

# **EDITORIAL FOCUS**

# Ten years later

Ten years ago Martin Luther King and others led the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom." In that ten years there have been many changes. Three of the leaders -- King, Whitney Young and Walter Reuther, are no longer with us. John F. Kennedy, who sat in the White House, and his spccessor, Lyndon B. Johnson, are dead. The era of the mass demonstrations for civil rights has almost ended.

Voter registration in the South has brought Black mayors to cities where Blacks were once beaten and jailed in their effort to register. The brother of Medgar Evers, who was murdered that same year, is now mayor of Fayette, Mississippi.

The Civil Rights Bill of 1964 was passed. Public accommodations are open. It has become popular to appoint Blacks to governmental positions.

But the past ten years have brought little change to those who still live in poverty -- closed out of opportunity for employment and education because of their race. Little has changed for the residents of the ghettos who do not benefit from the federal programs designed to improve their

The past ten years have brought little change to the philosophy and the structure of American society. It has brought no "Brotherhood", no acceptance of the equality of individuals, no real equal opportunity for the benefits of American life. This ten years comes to a close with an administration steeped in corruption, with a foreign policy designed to perpetuate aggression on the people of Southeast Asia, with a domestic policy determined to withdraw from the American people the few programs that have brought economic security and self-determination to the poor and to minorities.

# Study disproves **Welfare myth**

We are often told that Welfare recipients would rather draw a "hand out" than work and that if financial aid were withheld they would have to find a job. The implication that financial assistance breeds laziness has been used to fight the upgrading of welfare standards and especially the establishment of a guaranteed income.

A four year study conducted for the Office of Economic Opportunity by the University of Wisconsin refutes that theory and shows that giving cash to poor families does not reduce their incentive to work. Those receiving a cash income worked as often and earned as much as others who did not receive the subsidy.

The study showed that Blacks responded to the cash subsidy by earning more money on their jobs. The subsidy apparently provided the encouragement to continue working, even on low paying jobs. Young people and the better-educated poor used the subsidy to take time off work to find better jobs, and so raised their economic level.

The overall finding of the study was that the money did not change work incentive -- it just improved the standard of living.

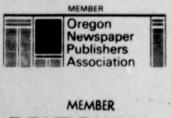
Without the fear that a guaranteed annual income would cause an immediate and widespread rush to quit work and live on the government subsidy, maybe Congress can get on with the job of providing an economic base for all lowincome families.

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## **Labor Day 1973**

ORGANIZED LABOR:

OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP

As another Labor Day approaches we pause to honor the laborers of the United States -- the men and women who have built the nation.

Ever since the shackles of slavery were broken Blacks have been involved in the struggle for human rights through labor organizations. This struggle takes place today in many forms -teacher strikes, consumer boycotts, demands for prison reform, "wild cat" strikes against factory

During the 1930's, when Black trade unionists helped organize millions of unorganized workers, put an end to sweat-shop conditions, and gave real dignity to the industrial worker, organized labor enjoyed the respect of the nation. Organized labor was the champion of the people and all segments of the population could identify with the move-

Today organized labor has too often become the social clubs of the white middle class. The craft unions are largely closed to minorities by restrictive membership requirements and unrealistic apprenticeship programs. Rather than lead the nation in the quest of economic security for all, the labor unions have become a protective society for the more fortunate. With few exceptions, the unions are preoccupied with wages and benefits and overlook the broader social goals.

The moral leadership of the labor movement must be restored by returning its attention to the needs of the American people -- quality education for every child, better housing, full employment, adequate medical care. The unions must broaden their ranks by admitting all of the working people of the nation, by formulating agressive apprenticeship and training programs, and by uniting all of the racial and ethnic factions of the labor force. Only then will labor be an effective voice against the dehumanizing profit motive of big business. Only then will labor have a voice in the operation of the corporations that control the economic and political life of this nation.

In Oregon we find few Black members in the labor unions -- the result of years of conscious and purposeful discrimination. The practice of exclusion is illegal -- but the laws are not enforced. Black workers are becoming impatient. If action is not taken to include Blacks, the work stoppages and violence that has hit other cities will soon be seen in Portland.

## What other **Black Editors say**

THE ATLANTA INQUIROR

Usually when one pictures welfare, one thinks of poverty stricken, needy people, many of them from minority races, who cannot work to support themselves. Welfare, then, could be defined as a system where public funds are given to the poor. Some critics, many of them politicians who smell political profit in the issue, have attacked welfare because they say it encourages people not to work and it gives them something for nothing. Yet if one defines welfare as gifts of public money, then it is not only the poor who are receiving welfare. In fact, some of the most vehement critics of the welfare system are getting what amounts to free money gifts from the federal government, only no one dares call it welfare - although that is what it is.

Take the case of a congressman who, until recently, was paid as much as \$250,000 a year by the government for not planting crops on his farm. Eventually the amount was reduced to \$50,000 per farm. But this did not disturb the congressman, as he then divided his farm five ways and collected the same \$250,000. The congressman did not work to

earn this money; indeed he had been paid not to work. President Nixon himself, who has often criticized what he characterizes as welfare chislers, has also been the recipient of a form of welfare. This welfare came in the form of federal funds spent to improve two of his four homes. The General Services Administration (GSA) states that the government paid a total of \$1,283,274 to improve the Key

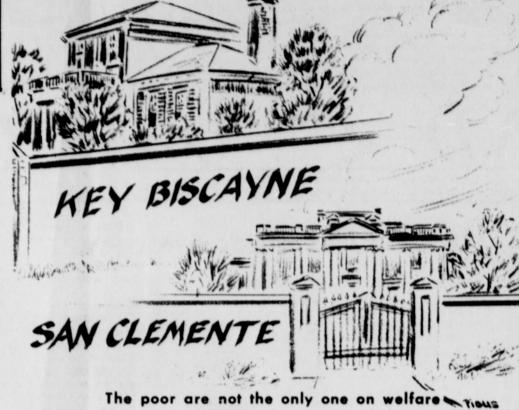
Biscayne and San Clemente Nixon residences. Certainly the American people cannot complain about that portion of the money which was used for the security needs of the president. The \$340,000 spent for a helicopter landing pad and the \$128,708 spent on bulletproof windows seem

reasonable amounts to pay to protect this nation's leader. But what of the monies disbursed for such non-security improvements as landscaping and a sprinkler system (\$76,000) and an electrical system (\$184,174) for what is, after all, Mr. Nixon's personal property? Free gifts to the President at the taxpayers' expense? Why, then, the huge outery about poor people using public funds to supply the necessities of life, when the President, who is hardly a poor man, receives thousands of dollars to water his lawn?

Yet, President Nixon vetoed the child development bill which both houses of Congress passed, and he cut back Model Cities and other poverty programs. Apparently he feels that the public funds are too limited to be thrown away on these humanitarian programs. He seemingly thinks that scarce public money is better spent continuing the bombing in Southeast Asia or servicing the private estates of Richard Nixon. The rationale seems to be: welfare is bad if spent on those who really need it; good if spent on the rich, who can always use sophisticated means to conceal or disguise the dole they have received.

USUALLY, WHEN ONE PICTURES WELFARE, ONE THINKS OF POVERTY-STRICKEN, NEEDY PEOPLE, MANY OF THEM FROM MINORITY RACES.

PRESIDENT MIXON HIMSELF WHO HAS OFTEN CRITICIZED FOR WHAT HE CHARACTERIZES AS WELFARE CHISLERS, HAS ALSO BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF A FORM OF WELFARE. THE TOTAL AMOUNT PAID TO IMPROVE THE KEY BISCAYNE AND SAN CLEMENTE MIXON RESIDENCES WAS \$1.283,274.



## Welfare system: Institutionalized poverty

by Representative Gus Hawkins

In 1969 the President's Commission on Poverty found that of the working poor, one of every four worked 35 hours a week or more for 50 to 52 weeks, but still remained poor.

The commission observed that the assertion "the poor are to blame for their circumstances and should be expected to lift themselves from poverty" is incorrect.

The commission additionally noted "the simple fact is that most poor people remain poor because access to income through work is currently beyond their reach."

Mindful of its obligation to all of its citizens, rich and poor alike, the federal government recognizes its re sponsibility to provide social welfare services to the poor of this nation as a bulwark against poverty, ignorance and disease.

These welfare services are not perfect; however, they are inordinately controversial and greatly misunderstood.

Perhaps the most pressing regarding welfare is the plight of the welfare recipient and the abusive nature of the attacks leveled against this helpless victim of the disease of poverty.

Not surprisingly, myths about welfare sometimes become substitutes for actual knowledge and cause the real facts to become obscured or

Jobs for all:

For the past several years

national debate over domes-

tic issues has been largely

confined to artificial, politi-

cally inspired issues such as

busing, "law and order", and

have had their day, it is time

to move on to a real issue of

basic significance to many

millions of people and to the

future of this society - jobs

If you read the official sta-

tistics that show unemploy-

ment trending downward,

or the glowing stories about

the booming economy, or if

you have a good job yourself,

you might not know just how

The government admits to

an official unemployment rate

of 4.8 percent of the labor

That sounds small enough

until you realize that it

represents some 4.3 million

people, many with families to

support, who can't get a job.

. The labor force is in reality

There is the upper tier of

workers with good jobs, good

salaries, union membership

and fringe benefits. Then,

there is a lower tier of

people who have no job,

work part-time when they

really want full-time employ-

ment, and those who do

below-poverty wages.

force.

split in two.

bad the situation really is.

Now that the demagogues

by Vernon Jordan

Obviously we cannot discuss all of the factors contributing to the myths surrounding welfare, but some get more than those who myths are so unfounded they

Myth: Hard work is the answer to the welfare prob-

beg for truth.

Fact: Less than 1 percent of the nation's able-bodied men are on welfare. In most states employable males are eligible for welfare only after they have received certification that no suitable jobs are available for them. Seventyfour percent of those on welfare are mothers and dependent children (70 per-

cent of whom are under 12). Myth: Most welfare recipients are Blacks who have moved to northern cities just to get on welfare.

Fact: About 55 percent of welfare recipients are white; 39 percent are Black; 6 percent are American Indians and others. The average rural migrant hoping to find employment when he moves to the city lives in the city for five years before requesting welfare.

Myth: Most welfare recipients cheat the welfare system.

Fact: The vast majority of welfare payments are made to persons legally entitled to them. Most studies of welfare "fraud" (conducted by both state governments and the federal system) indicate that less than 1 percent of

proportionately of Black peo-

ple and other minorities, wo

men, young people, and Viet-

The latest poverty figures

tell the story very well. Last

year about one million white

people moved OUT of pov-

erty, but some 300,000 Black

people became poor. In the

past four years, more than

60,000 Blacks became poor.

something of a hush-hush

subject as emphasis is placed

on the progress Black people

have made in education, in

obtaining better jobs, and in

But most of the economic

progress has been confined

to relatively few Blacks with

the education and skills to

higher family income.

Black poverty has become

nam veterans.

Issue of basic significance

the welfare recipients are involved in fradulent con-Myth: Welfare recipients

work. Fact: \$3,600 a year is the national average welfare budget for a family of four.

\$4.275 is the official poverty

level for a family of four. Obviously, the life of a welfare recipient is not easy. and is becoming more difficult with the continuing rise in the cost of living. There are some other interesting facts concerning the plight of the poor in this nation:

• 25 percent of the American population lives below the minimum decent stan-

• 55 percent of the welfare rolls are made up of children. • 20 percent of the welfare rolls are made up of the blind, disabled, and the aged. • 2 years is the estimated time the average family re-

• 60 percent of welfare mothers are: working, in training, waiting for training, or waiting for jobs, or wait ing for decent day care.

ceives assistance.

Clearly, facts by them selves do not solve the problems of welfare. They do, however, allow us the opportunity of understanding the nature of the welfare system and thereby thinking more intelligently about solu-

The government says there

are 4.3 million of them. But

that is only because the gov-

ernment counts only people

actively looking for work

The fact is that there are

millions of people who are

not officially counted as being

unemployed because they

have given up looking for

work, or because they are

working part-time, even

though they may prefer to

If you add these dis-

couraged job seekers and

under-employed workers to

the officially unemployed,

you'll find that there are

actually about 10 million un-

employed people, over two

million of them Black.

who can't find it.

hold full-time jobs.

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| 69 Plymouth Road Runner               |  |
| 69 Dodge Comet 4 dr                   |  |
| 69 Pontiac Tempest LeMans 2 dr. Coupe |  |
| 68 Buick Wildcat 4 dr. sedan          |  |
| 70 Plymouth Fury III 4 dr. HT         |  |

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• \$6.00 per year elsewhere.

about a supposedly booming economy, and other diver-

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take advantage of the waning Instead of the official rate of 4.8 percent unemployed, a more accurate picture shows 10 percent of the labor force out of work, with a 20 percent rate for Black workers. This grim reality has been

the typical Black family last year earned about \$700 LESS than the government acceptable living standard.

who work all year round for ones, the people with jobs.

This lower tier of Ameriaren't lucky enough to find a can workers is made up dis-

discrimination in industry. What ought to be of greater concern is that one out of three Black people is poor; that nearly half of all Black children are growing up in poor families; and that

There are about 10 million people -- white and Black -less than \$5,000. A third of all Black full-time workers make less than a living wage. And these are the lucky

work full-time but make What about those who

sionary issues. But it is clear that the economy doesn't seem able to provide everyone with work, and it is time this issue came out into the open and the nation started a great debate on what should be its No. 1 priority --

full employment policy.

hidden behind doctored sta-

tistics, misleading rhetoric