



**The Editor's Desk**

ALFRED LEE HENDERSON



**WE SEE THE WORLD THROUGH BLACK EYES**

**White business: Race before profit**

The United States is often called the "melting pot" --- but it is more like a pressure cooker. The pressure is racism that does not allow the United States to become the "Land of the free and the Home of the brave" for all its people.

Blacks are kept out of the economic mainstream nationally and in Oregon. Business, labor and public officials have conspired to prevent Blacks from taking their rightful place in society, through refusal to hire Blacks, discrimination by labor unions, and elimination of Blacks from public employment through the manipulation of tests and civil service lists. Government has looked the other way as Black people have suffered discrimination in education, housing and employment.

White businessmen, union leaders and public officials are still in command. Black businesses and other economic endeavors must rely on white support or fail, yet this support is not forthcoming.

And the same people who have systematically kept Blacks out of the economic life of the community, accuse us of failing to have the initiative to become businessmen.

Whites still do not look on Black business seriously. If they do business with a Black company or advertise in Black media, it is on a token or charity basis. If they could take Black business seriously, they would find sources of goods and services as well as an outlet for their products in the vast "Black market".

But racism even infringes on the profit motive of the white businessman. We are often told, "I don't want Black customers" or "I have all the Black customers I need." Whereas high powered advertising campaigns and all kinds of gimmicks are used to entice the white customer, even those with limited ability to pay, there is great hesitancy about whether the Black customer is really wanted or needed. Rather cut profit than encourage Black trade.

The same is true of the white attitude toward Black business. When goods and services are available from a Black company, even if at lower cost, real consideration is not given by the white businessman. He might give a small donation, but a real business relationship with a Black company is somehow demeaning.

This is true in advertising as well. Some companies take an ad in the Black media once or twice a year (a little charity), but they do not budget for an advertising schedule in the Black media. They do not actively pursue the more than 20,000 Blacks in Portland alone, who must buy their food, clothing, cars and other items somewhere. This growing market is nearly untouched, certainly not cornered by any retailer or provider of services; yet white businessmen in Oregon seem to prefer "white money".

Across the nation some of the major corporations, and the small businesses also, are discovering this market and are catering to it. But not in Oregon. As in most other aspects of life in Oregon, we are staggering behind the rest of the nation, continuing in our own narrow, self-styled way of thinking. Even the pursuit of the dollar will not bring equality of opportunity to Oregon.

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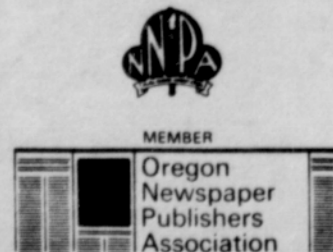
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Alfred L. Henderson, Editor and Publisher



**CUT-BACKS**

- DAY CARE CENTERS
- POVERTY PROGRAM
- HOUSING
- YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAM
- COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
- WELFARE AID
- SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM
- NO CUT ON UNEMPLOYMENT

POVERTY OFTEN DEPRIVES A MAN OF ALL SPIRIT AND VIRTUE. IT IS HARD FOR AN EMPTY STOMACH TO STAND UPRIGHT. FRANKLIN



**Seeds of a hot summer . . . ?**

With Ron Hendren

**CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: BACK FROM THE DEAD**

**A YOUNG VIEW OF WASHINGTON**

WASHINGTON—Last week, less than a year after the Supreme Court struck down capital punishment, President Nixon sent legislation to Congress that would revive the death penalty for a host of serious crimes.

The action came on the heels of a United Nations report which revealed that executions, far from being on the way out among U.N. members, are in fact a widespread and increasing form of punishment throughout the world.

Only 27 of the U.N.'s 132 nation members have done away with the death penalty, either by law or in practice. Of the remainder, 101 still employ executions routinely and for many crimes of varying severity.

If the report is to be believed, most people in the world favor the death penalty, and that is why their governments employ it as an "efficient" tool of criminal justice. Even where it is not legal, says the report, the death penalty has been resorted to, often without public knowledge.

The paradox between Mr. Nixon who favors capital punishment and a Supreme Court, made up largely of his own appointees, which believes the death penalty is unconstitutional is somewhat akin to the U.N. paradox: these same governments which continue to employ the death penalty have voted in the world body for the eventual abolition of capital punishment.

The contradiction is an interesting

one, and its explanation may lie, at least in part, in a key conclusion from the U.N. report that "the death penalty is always used when a particular problem seems to grow out of proportion . . ." Certainly a host of new capital crimes have cropped up in the last decade, ranging from hijacking and skyjacking to dope peddling. So far, little headway seems to have been made by law enforcement officials to stem this growing tide of international lawlessness, and it is natural enough to turn back to the gas chamber, partly perhaps in frustration because all else seems to have failed.

And yet, no important new studies have come to the fore to support the long-disputed thesis that punishment by death is itself a deterrent. Other U.N. studies show, for example, no demonstrable differences in crime rates between countries which employ capital punishment and those which do not. Likewise, the before-and-after picture in countries which have lived with and without the death penalty is pretty much the same.

It is this question of deterrence that concerns many thoughtful members of Congress. They believe—and there is considerable evidence to support them—that the effectiveness of punishment as a deterrent lies not so much in its severity as in its certainty. And one major problem with many present-day systems of criminal justice is that the certainty of punishment has been seriously eroded. Either we have not perfected means of

apprehending criminals, as is often the case with drug traffickers; or, once caught, we have found ourselves unable or unwilling to produce convictions and penalties that will stick.

Capital punishment, if it is reinstated in this country, is not by itself likely to change that fact of life. Perhaps renewed discussion of the death penalty on Capitol Hill will be sufficient warning to the courts and penal institutions that they are not doing their job. But that is not likely, because so long as courts are crippled by impossible case overloads and conflicting criminal codes, there is little they can do by themselves.

In the final analysis, Congress may go along with the President, because of the public mood, because they share his frustration about growing crime rates, and because Mr. Nixon possesses unusual clout for a second-term Republican President. But there are many congressmen who, if they succumb to the public and political pressures which are sure to be brought to bear on this issue, will not do so enthusiastically. They know that capital punishment is not among the real answers to the crime problem, and that a careful restructuring of the criminal code would be a far more effective deterrent.

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**The Great Society**

by Bayard Rustin

Did the Great Society succeed in making our society more equal -- in providing the poor with better housing, quality schooling, improved medical care and other services? Or was the Great Society a highly touted, well meaning, but expensive failure?

The Nixon Administration is currently engaged in a high pressure campaign to persuade Americans that the liberal social legislation of the Johnson Administration accomplished little beyond wasting the taxpayers' money. For instance, the President said in one recent speech: "America is still recovering from years of extravagant, hastily passed measures, designed by central planners and costing billions of dollars--but producing few results." Nixon concluded that "the high-cost, no-result boondoggling by the federal government must end."

Criticism of the Great Society is not limited to conservatives; some liberals question whether Johnson's social programs accomplished anything more than raising the expectations of the poor, without fulfilling their needs.

But it is Nixon who is most bent on discrediting the programs of liberalism. He de-

voted each recent speech to an attack on this or that program which, he asserts, turned "the federal government into a nationwide slumlord" and gave the poor, "little but broken promises."

Whatever its shortcomings, the Great Society was not a failure. It disappointed the expectations of many; some of its programs were poorly conceived; others were never adequately funded.

But the successes of the Great Society were notable. The federal housing program did not make the government a "slumlord." It rather provided the only decent alternative for thousands of low income families who are unable to afford anything else but the most deplorable slums. Federal education programs have played a significant role in reducing the previously wide gap between the schooling of Whites and Blacks. In great part because of the Great Society, Black high school graduates now attend college in about the same proportion as their White classmates.

The weakness of the Great Society was not that it tried to do too much, but that in too many cases it did not go far enough.

Federal efforts to build housing, and to stimulate the building industry, for instance, produced a housing supply averaging one twentieth of the annual need, a situation which creates nearly as many problems as it solves.

Some of the programs were misdirected. There was too much emphasis on reforming marginal institutions in an effort to correct a "culture of poverty," a concept for which we still lack adequate definition. We would have been better off to provide the poor with, first, an adequate standard of living in the form of a guaranteed annual income, and, second the services which bear most directly on day-to-day life -- jobs, medical care, housing, and the like.

Another problem was that some programs were formulated to give the poor a sense of psychological comfort rather than to advance their economic status. The anti-poverty program particularly suffered because of the unwillingness to attack, head-on, the basic causes of impoverishment.

President Nixon has not bothered to criticize these aspects of the Great Society.

He has, rather, tried to depict the Great Society as dominated by a distant bureaucracy, dictating its wishes to local communities, with little interest in, or understanding of, local needs.



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**E-Z-Winner Contest**

1. Drawing for the first week only will be held on Wednesday, April 4th. Winners will be notified by mail and phone.
2. All entries must be received no later than 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 3rd.
3. There is no limit to the number of times you may enter. All entries of the previous weeks are eligible to win each succeeding week.
4. Winners of the weekly contests will be eligible for a grand prize drawing at the end of the contest.
5. Entries from states where contest are prohibited by law are void.
6. Employees of the PORTLAND OBSERVER and their families are not eligible to participate.

**5 Winners this week!**

**5 pairs of tickets to the Alameda Theatre to see Wattstax and Buck and the Preacher**

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**Pending bills**

HB 2398 on Financing Law and Moderate Income Housing was introduced at the request of the Governor to finance the construction, sale and rehabilitation of 14,000 low income housing units through the sale of \$200 million in tax-exempt revenue bonds. The primary market will be moderate-income families, with direct service to lower-income families through rehabilitation and rent variation. Contact House Local Government and Urban Affairs Committee.

SB 475 authorizes the cancellation or suppression of state liquor licenses where the licensee refuses services and facilities because of race, color, sex, creed or national origin, or engages in unlawful discriminatory employment practices. Contact Senator Keith Burns.

The bill to redistrict legislative districts in Multnomah County proposes to eliminate the arbitrary lines dividing the Black community and place an area approximately the Model Cities area into one legislative district. The purpose of the bill is to enhance Black voting power. Contact Representative Welly Priestley.

**Notice**

The OBSERVER welcomes comments from our readers. All letters submitted to the "Letters to the Editor" column must bear the writer's name and address. Deadline for articles and pictures: Monday, 5:00 p.m. preceding publication. Deadline for advertisement: Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. preceding publication.

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