

Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man

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"THE BURDEN OF RACE"

(Negro History Specialist's study of Negro-White relations to be published Oct. 11)

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A white historian who specializes in American Negro history has edited a documentary study of Negro-White relations in America during the past 350 years. Edited and with commentary by Gilbert Osofsky, the book is titled "The Burden of Race." It will be published by Harper & Row on Oct. 11.

The documents included in the book range from Cotton Mather's advice to the slaveholders, excerpts from John McCone's analysis of the Watts riot, the famous Morgenthau report and Stokely Carmichael on "black power."

THE BOOK is divided into sections, from Slavery, to the Role of the Supreme Court, to the frustrations of the period following World War II. Each segment is preceded by an introduction by Professor Osofsky.

Excerpts from some of the documents in the book:

A slave trader's description of a voyage to Africa in 1794 and his subsequent purchase of a group of young Negro men from their Negro captors. "The captives were destitute for the most part of even their necessary covering and bound indiscriminately together by hands and legs, the cords being again fastened to the ground by stakes."

Some slaves were raffled off. "Fancy girls" (concubines) went for the highest prices, as did good breeders and field hands. In 1838 the Charleston Mercury advertised the sale of a 20-year-old girl "very prolific in her generating qualities."

A description of the domestic slave trade by a Negro who was rented out by his master to work with a slave trader, "I was ordered to have the old men's whiskers shaved off, and the gray hairs plucked out where they were not too numerous, in which case we had a preparation of blacking to color it... These slaves were also taught how old they were and after going through the blacking process they looked ten or fifteen years younger."

A DESCRIPTION of a race riot in Chicago, "Thirty-eight persons killed, 537 injured, and about 1,000 rendered homeless and destitute was the casualty list of the race riot which broke out in Chicago on July 27, 1919, and swept uncontrolled through parts of the city for four days. By August 2 it had yielded to the forces of law and order, and on August 8 the state militia withdrew."

From a Chicago Property Owner's Journal around 1920, "Mrs. Nora Foster of 4207 Prairie sold her house to some niggers and when she went to collect she was assaulted and thrown down a flight of stairs... it does serve as a splendid example of the fact that niggers are undesirable neighbors and entirely irresponsible and vicious."

AN ASSOCIATE professor of history at the University of Illinois, at Chicago, Gilbert Osofsky is also the author of "Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto." He is now at work on a study of Negroes of the Depression and a volume of slave narratives.

Virginia Kirkus reports on "A Burden of Race:"

"While there have been many documentary histories of Negro-white relations in America, Mr. Osofsky's is both judicious and eloquent; his selections show a wide range of complexities and his introductory passages are short and pertinent clarifications. A really representative omnium gatherum."

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ADMINISTRATORS HIT NATION'S WELFARE SYSTEM

NEW YORK - (NPI)--Welfare Commissioner Mitchell I. Ginsberg believes the welfare system should be "thrown out."

Ginsberg, whose department feeds, clothes, and shelters 665,621 persons--most of them Negroes and Puerto Ricans--is faced by the prospect of rising relief rolls in an increasingly prosperous economy. He doesn't like what his department has to do and doesn't mind saying so.

Charging that New York's billion-dollar welfare system is run "like a corner candy store," Ginsberg called the nation's welfare services "bankrupt" as a social institution.

He generally agrees with Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's disapproval of welfare as "a system of handouts, a second-rate of social services, which damages and demeans its recipients."

THE EXISTING system will have to be improved through bold experimentation, he said, though a new system was "years away."

Ginsberg particularly found fault with the "crazy and self-defeating" policy of deducting from welfare recipients' checks what they earn. Such a policy, he said, imposes, in effect, a 100 per cent tax on earnings, thereby encouraging idleness.

People won't work for nothing, he said.

To offset this policy, Ginsberg has gained approval for a program allowing mothers receiving aid to dependent children to keep the first \$85 a month of their job earnings and half the rest, up to \$4,900.

A work stoppage by welfare workers had delayed his program, for which he had obtained approval from state and federal officials.

Another Ginsberg plan is to shift the whole administration of welfare to the state government. Doing this would simplify the task of deciding who is entitled to receive welfare, he said. With three levels of government involved--federal, state, and local--it takes too long to decide, he explained.

THE WELFARE director also believes that all persons willing and able to work should be guaranteed jobs. If private industry won't employ them, government agencies should, he said.

A welfare program by any other name may smell as bad, but Ginsberg has changed his department's name from welfare to social services to remove some of the stigma of welfare and give a clearer idea of what his department seeks to provide.

Meanwhile, Ginsberg has promoted job training programs with the money he has. While he hopes for the eventual removal of the present welfare system, he doesn't believe it can be "thrown out right away."

"Relief Shackles Poor"

WASHINGTON - (NPI)--Governmental programs are locking the poor in poverty, several welfare leaders and a Congressman from Detroit have charged.

Several leaders of the American Public Welfare Association said that the \$6 billion in relief programs throughout the country do nothing but shackle the poor in the "dead end" of poverty.

J. M. Wedemeyer, California's former public welfare director and director of the Association's project to improve welfare services, said he was jolted to learn that the "most hated force (in the Watts area of Los Angeles after the 1965 riot) was welfare."

The administration of welfare programs is regarded as oppressive, he concluded after conducting a survey in cities of 100,000 to 500,000 population.

OTHER LEADERS of the Association noted that the poor are kept in poverty by the rule that persons receiving welfare may not have a side income.

They proposed a reverse income tax for the poor--in which the federal government pays them--as a way of overcoming the "dead end" of many of the nation's poor.

Meanwhile, Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.) charged that "the federal government has, in effect, legislated poverty for 17 million American workers."

He told the Retail Clerks International Association's convention--whose members are not known for their opulence--that one out of every three workers earns less than \$1.60 per hour, despite last year's improvements in the federal minimum wage law.

"An hourly rate of less than \$1.60 does not

result in even the \$3,130 a year, established by the federal antipoverty program as the minimum necessary to keep a family of four out of poverty," he said.

"TEN MILLION of those covered by the minimum wage law are not provided with this minimum yearly income, while another seven million are not even covered by the federal law."

The failure of the federal government to use a coordinated approach to the elimination of poverty "is both irresponsible and unresponsive to the needs of the 17 million semi-employed Americans." Any person who must work hard every day and then take home poverty pay is semi-employed," he said.

Rep. Conyers announced he would introduce a new minimum wage bill that would end "legislated poverty." His bill would raise the minimum wage to \$1.60 immediately for all non-supervisory workers who now earn less than that amount.

"A \$2. per hour wage would go into effect for all employees as of July, 1968," he said.

"The most important step for the Congress is to end the kind of legislated poverty which we have under the present minimum wage law."

THIS WEEK IN NEGRO HISTORY

AN "NPI" FEATURE

- Sept. 27, 1950 Ezzard Charles retained heavy-weight boxing title by defeating Joe Louis at Yankee Stadium, New York City.
- Sept. 27, 1918 George Henry White died in Philadelphia. He was the last Reconstruction congressman of South Carolina.
- Sept. 28, 1901 Richmond Barthe, one of the best contemporary sculptors, was born in Bay St. Louis, Miss.
- Sept. 28, 1895 Booker T. Washington, famed Tuskegee educator, served as judge at the Atlanta Exposition where he delivered the address that rocketed him into national prominence.
- Sept. 28, 1935 The late James Weldon Johnson became a regular lecturer at New York University.
- Sept. 28, 1948 Herman Marion Sweatt applies to enter the University of Texas law school.
- Sept. 28, 1951 Dr. Ralph J. Bunche appointed undersecretary of the United Nations.
- Sept. 29, 1784 First African lodge of Free Masons established in the United States at Boston, with Prince Hall as leader.
- Sept. 30, 1893 Booker T. Washington wedded for third time. His bride was Miss Maggie James Murray, Fisk (Nashville) University graduate.
- Sept. 30, 1949 Hallie Q. Brown, former dean, Tuskegee Institute, died.
- Sept. 30, 1865 Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery was passed by Congress.

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A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER (Published every Thursday) DEDICATED to the INTERESTS and ASPIRATIONS for a BETTER LIFE for NEGRO CITIZENS of the STATE of NEVADA

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