

# Point of View

*Guest Editorial*

## Boycott Aided Change In Ads

One of the primary purposes of advertising is to sell a product. To do this, it is necessary to influence the thinking of the consumer. Historically,

Ad Agencies have not performed their tasks with the attitudes and sensitivities of the buying public in mind. A kind of powerlessness has prevailed the thinking of the consumer. This remained the case until the impact of the boycotts of the civil rights movement was finally fully appreciated. Since that time, numerous con-

sumer groups have employed the boycott as a means of affecting prices and, lately, as a means of dictating how those products would be presented and merchandised. The image of the "all American" boy, girl or family has changed somewhat, because the business world has finally recognized that the image of the blonde, blue-eyed, slim and trim person has not accurately represented the majority of Americans who did not fit

in that mold. We have begun to see more variety. Certainly there are yet the blondes, but there are also, now, brunettes, red heads, silver gray, and, finally, afro-coiffured models.

All of these groups have demanded more responsiveness from the media. This is exemplified by the impact which consumer groups have had on television programming. Through economic threats, productions have supposedly reduced the number of violence or sexually oriented programs, and replaced them with situation comedies. Now rapists, muggers, embezzlers, pushers, crooked cops, terrorists, racists, murderers and the like laugh their way through their activities and the viewing audience laughs right along with them.

Whatever the reality the belief is that the shows have been cleaned up. The next line of concern has been the commercials themselves. With the advent of women consciousness, efforts have been made to alter the (See Madison, page 23)



**CARL ROWAN**

## Why Welcome Cubans But Shun Haitians?

WASHINGTON- For Cuban and Haitian refugees the beginning is the same. They come in crowded, flimsy boats, fleeing from the oppression & poverty of a Caribbean island to the dream of freedom and a new start in the United States.

But when they land in this country, the difference is that of a dream fulfilled vs a dream destroyed.

The Cubans were welcomed as political refugees, heroes of a sort, and quickly made "legitimate" with Social Security cards, work permits, eligibility for food stamps, health benefits, job training and all the other social services available to Americans.

The Haitians were arrested as illegal aliens. They were detained, often jailed; they were denied the credentials needed to work or to collect most benefits; they were left in desperate doubt as to whether they'd be sent back to Haiti to face brutal reprisals by the Duvalier dictatorship.

This contradictory treatment reflects the confusion and disarray of U.S. refugee policies. Our hearts bleed for Cambodians and Vietnamese "boat people." We send the Navy out to escort the latest flotilla of Cubans, and President Carter personally announces that everyone fleeing from that island will be welcomed with "an open heart and open arms."

### BLACK BOAT PEOPLE

But when it comes to the "black boat people" of Haiti, the welcome mat has been cruelly yanked away.

As a result, reports Sue Sullivan, director of the Haitian Refugee Project, some 13,000 Haitians are living in limbo in Florida. Many have been there for several years, fighting legal battles for asylum; some 3,000 have arrived in the last five months alone, as a new wave of crackdowns and fear spread through Haiti.

Since 1972, when these refugees started to arrive,

they have systematically been denied the basic survival assistance that "legitimate" political refugees receive. Private organizations and local authorities have tried to help, but they are overwhelmed. Dade County officials say that starvation, not just malnutrition, has become the No. 1 health problem for thousands of the Haitians.

What's behind the double standard in our refugee policy?

The official explanation from U.S. authorities is that the Haitians have come primarily to seek better economic opportunity and are not genuine political refugees.

### POLITICAL ASYLUM

Our nation automatically grants political asylum to refugees from communist countries such as Cuba, but others must seek it on an individual basis -- a long, expensive, often fruitless legal un-

dertaking.

The Carter administration recently asked Congress to finance the admission of 234,000 refugees, over 90 percent of whom will come from communist regimes of East Europe, Russia, Cuba and Indochina. A total of 20,500 spots were allotted to Latin America (including Caribbean countries); 19,500 of them are reserved for Cubans and most of the remainder for persons fleeing Central America.

That leaves little room or hope for Haitians. And it is hard to understand why. Communist dictatorships hold no monopoly on terror and persecution. The 23 years of father-son Duvalier "presidency-for-life" in Haiti have been as cruel and repressive as the 21 years of Castroism in Cuba.

### BETTER LIFE

It's true that some Haitian boat people have (See Carl, page 23)

# Mass Media 'Sells' Politicians

BY BAYARD RUSTIN

Back in 1968, a group of exceptionally clever and talented marketing experts, most of them from the business world, performed a miracle: they repackaged and sold Richard Nixon, a man who was viewed by many people as a bad loser, and a shady character.

In a real sense, the election of Nixon was not so much a triumph for a political strategy or ideology as it was a victory for a carefully-planned advertising campaign. Voters "bought" Nixon instead of Hubert Humphery in much the same way that they choose Crest toothpaste over Ultra-Brite.

Because of Nixon's

success in selling himself, many political candidates have turned to media strategies, emphasizing image over issues. As a result political campaigns, including presidential ones, have been trivialized and debased. Indeed, far too many people now view campaigns as repulsive displays of sheer nonsense.

### PACKAGING PIONEER

Having succeeded in marketing candidates, the media consultants are now turning to a new and financially lucrative endeavor -- the selling of political ideas.

The pioneer, of course,

in packaging ideology is the Mobil Corporation, whose conservative political views are regularly scrawled on the Op-Ed page of the New York Times. The Mobil

ads, which cost thousands of dollars to print, are concise, brilliantly-written, and even humorous.

But they are also misleading and one-sided (which shouldn't be too surprising, considering Mobil's heavy investment in the ads).

Following Mobil's example, other corporations have begun

producing political messages -- some blatant, some subtle -- in the pages of America's newspapers and magazines. Almost every day one can find the

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opinions of Union Carbide, SmithKline Corporation, Citibank, or Amoco quietly lurking in some magazine or newspaper.

### BEST ADVERTISEMENTS

SmithKline's advertisements are perhaps the best, since they have

colorful layouts, nice pictures, and a special air of sincerity. One recent SmithKline ad even included a patriotic message from Robert F. Dee, the company's chairman and chief executive officer.

Mr. Dee reminded his readers that "only you as a private citizen can make good government a vigorous reality." He continued by expressing the hope "that the ideas of the SmithKline Forum will help you form your own opinions."

What's wrong with this type of advertising? First of all, there is a serious danger that political ideas in our society will go the way of political candidates. In other words,

complexities will be grossly simplified, political ideas will be reduced to slogans, and political decisions will be based on images rather than understanding.

What is worse, political debates carried out in the advertising columns of our newspapers, and on the screens of our television sets will insure that the side with the most money -- not the best case -- will prevail.

### DISASTROUS SITUATION

For the have-nots of society, such a situation could be disastrous, since many of the business-sponsored ads have taken clear aim at programs (See Bayard, page 23)