

BLACK EMPOWER MENT

By Dr. Nathaniel Wright, Jr. **Human Rights Activist**

THE "BOTTOM LINE"

We, as black Americans, come from a culture of wage earners. We "punch the clock," and some among us "wait for pay" in a variety of productive and non-productive-oriented ways.

Those for whom we have worked have paid our wages or provided our crumbs. We comprise upwards of 15 percent of the nation's population. But we own less than one percent of the nation's other than self-employed businesses.

Among business persons there is a perpetual need to figure out, and to reckon with, what is known as the "bottom line." The "bottom line" is the figure at the end of the financial columns which tell whether or not every part of a process and every hour expended has paid

If the "bottom line" has a minus sign on it, then revisions are called for. Only if the process it represents is accompanied by a plus sign might it continue. But only then may it continue if optimum profits are to be made.

As black Americans, we do not come from a culture of the "bottom line" in the conventional business world's sense of the term. Those who are financially the most successful-whether through business production or business finance-live not

on wages but on what is called a "margin." A "margin of profit" is whatever is beside the plus sign in every business operation. It is represented by the "bottom

Those of us who come from a wage-earning culture or way of life get our pay whether or not what we do pays off or creates a "profit margin." We live from weekto-week regardless of the "bottom line." We tend to develop a mind-set more nearly related to guaranteed wages, to guaranteed pension and to guaranteed hours and other guaranteed conditions of work.

Some among us may not even imagine any other kind of way of life where every penny at the "bottom line" must be watched. "A penny saved is a penny earned" in a profoundly significant sense to the wealthy and to those in business. The success of what they do is based upon counting up, and holding as tight as possible onto, every penny which comes out at every "bottom line."

The major significance to black people of what is said here rests in the recognition that there is a vastly different approach from that which we have known to the "time clock" and to "working hours" among those who would be financially affluent

make the most money which the crucial "bottom line." "bottom line."

We are not productionlabor unions) are much like awareness of and respect for neuters. They want to get the "bottom line." Only thus back as much as possible will our communities close while putting out as little as the apparent gulf between possible. The concept of black Americans as the "have investment is not a central nots" and white Americans concern. There is a limited as those who are the self-giving with guaranteed-and implicitly not make for the creation of pression which read, "Igsubstantial wealth.

Many older blacks today who coming them. have been hired at large when forced into new posiduce, only to posture.

blacks who have lived on ence or both. government grants or have

or well off. Hence, if black worked for some federal Americans want to be suc- agencies. When the grants cessful in business and to be run out, or a living is to be among those of the highest made in the productionincomes, we shall need to oriented world, prospective take a somewhat different employers want to know attitude toward how we what you can produce and spend our time in an effort to how oriented you are toward is only to be found at the This is the only experience that really matters.

Black Americans must oriented. Wage earners (espe- move out of a wage-earner's cially under the influence of mentality and into a lively a "haves."

Among the ancient Roman limited-return. This does philosophers there is an exnoscare est cognare," signi-Nor does the attitude of fying that to recognize one's posturing as though we were deficiencies or ignorances is affluent make for wealth. the very first step in over-

We need to recognize that salaries by major concerns to our cultural conditioning give an image of integration tends to keep us thinking and in non-production-oriented acting in ways which do not jobs have come to find that, make the best business sense. When this recognition sinks tions, they cannot produce. in, then we may begin to close They were not hired to pro- the hitherto "unclosing economic gap" and realistically This same general picture look to the day when the holds true for many middle "bottom line" adds up to or lower income younger substantial affluence, influ-



MITCHELL CRITICAL OF NEW NATIONAL POLICIES

In a recent speech at Augusta College, Augusta, Georgia, Congressman Parren J. Mitchell (D-7th-Md.) warned against the precipitous, capricious implementation of new government policies, holding that such actions may exacerbate the nation's economic and social

While expressing a willingness to try some new approaches to solve the nation's economic ills, Mitchell argued that new approaches should operate in tandem with existing social programs funded by the federal govern-

"A new approach, such as the Urban Enterprise Zones, should operate in tandem with existing programs such as CETA," he said. "If private sector jobs are created by the Urban Enterprise Zones, we may then be able to reduce CETA jobs proportionately."

The Maryland Lawmaker

criticized tax cut proposals by pointing out that they will have no immediate impact on reducing either inflation or unemployment, and the loss of federal revenues may force the elimination of federal efforts on which the poor, the working poor, senior citizens, and the unemployed

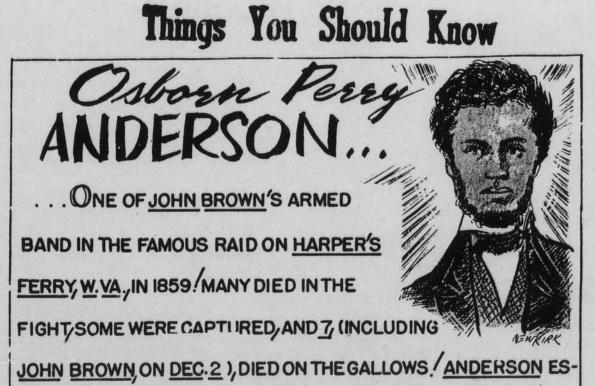
depend for their survival.

His criticism of the proposed ten percent reduction of personal income taxes for three years was that the affluent would benefit far more significantly than would lower and middle class families. "Under this tax approach," he argued, "benefits to the affluent would off-set the inflation rate four fold, but benefits to lower and middle class families would not even off-set the damage to such families by double digit inflation."

The six-term Representative stated, "We must not and cannot formulate and implement national economic policies which will force the lower class to bear the burden of economic pain for the greater good of the American society.'

Have you writen to one of your elected officials this

You may write to your Congressmen and Senators at: Congressional Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 or Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Please congratulate them for their important work, and let them know where Black America stands on crucial



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