



ALFRED L. HENDERSON
Editor/Publisher



**WE SEE THE WORLD
THROUGH BLACK EYES**

EDITORIAL FOCUS

Not sorry now

Representatives Edith Green and Wendell Wyatt have indicated that they will no longer serve in the House of Representatives when their current terms end.

Wendell Wyatt has earned the respect of the nation. He has served his state and his district well. Although often we do not agree with him, his decisions are based on his conservative political philosophy and we feel he is a man of integrity. Wyatt's constituents will feel the loss when this man leaves Congress.

We cannot say that we are sorry to see Edith Green go. Black people across the nation are rejoicing as they see this powerful opponent of equal rights leave Congress. Mrs. Green, who has been labeled a liberal, has consistently joined with Southern Congressmen and other conservatives to fight programs that would assist Blacks and the poor. She has fought the busing of school children to promote desegregation with a venom that is unusual for one who represents a state with so few Blacks. She has been one of the strongest opponents of the War on Poverty programs and has even opposed such programs as the extension of benefits to the unemployed.

Mrs. Green was for a time in the early 60's called a "friend to Blacks" -- but this so-called friendship ended when she sold out the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and when she became a leader in the move to oust Adam Clayton Powell from his seat in the House and his chairmanship of the House Education Committee, of which Mrs. Green then became chairman.

Mrs. Green will long be remembered as one who was active in the promotion of federal aid to education and other educational programs. However, her reputation in the field of education is tarnished by her opposition to equal educational opportunities for Black children.

No, we cannot say we are sorry to see Mrs. Green go. We can only work to insure that her replacement will have a sensitivity to the needs of minorities and the poor of the District.

Let's hope Mrs. Green enjoys a quiet retirement and refrains from running for a local office.

Campaigns begin

As February draws to a close and the primary races begin to take shape, we caution Blacks who are considering running for public office to announce their intentions early.

So far only Gladys McCoy, current school board member, and Attorney John Toran, candidate for the state senate, have announced; and we assume Bill McCoy will seek re-election to the State Legislature. Others are talking about the city and county commission and legislative seats, but none have made their intentions public.

A successful election campaign involves more than a good candidate. It requires money, volunteer help, and endorsement of well-known and respected citizens and groups. Those who wait too long will find their potential supporters have already endorsed and pledged their assistance to other candidates. Many persons who would otherwise support a Black candidate will be obligated to honor commitments made before the Black's interest was known. With numbers of candidates running for a variety of important offices, the money will already have been pledged elsewhere.

It also takes time for a candidate to reach all of the people of the district -- to make his platform known to the average voter. A long and active campaign is especially important to those who do not already have name familiarity throughout the district.

Another danger of the last minute campaign is that we often have several good Black candidates -- as well as several whites -- running for the same positions. Since prospective candidates must consider their opposition, an early announcement and some show of support will often keep the opposition to a minimum. It is important that the best Black candidates not eliminate each other, and that we make an effort in all areas.

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Brotherhood Week

This is Brotherhood Week, a week set aside to remind us that all men are brothers. During Brotherhood Week Christians invite Jews to their luncheons, Black ministers are asked to speak in white churches, and school children see movies about minorities. Everyone pauses to extend a hand of friendship -- or tolerance -- for one week in the year.

Then when Brotherhood Week ends, everything goes back to normal. The old hatreds surface, the bigotry continues, the white neighbors resume their struggle to keep Blacks out of their schools, the personnel directors reject minority applicants, the prices go up and the quality down in poor neighborhoods, the workers scorn the welfare mothers, the growers misuse Chicano farmworkers, the politicians deplore "giveaway" programs.

Wouldn't it be appropriate if some year, during Brotherhood Week, a real change was made -- if the President would propose humanistic legislation to provide for the basic physical and medical needs of all of the people; if Congress and the State Legislatures would appropriate adequate funds for welfare and education and job training; if corporations would consider the customers dependent on them rather than just their profits. It would be a real Brotherhood Week if actions were taken to end racism and oppression in the United States.

But none of these things were done during this Brotherhood Week. We have a presidential administration steeped in corruption, shortages that disproportionately effect the poor, and an economic system designed to oppress.

So we don't have much faith in Brotherhood Week, and can't believe that most of the gestures made during this week are sincere.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE

I feel that on the concept of sterilization for the mentally retarded and poor in that order, as stated by the people who support it, is an insult and a slap in the face of the people of this country. For so long now, the words that echoed in the ear of the poor have been words that support the upper classes like Phases I, II, III, and IV; soaring food prices; energy crisis; crime in a high office that would have sent a commoner to prison. Things that really show and force the privileged few out of hiding and separate them for the whole world to see. With most people concentrating on how to succeed in something falling faster than they are, they fail to see exactly what is meant by sterilization.

First off, the mentally retarded is not the question but only used in this text as something to take the pressure off the other -- "the poor". We should be for the sterilization of the mentally re-

tarded if the criteria for judging mentally retarded were fair and just and not based upon one's ability to succeed in a chaotic society, or one's aggressiveness, or one's competitiveness, or one's perspective employment; but based on one's ability to show traits such as compassion and love and an ability to survive, understand and learn. This society can't stand anything or anybody flowing in the opposite direction. The mentally retarded flow in a different direction so they must be controlled. On the other hand, this country must maintain the illusion that everyone, regardless of race, creed or religion, can ascend to the highest class of them all -- "the elite" -- the upper class, if they (the people) work for it. Too many people are a direct threat to that illusion because in this society someone has to be poor and the affluent aren't making room at the top.

In order not to have to share the pie of America with the growing masses which are straining the limits

Priorities for Blacks

by Bayard Rustin

What are the most serious problems Black people face? If asked this question a few years ago, many whites would doubtlessly have answered that the problems confronting the Negroes were measurably different from the problems confronting the rest of society.

Whereas poor people and the working class have traditionally suffered from unemployment, bad housing, lack of access to education, run-down, crime infested neighborhoods and other inequities built into the economic order, Blacks, it was felt, suffered above all else from the racist attitudes of individual whites.

The belief that personal attitudes were more important than economic injustice was reflected in the reaction to the Kerner Commission Report. Despite its explicit condemnation of the racist behavior of institutions -- as opposed to the racist sentiments of individuals -- the report was widely interpreted as a call for whites to look inward. Unhappily, the Commission findings were made public at precisely the moment when America could least afford to indulge in self-analysis. Ghettoes were burning, and the country was traumatized by racial disorder. Black people were intensely disillusioned -- not so much because of the persistence of individual prejudice -- but because government was failing to follow through on its promises to remake our economic and social structure.

Now the New York Times has published a study which, while not exploring racial problems as comprehensively as the Kerner Commission, presents a more accurate reflection of what Black people want. Its significance lies in its findings that the problems of Blacks and the problems of whites are basically the same and, moreover, that these problems have almost nothing to do with attitudes or prejudices.

Both Blacks and whites, for instance, were more concerned about crime than any other social ill; Blacks, if anything, were more emphatic in their feelings about law and order. Both agreed that the other most important problems were housing, drug addiction and transportation.

They were in agreement that the rich, the corporations, landlords and organized crime received preferential treatment from government. And while about one of every five Blacks acknowledged to having been victimized by discrimination, almost none listed racial bias as the most important problem they faced.

In only one respect did the survey find strong racial differences. This was government programs -- such as busing or the placement of low-income housing in middle-

income neighborhoods -- to further integration. Otherwise, Blacks and whites expressed very much the same attitudes towards social problems, institutions, and what ought to be the priorities of government.

What has been written here is in no way meant to minimize the awful spiritual and psychological toll which prejudice exacts from our society. Nor is it my intention to deny that racist attitudes can and certainly do determine the policies of government and the functioning of institutions.

But the answer to America's racial problems is economic and political, not psychological. Blacks recognize this. The challenge, therefore, is to drive the point home, as emphatically and often as possible, to all Americans who are concerned about inequality.

If we have learned anything from recent experience, it is that social myths can infect the entire political system. As long as racism was the principle enemy, concerted, interracial political action was impossible. And to the degree that the nation turned inward, the more likely it was to believe that "government programs make any difference."

We would be much better off today if we had attacked the basic social problems about which the majority of Americans are concerned. For in the mobilization of a coalition of the majority of Americans who need social change lies the solution to polarization and hate. And in the resolution of these problems lies the ultimate answer to racism.

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