



ALFRED LEE HENDERSON  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

WE SEE THE WORLD  
THROUGH BLACK EYES



## EDITORIAL FOCUS

### Facts refute middle class theory

A highly publicized article in the April issue of *Commentary* called "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric" has caused considerable controversy. The article by Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon suggests that the majority of Blacks in the United States can now be classified as middle class and that this progress is being ignored by Blacks and white-liberals in order to cash in on more government programs.

The main reason Scammon and Wattenberg were able to place 52% of Blacks as middle class is that they define as middle class nearly everyone except professionals and the unemployed. In their eagerness to find a group of Blacks with incomes nearly equal to whites, they eliminated all one-parent families, families where the husband is over 35 years old, and all Southern families. They then stated that "the median income Black husband-wife families in the North and West, with the head of the family under 35 years of age, rose from 78 percent of white income in 1959 to 96 percent in 1970." These families include only 16 percent of the Black families in the nation.

In reality, few Blacks have incomes that are equal to whites and those that do must work harder to get them.

Between 1947 and 1971, the gap between incomes of Black families and white families grew from \$2,500 to about \$4,000. So although some families are better off, most are worse off comparatively. The median income for Black families in 1971 was \$6,440, and for white families \$10,672. Nearly 40 percent of Black families earn less than \$5,000 a year, as compared to 16 percent of white families.

The statistical rise in Black income can be explained by two factors. Many Blacks left the South and got jobs in the North with higher pay — and higher cost of living. Blacks also gained during the economic boom of the 1960's when there was a demand for labor. But now, with two Blacks unemployed for every white, we are back where we started.

There are still few Blacks in high salary positions. Blacks have 70 percent fewer managerial jobs and 30 percent fewer craft jobs than they should have if they were fairly represented. Blacks constitute only 5 percent of the journeymen in the craft unions.

These figures show that Blacks are far from having equal income with whites, although some gains have been made.

Scammon and Wattenberg charge that white liberals and Black civil rights leaders have "elected to mute any public acknowledgement or celebration of Black accomplishments in order to maintain moral and political pressure on the administration and on public opinion." It should be realized that the termination of the social programs of the Great Society is not the result of lack of celebration, but the result of the coming to power of a conservative force which fundamentally opposes such plans.

The job of defending the Great Society should not belong alone to Blacks, for we are not the major benefactors of its social programs.

### Movement suffers

Reverend Abernathy has resigned from his position as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the position he has held since the death of its founder, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Abernathy attributed his resignation to lack of financial support for the organization.

SCLC has had its internal problems, with the defections of Jesse Jackson, and the movement of many of its leaders into other fields, such as Andrew Young, who has gone to the United States Congress. There has been some dissatisfaction with Abernathy's lack of charisma, but on the whole, he does have the ability and the will to lead this organization.

The NAACP is also having its problems, with one of its largest and most influential branches suspended as a result of its insistence on local answers to local problems. The national office, in an attempt to reinforce its control over the branches, has expelled the president and promised removal of the Branch Charter if it does not conform to the orders of the national office.

We are in a period when the struggle for equal opportunity is less glamorous and less dramatic than it was in the 1960's. There are no marches in Selma, bus-boycotts in Montgomery, or riots in Watts. The jails are not filled with militant young Blacks and idealistic young whites. The struggle goes on but it is fought in the courts, in the legislatures and city halls, and in the marketplace.

It is no longer illegal to belong to the NAACP in Mississippi. Its leaders are no longer shot or bombed. With the pressure from the outside reduced, the conflicts from within seem to take precedent.

It is probably natural that in this period of time financial support for civil rights organizations would diminish. When the struggle is not in the front pages of the daily newspapers, Blacks who have made it to some degree prefer to forget the past and hope for a better future; and whites are able to forget that oppression exists. But this is a period perhaps more dangerous than the 1960's when the fight was in the open and everyone knew where the lines were drawn. Now we face the more subtle racism of job discrimination and tokenism, political exclusion and economic oppression. We have a presidential administration that is intent on eliminating the programs that have helped minorities and the poor; that seeks to do away with contract compliance, quotas and educational assistance that have enabled Blacks to get into some good positions in government and private industry.

We cannot afford to lose our leaders because we are unwilling to provide financial and moral support. Our organization cannot afford to take time out from the struggle for power plays against our own. The great need is to unite against the common enemy.



Segregation in intent

## What other Black Editors Say

### Congress compromises

(Reprinted from *The Sun Reporter*)

Last week Congress reached a compromise with President Nixon on an issue of deadly importance. An agreement between the White House and Congress means the end of American air attacks against Cambodia after August 15.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield called the congressional action a "capitulation". Senator Mansfield noted that both Houses of Congress voted several times in recent weeks to cut off funding for military operations in Asia. The cutoff was scheduled to take effect June 30.

The compromise came after President Nixon vetoed a spending bill without funds for Asian military operations. The House failed to override Nixon's veto and Washington politicians began to speak of a constitutional crisis. Nixon said he would veto any bill with no funds for bombing. Nixon implied that any resulting budget crisis would be the fault of Congress. The \$33 billion bill vetoed by Nixon contained funds for several on-going government operations.

Nixon said that negotiations to reach peace in Asia would be stymied if Congress tied his hands by not allowing him to bomb Cambodia. The combination of an alleged budget crisis and implications that Congress would be held at fault if a peace agreement is not reached proved too much. Congress compromised.

The compromise, which means Cambodians will be subject to six more weeks of death from the sky, raises some questions.

First, does a legislative body have the right to compromise when the lives of people are at stake?

Second, what should be the first priority of Congress? Is Congress mandated to continue an undeclared war or should Congress bow to the President and give up its own war making power?

Third, is the Congressional compromise acceptable on the grounds that Nixon would have found bombing money from another source and compromise was the only way to end the Cambodian bombing?

The first question is moot. Congress has been compromising the lives of people for years. Neither Presidents Kennedy, Johnson or Nixon ever received a specific war declaration from Congress during the Southeast Asian conflict. Congress undoubtedly places the President above humanity. This is no justification. It is the reality of international politics.

The second question is full of ambiguity. Until recently Congress not only supported an undeclared Asian war, it willingly provided the money to wage it. Now that Congress has denied war funds to the President, why should it be so quick to rescind its own action? The answer to that question is the supremacy of the President in American politics. All debate notwithstanding, Congress invariably succumbs to the will of the President. Thus, the cessation of an undeclared war takes second billing when the President wants otherwise.

The third question raises one valid point. If Congress had continued to deny Nixon funds to wage war, it is safe to assume that the President would have found money elsewhere.

President Nixon has displayed a remarkable disdain for Congressional prerogatives. The federal bureaucracy, being the behemoth it is, provides funds for the President from many sources. Nixon, who feels that any congressional action to curb his power in the foreign arena is akin to treason, would have found war money. That may be why many congressmen and senators took the compromise offer; lock stock and bomber.

The Congressional compromise with President Nixon is certainly outrageous from any humanitarian standpoint. As a matter of practical politics it was a practical move by Congress to end the Asian conflict.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Judge finds room

Dear Mr. Henderson:

I just read the letter to the editor in the July 5, 1973 issue of the *Observer* entitled "No Room for the Judge". I am deeply appreciative of the concern expressed by the two attorneys, but my dilemma no longer exists.

On June 29, 1973, I moved into the courtroom and chambers which Judge Jean L. Lewis vacated on my behalf in order that my department would have a suit-

able and appropriate courtroom in which to hear cases. It is anticipated that the County Commissioners will provide and build a permanent and functional full-court complex for Judge Lewis within the next few

months.

Thank you and all your readers very much for all the community support which I have received.

Sincerely and respectfully,  
Mercedes F. Deiz

Published every Thursday by Exle Publishing Company, 2201 N. Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217. Mailing address, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208

Subscriptions \$5.25 per year - Tri-County area, \$6.00 per year - Outside Portland. Telephone, 283-2486.

Second Class Postage Paid at Portland, Oregon

The OBSERVER's official position is expressed only in its Publishers Column (We See The World Through Black Eyes). Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the OBSERVER.



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