



Education Is Power

By Thomas E. Wilson,
Ph.D.

This week's column was written by Mr. Porter L. Troutman, Jr., Director of the Teachers Corps project at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and candidate for the Doctor of Education degree.

The quality of education received by minority and low-income children and the impact of the growing presence of these children in formerly white segregated schools are subjects of widespread national concern. Educational literature abounds with indictments of the educational system, yet effective long term solutions are few and far between. A conclusion is that most approaches leading to solutions of problems concerning the educationally and culturally different continue to elude even the most astute educators.

Then, what seems to be the problem? Is it that far too many of those who are supposedly engaged in the education of children are deficient in their ability to respect, teach, guide and counsel those who are different? Are these children seen as "deficit models?" Heaven forbid! Many times, what they bring to the classroom in the way of a particular culture, lifestyle, language and learning mode is judged as inferior or deficit. Cultural differences are translated to inferiorities.

However, since the middle fifties, many changes have occurred. Some of these changes are directed towards the goal of increasing educational opportunities for all and tend to encourage and capitalize on diversity.

One of the programs which presumes to accomplish the above is Teacher Corps. The Teacher Corps program was begun in the mid-sixties, and had as its purpose the training of teachers who are or will work with the culturally different or economically deprived child. Careful attention is given to the selection of the "Interns" to assure that they are willing to be trained in techniques of working with minority and low-income children.

The present project is housed at the Matt Kelly Sixth Grade Center. Mrs. Naomi Goynes, a Master Teacher, is the on-site team leader in order to insure that they receive the best educational experience possible. These interns work directly with the children in a classroom setting. This experience is complemented by classes at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and visitations to other schools.

In addition to free university classes and in-school experiences, the interns are required to spend a minimum of ten hours per week in a community-based educational program. Some of the kinds of activities they participate in are Girl Scouts, Parent Organizations, Big Brothers, etc.

Other benefits that the interns receive are:

- 1 - Elementary Teaching Certificates.
- 2 - One-hundred twenty-five dollars per week in stipends.
- 3 - A Master's Degree in Education providing they fulfill the requirements for the degree.

In addition to the above, thirty other experienced teachers receive additional training through classes and/or workshop at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in order that their work with minority and/or low-income children may be more rewarding.

Some of the benefits that experienced teachers receive are:

- 1 - Twenty-four semester hours of university credit classes to be based on their individual needs.
- 2 - More than four-hundred dollars in instructional supplies.
- 3 - An opportunity to plan collaboratively with the professorial staff of the University in designing curriculum content.

Most important is that the Teacher Corps project is a joint educational venture between the University of Nevada, and the Clark County School District.



Benjamin L. Hooks

FCC
Commissioner

Almost everywhere I have gone in the past few months, folks have come up to me with questions: "What is this I hear about your leaving the Federal Communications Commission? Are you going to be the next NAACP executive director? You're not leaving the Commission are you? I hear you are going to be the next Chairman of the Commission. Is this true?"

Questions...Questions...Questions...Questions I wanted so much to answer in a positive way, but could not. I could not for the simple reason that I had no positive answers at my disposal.

It was, indeed, true as some folks were saying that if Jimmy Carter won the election that, as ranking Democrat on the Commission, I would certainly be in line to be appointed chairman.

But all of this was so much speculation: "If Jimmy Carter is elected?" "If he should choose me" as ranking Democrat at the FCC to become its chairman. If. If. If. The ifs were entirely too many and I had no concrete answers for them.

As to my being selected to succeed the venerable Roy Wilkins as executive director of the esteemed NAACP, I could say yes, I am being considered for the post. Yes, I had been contacted and asked by board members "If the board should choose you, would you accept?"

Well, what does that mean? It was an iffy question once more, and I could not give an honest answer to the many queries based on that. Throughout these many months, I have never once felt I "had the NAACP job sewed up."

Indeed, I often felt just the opposite. The

BAYARD RUSTIN Saving The NAACP

The NAACP barely escaped a legal lynching on October 8. It was endangered because it had worked so diligently to protect the rights of black Americans.

Already facing a recession-induced financial crisis, a new and more ominous threat to the most important civil rights organization arose over the summer.

In the early 1960's the NAACP organized a selective buying campaign against merchants in Port Gibson, Mississippi to counteract job discrimination. The merchants sued in the Mississippi courts, alleging restraint of trade, and won a damage suit of \$1.25 million.

To make matters worse, Mississippi requires a bond of 125 percent of the judgement, in this case \$1.6 million, to be posted within 45 days if the judge's decision is to be appealed. That bond was originally due on October 1, but a federal judge in Mississippi issued a restraining order and pushed back the deadline for a week pending a full hearing of the issue.

Throughout its history there have been attempts to destroy the NAACP. But for many years intimidation, violence, and legislation has threatened only local or state branches. The Mississippi suit, in contrast, threatens the entire NAACP. The bond which the NAACP was required to post amounts to almost half of its annual budget, the awarded damages by themselves to over one-third. At a minimum, the NAACP was facing a drastic cut back in its activities.

Faced with this desperate situation, the NAACP mounted a vigorous effort to raise the needed \$1.6 million. Serious obstacles handicapped the effort. Many blacks, not to mention whites, found it impossible to believe that in 1976 the NAACP was under a crippling, potentially fatal assault. The leadership of the NAACP and black churches formed a coalition last year which elected Governor Charles Finch, a moderate. For the first time in modern history, blacks now play an integral role in the state's Democratic party. But all the past and future accomplishments of the NAACP were,

Search and Screening Committee of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP was indeed masterful in keeping a blank face in terms of its considered choice.

And so, you see, I had nothing at my disposal, no concrete information of any value with which to answer the many queries. Hence, I might have appeared to be "stonewalling" when in fact, I simply could not answer any of the questions with truth or accuracy.

I was as surprised as anyone when the board announced it had unanimously accepted the Search Committee's recommendation that I become the next executive director of the NAACP.

Never in my wildest dreams did I dream this would occur. I have always loved the NAACP, felt if I worked hard and lived long enough someday I might become a national board member. Nothing more. I am still flabbergasted.

Nonetheless, I will do my level best to follow in the footsteps of the giants who went before me: John R. Shillady, James Weldon Johnson, Walter White and now, Mr. Wilkins.

The task before me is an awesome one. I have no illusions about that. The NAACP under the brilliant and inspiring leadership of Wilkins and his predecessors has been in the forefront of the struggle for civil rights in this country for more than 67 years.

Mr. Wilkins retires in July, 1977. I will then assume the NAACP leadership mantle. I have no great plans to alter the present course of this organization. I only hope to expand and make bigger and, hopefully, better those things the NAACP has always done with so much commitment and excellence.

But I can only do that with the help of American citizens -- black and white, brown and yellow, rich and poor, Jew and gentile -- and, of course, with God's help.

I look upon the assumption of this new post as not a negation of my work on the Commission, but as an opportunity to expand that work in many many more areas in American life. The fight continues at another level.

nonetheless, threatened by the suit. The national media virtually ignored the threat to the NAACP, although the black press implored its readers to help and black leaders called upon their supporters.

Blacks across the country responded to the NAACP's crisis by the tens of thousands. When I was at the NAACP's national headquarters the day before the deadline, a black woman, who works as a cleaning lady, brought in a contribution of \$25. The day of the deadline, she returned with another \$25. The sacrifice and commitment of this woman was typical of the responses of black Americans. The bulk of the money raised came in small contributions from NAACP branches.

Yet as the deadline approached, the NAACP was still \$800,000 short. In moments of crisis like this we find out who are our real friends. No corporation, no foundation, no philanthropist stepped forward to save the NAACP. But the labor movement was there. The AFL-CIO guaranteed the additional \$800,000 needed for the bond. The AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department and the United Auto Workers each agreed to reimburse the Federation for up to \$200,000 should the NAACP lose its appeal in the courts.

Lane Kirkland, the AFL CIO's Secretary-Treasurer, pointed out that "It should come as no surprise to anyone that the labor movement is taking action. We have never been passive spectators when our friends were in trouble and we never will be." Unfortunately, for many people it probably came as an enormous surprise. All too often the labor movement has been scorned as racist and reactionary, when in fact, it has been the leading ally of the civil rights movement. Black Americans owe the labor movement a debt of gratitude for its assistance at this time of crisis.

We also owe an incalculable debt to the NAACP. The immediate crisis has passed, but the NAACP still needs contributions so that it can continue the fight for freedom and justice.

You can do your part by sending a contribution to the NAACP, 1790 Broadway, New York, New York 10010.