not doing everything that I write about

in this column. I'm only trying to explain that I, too, am human.

Another common phrase I hear in the form of a complaint is "He thinks he's so good since he writes for a newspaper." Well, those complaints don't bother me a bit because I have found that the persons who say that are, in a sense, jealous.

I honestly don't think I'm better than anyone else my age; but in the same respect, I don't think anyone should consider himself better than me.

There are also some that ask me, "Who are you to tell someone how and what to do?" Well, to put things in plain language, "I am someone who cares about the world and the people who inhabit it. I am someone who would like to see the youth in this world be better than they are now."

I figure that if teens don't listen to adults, then maybe they will listen to someone their own age.

If you read my articles, you find that I always include myself as a part of what I'm talking about. I always say "we" - I mean "we" as teens of this community. So I hope now that everyone can understand that I am a part of what I write and I am entitled to make mistakes, too.

If there is anything about my articles, or myself that you would like to comment on or complain about, please write me at 529 Radford Street, High Point, N. C. 27260.

THOUGHT FOR THIS WEEK: The truth is the light of the world. Let it be a light unto your path.

#### Things You Should Know

##### TARIK-BIN-ZIAD



A SLAVE-BORN LEADER, HE BECAME COMMANDER OF THE MOORISH ARMY IN THEIR INVASION OF SPAIN. IN ISLAM, THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR - CALLED "JEBEL-U-TARIK" - WAS NAMED AFTER HIM. HE IS GREATLY GLORIFIED BY TURKISH HISTORIANS!

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