

The Publisher Speaks



GUEST EDITORIAL BY Naomi Levine

It was 1963, the summer of our innocence, when 250,000 Black and white Americans walked hand in hand to the Lincoln Memorial in the great March on Washington. The goal was civil-rights legislation to make it illegal for any employer or university or lunch counter to turn away any citizen because of the color of his skin.

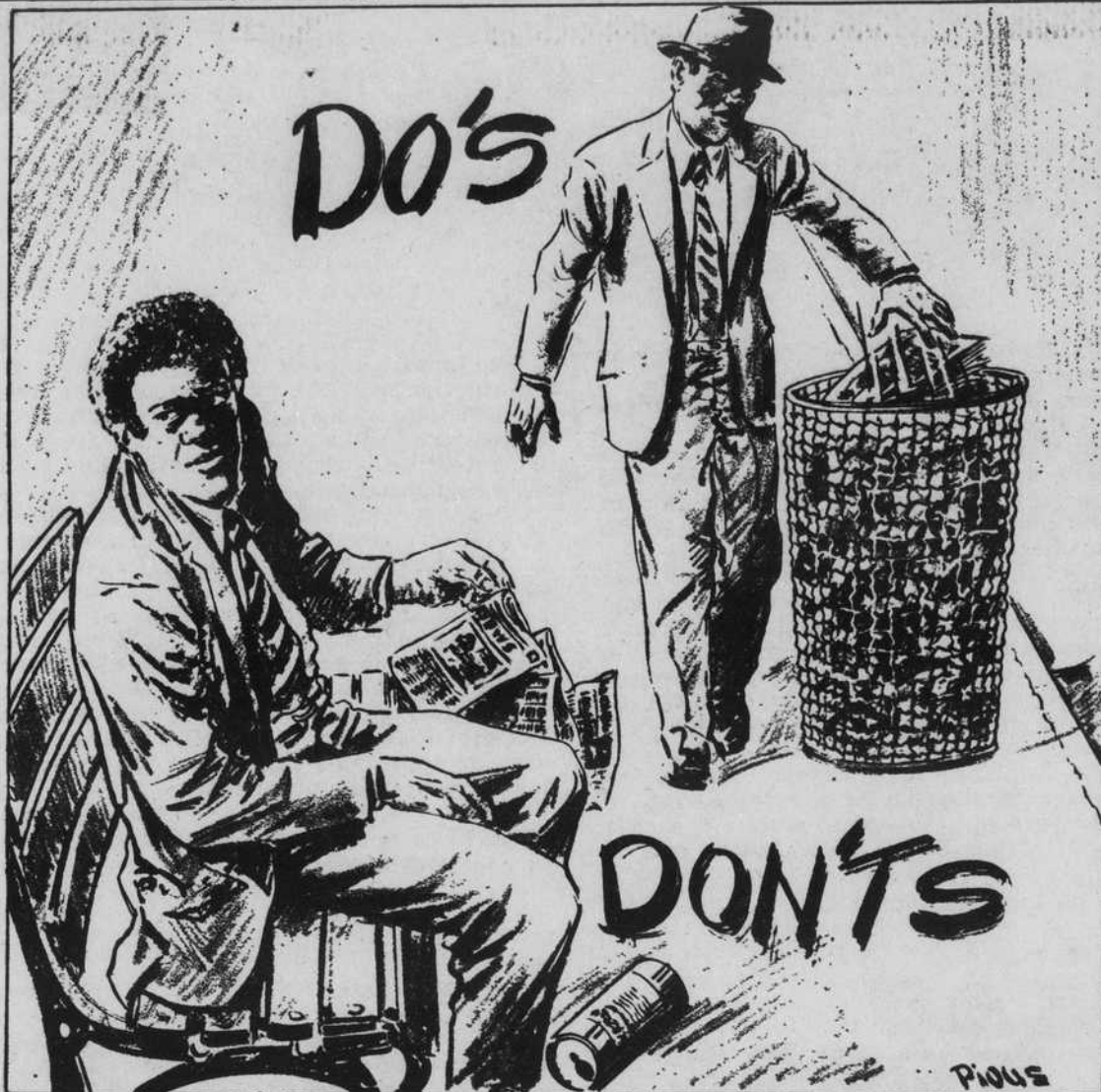
The laws were passed -- but some of the same civil-rights groups that fought segregation now support racial preferences in colleges and universities for racial minorities. Some -- but not all. Many of us who took part in the civil-rights movement oppose racial preference to get minorities in just as we fought racial preference to keep minorities out.

At the heart of the issue lies the fact that most Blacks and other minority group members don't have good enough grades to qualify for medical and other professional schools. The University of California at Davis sought to solve this problem by a racial quota, reserving 16 out of 100 places in its medical school for racial minorities. One white applicant, who was turned down even though his grades were better than some of those 16, brought a lawsuit against the university. His name is Allan Bakke. His case will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on Columbus Day.

Must America discriminate against whites in order to fulfill the promise of equality for Blacks and other minorities? More specifically, how can society train more minority physicians, lawyers and other professionals when not enough of them qualify under today's exacting standards? In the problem lies the solution. Minority group members don't do well enough on the qualifying tests not because of their race but because of the economic, social and cultural disadvantage they have faced. Therefore they deserve a special break on the basis not of race but of how well they have overcome the deprivation they have suffered.

Setting racial quotas giving racial preference to decide who gets public or private benefits opens up a Pandora's Box of problems. It penalizes white students (like Allan Bakke) who have never been guilty of discriminating against anybody. It pits white against Black in a contest for public benefits and private favors. And it returns our country to the same kind of discrimination we tried to do away with as we marched for civil rights in the '60s.

We think medical schools should not choose applicants on grades alone; that would penalize the poor, the young men and women who never had a break and whose numerical scores reflect that. But neither should professional schools set aside places for students



on the basis of race; that would institutionalize -- and legalize -- racism in American life. And it would bring about a stratified society that rips asunder the very fabric of American democracy.

The break should go to the student who had to work his way through school, or who overcame an inferior education, or who managed to survive a broken home. If he has shown that kind of determination -- even if he didn't do well enough to qualify on the basis of grades alone -- he (or she) deserves a shot at medical school. And he's likely to be a better doctor than someone born with a silver tongue-depressor in his mouth.

Many disadvantaged Black and Hispanic students have demonstrated the kind of motivation and perseverance that makes them potentially fine physicians, if only they get the chance. But not all disadvantaged students are members of racial minorities, as the poor whites of Appalachia can testify. And not all members of racial minorities have suffered deprivation.

That's why we believe the only fair basis for choosing medical school applicants is on the basis of how well they did in life as well as how well they did in school. If most of those who benefit from this program turn out to be members of racial or ethnic minorities (as we expect), all well and good. But they'll get those opportunities on their level of achievement, not the color of their skins.

We live in a country founded on the idea that all men are created equal, that a man's racial ethnic origin has no relationship to his abilities, that where we're going is more important than where we've come from. Let's keep it that way.

BUSINESS IN THE BLACK

By: Charles E. Belle

The best one can brag about the economy is that it is now advancing along the more moderate path projected in most forecasts. One government economist says if he could collar President Carter by the lapel, he would tell him that the economy is flat, flat, flat, flat.

The national unemployment rate has halted its decline. It has been holding at an average of seven percent since April, following a rapid drop from eight percent during the business resurgence of last fall and winter.

The continuing high level of the national joblessness, is a reflection of the slower growth in the business condition to keep up with the growth in the labor force. There are simply not enough jobs being created for the country's work force. Black and other poor people are paying for this desparagement in the job market.

The U.S. Commerce Department estimates that the nation's economy grew at an annual rate of 7.5 percent in the first three months of the year, then slowed to a rate of 6.1 percent in the next three months. For the last half of the year only five percent is predicted by the government.

The black population has been slowly eased into last place in the highly competitive job market. While total employment has been steadily rising, black employment has not kept pace with its population growth. The average jobless rate between 1974 and 1976 increased from 9.9 percent to 13.1 percent for blacks, and over 30 percent jump in just two years.

In the meantime a record number of 95 million people are employed according to the U. S. Labor Department. The department also found, for the first time in several years, that the unemployment rate for the elderly, aged 65 and over, exceeded five percent, up from 3.4 percent in 1974, a jump of almost 50 percent over the same time span.

Ten point seven (10.7) percent of the nation's population is now 65 or over. An estimated 22.9 million senior citizens in 1976. Blacks who are able to live until the age of 65 tend to live longer than white senior citizens. Blacks, young or old, are not in demand in the current job market.

PLAN FOR THE EMPLOYED

One answer President James Earl Carter's has for the call for help by blacks is a tax reform plan for the employed. The proposal for the tax reform will cut to 50 to 70 percent at the top rate and trim to 10 from 14 percent for the bottom tier.

The problem for unemployed poor people is a lack of jobs or programs which will provide them with the skills to find employment. There is no shortage of desire in the black community to obtain equal employment.

College enrollment of black students increased nearly three-fold since 1966, reaching Continued on Page 7 Column 1

LAS VEGAS VOICE

NEVADA'S BLACK COMMUNITY WEEKLY
"An Uninterrupted Publication Since 1963"

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

Lawrence Albert Publisher
Sandra McIlveen Treasurer
Dorinda Baker Editor

EDITORIAL, ADVERTISING & CIRCULATION OFFICES
616 North "H" Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89106
Telephone 648-2615

ADVERTISING RATES FURNISHED UPON REQUEST

Price per copy - 15¢ • One year \$13.50

(Application for 2nd Class Mailing Permit pending at Las Vegas, Nevada.)