

4-5-1971

## Race Relations Reporter, 5 April 1971

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### Recommended Citation

Race Relations Information Center, "Race Relations Reporter, 5 April 1971" (1971). *Publications*. 116.  
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# Race Relations REPORTER

A newsletter published by Race Relations  
Information Center, Nashville, Tennessee

Vol. 2, No. 6: April 5, 1971

## Mississippi patrol sued

A federal district court judge in Biloxi, Miss., has set May 19 for a trial of charges by two black men that they have been denied the right to apply for positions with the Mississippi Highway Patrol because of their race. Judge Walter L. Nixon Jr., in denying a motion by state officials to dismiss the charges, ruled that "while there is no constitutional right as such to public employment, there does exist a constitutional right to be free from unreasonably discriminatory practices with respect to such employment." The two black men, Willie L. Morrow and Jerome Mangum, said they tried on three different dates in June of 1970 to obtain application forms from Charlie Snodgrass, the highway patrol's personnel officer. They said Snodgrass refused to give them the forms.

Frank R. Parker, an attorney for the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, presented in behalf of Morrow and Mangum affidavits from two white men who said they had encountered no difficulty when they inquired about applications for employment with the highway patrol. One of the men, Gary Brown, was given an application in late May or early June of 1970. The other--Edwin N. Williams, a correspondent for the Greenville Delta Democrat-Times--was told on the phone that "all you have to do is come to headquarters and get an application and fill it out."

An RRIC survey of blacks on state police forces (Race Relations Reporter No. 21, Dec. 9, 1970) showed that no more than 250 of the nation's 40,000 state policemen are black. Mississippi was one of 10 states in that survey that had no black troopers. Judge Nixon, in denying the motion to dismiss, said, "It is uncontradicted that of the approximately 360 uniformed officers in the Mississippi Highway Patrol, all are white, and there has never been a black patrolman serving as a uniformed officer in the history of the Patrol."

The Mississippi suit is a class action covering "all qualified Negroes who have applied or will in the future apply for employment" with the highway

## Inside This Issue

The Richmond, Va., school board has asked a federal judge to create one district out of three . . . The ending of foundation support threatens several black studies programs . . . White ethnics and blacks in Detroit have joined in an alliance . . . And a federal judge has ordered a barber school to admit both races as students . . .

## FIRST CLASS MAIL



"the Polish-Black Encounter," Waterman stared out at the audience for a while and then he said: "While the rest of the speakers were talking, I have been asleep." A murmur of indignation rippled through the crowd, but it stopped as Waterman continued: "Actually, what I mean is this—I recently took a course in sensitivity training, and I learned to close my eyes while people are talking so that I hear only what is being said and not who is saying it. I have been doing that today, and I have not heard Kazimierz Olejarczyk, or Joseph Wytrwal, or Dr. Chrypinski. No, on the contrary, I have heard Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael, and Martin Luther King."

"Those were some pretty conservative folks," Waterman recalled later. "And they were really stunned. But I think it made them think a little because since then a number of them have come up to me and said, 'You know, we are still talking about that speech you made, and we were very impressed. I guess we have more in common than we had realized before.' If we can get more people thinking like that, we may be able to get somewhere."

## U. S. Judge Forbids Barber Prejudice

Barber shops—long a stronghold of segregation—are still segregated in many parts of the country, though not, apparently, with legal sanction. Judge James T. McMillan of U. S. District Court in Charlotte, N. C., recently found in a case involving discrimination in a barber school that there are about 2,700 barber shops in North Carolina. Of these, approximately 1,500 are operated by white barbers and serve a white clientele. There are approximately 1,200 barber shops operated by black barbers. About 85 black barbers cater to a white trade, the remaining black barbers catering to blacks.

McMillan barred a Charlotte barber school from refusing to admit black students, basing his decision in the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which guarantees equality in making and enforcing contracts.

One of the operators of the school told the judge that Negro hair is more difficult to cut properly than Caucasian hair. "A really good colored barber," he

said, "is almost an artist." McMillan found it significant that the standard barbering text, used in the Charlotte school, devoted a chapter to "Cutting and Styling Curly and Over-Curly Hair." The judge said of the chapter, "It is stated that 'over-curly hair is present in all races to a greater or lesser degree' and that learning to cut such hair is a 'challenge to the well-trained barber.'"

The New York State Human Relations Commission told Reginald Stuart, New York correspondent for *Race*

*Relations Reporter*, that in its 26-year history, 34 public-accommodations complaints have been filed against barber shops charging discrimination.

Ralph Katz, public information officer for the commission, said most of the complaints were filed by blacks against white shops whose barbers either refused to render services or performed jobs that discouraged the return of black patrons. Of the 36 complaints filed, commission investigators found 26 cases in which there were clear indications of discrimination. They were settled on conditions that the shops would discontinue discriminating, and would compensate the complainant for another haircut. The commission had no record of "education" complaints against barber schools or shops in New York City.

Most of the complaints came from predominantly white neighborhoods where white barbers did not want to serve black patrons, in fear of losing white customers. Some operators told the commission that the texture of black people's hair was different and therefore the white operators did not know how to treat it. "This is put up against the fact that when a man is granted his barber license in this state, he is supposed to be able to cut all kinds of hair," Katz said.

Harold Harris, public information officer for the New York Department of State, which issues and revokes barber licenses, said no action has been taken against the barber shops or operators charged with discrimination, although it is against the law. "Any barber who practices discrimination will have his license revoked. "It's just against the law," he said. However, his office had no record of complaints being filed.

The four barber schools advertising in the New York City telephone directory all said they do not discriminate on the basis of race.

Address correction requested

RACE RELATIONS REPORTER  
RRIC, P.O. Box 6156  
Nashville, Tennessee 37212

Prof John Crews  
Dept. of English  
Univ. of Mississippi  
University, Miss. 38677

patrol. It seeks to require the patrol not only to accept applications from blacks but also to recruit and train applicants on a non-discriminatory basis "to the end that the percentage of Negro officers in the department would not significantly differ from the percentage of Negroes in the population of Mississippi." About 40 per cent of the state's population is black.

No other blacks have attempted to apply for jobs with the highway patrol since Morrow and Mangum, but Parker, their attorney, is confident that "quite a few others" will apply if the two men win their case. Morrow, a printer's apprentice, is an Air Force veteran who served in the military police. Mangum is a 21-year-old student at Jackson State College.

In Washington, three Democratic senators focused attention on the Mississippi case by asking why the Department of Justice has not intervened in the case. Senators Birch Bayh of Indiana, Philip Hart of Michigan and Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, all members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, raised the question in connection with President Nixon's nomination of Jerris Leonard, assistant attorney general for civil rights, to head the newly created Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. The three senators said the justice department had received a formal request last July to enter the highway patrol case. In the list of 20 questions they submitted to Leonard for answers before hearings on his confirmation are resumed, they asked: "Have you yet decided whether this is an important enough case for the Civil Rights Division to intervene?"

Warren Weaver Jr., writing in the New York Times, said an attempt to block Leonard's confirmation was unlikely. He said the three senators hope to "win a commitment from the Nixon Administration official (Leonard) that the law enforcement agency, which will have about \$1.3 billion to distribute as of next year, does not make grants that strengthen discriminatory police and correction systems." \* \* \*

## Puerto Ricans dispute name

A dispute has arisen concerning the naming of a Puerto Rican housing project in New York's lower east side. Community representatives who have had a share in planning the project want to name it after the Puerto Rican revolutionary Albizu Campos, who headed the Puerto Rican Nationalist party in the 1930's, 40's and 50's and spent a total of 21 years in prison for alleged political crimes. New York's Housing and Development Administration, charged with developing the 500-apartment, low-rent project, has bowed to community pressure concerning the name. But the city's Housing Authority, which administers public housing, has objected on the grounds that there are "some serious questions as to the acceptability of the name to the Puerto Rican community as a whole." The matter probably will not be finally decided until the project is ready for occupancy several years from now. But Puerto Rican community leaders held a ceremony March 22--the 99th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico--and named the project after Campos.

## Black teacher protection

The National Education Association has asked a federal appeals court to give black educators more protection against discrimination in the process of integrating public schools. The NEA petitioned the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to broaden an order issued in 1969 that required school systems to apply "reasonable, objective, and non-discriminatory standards" in staff reductions caused by school desegregation. NEA said the 1969 order left too much discretion to the school districts.

NEA said 1,072 black educators have been dropped from school systems in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi since 1968. During the same period, school systems in the five states have added 5,575 white educators. NEA said its figures came from computer tapes of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Race Relations Information Center found last fall that displacement due to school desegregation is "decimating the ranks of black classroom teachers and threatening black principals with extinction in 11 Southern states." The RRIC survey cited statistics from Florida indicating that more than 1,000 black teachers had been dropped in the past three years. Precise figures from other states were not available at the time of the RRIC report. (Race Relations Reporter No. 21, Dec. 9, 1970) \* \* \*

## Union training plans

Plans for training and enrolling more blacks and other minority group members in the construction unions have come under fire from Franklin Williams, chairman of the New York State Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. Williams, former U. S. Ambassador to Ghana (1965-68), said "hometown training plans in New York City, Rochester, Albany and Buffalo guarantee the minority community nothing. My tentative comment (a final committee report will be issued in late April) on all these plans is that none of them, in my judgment, will achieve the state purposes for which they were adopted." Williams made the comments in New York City shortly after the last of four scheduled public hearings (March 23) held throughout the state to evaluate local training plans.

The four plans, commonly called "hometown plans" by federal, state and local officials, are the outgrowth of efforts throughout the country to enlarge the number of minority group members in the construction trades unions, which have traditionally excluded them. "I get the general impression that the plans are more paper than reality," Williams said, in terms of transmitting commitment into actual action in recruiting, training, job placement, guaranteeing union membership and job opportunities. He cited numerous loopholes in all of the plans and indicated that new efforts would have to be made in order to rectify the deficiencies. He cited the most controversial of all plans, the New York City Plan, as "a training plan which sounds interesting, but it is not a hometown plan." The New York Plan (Race Relations Reporter, March 1, 1971) has been characterized as the most deficient and least promising of all plans in the state. \* \* \*

## Black vote threatened

More than 20 Mississippi counties have called for re-registration of all voters--actions which civil rights organizations say will effectively disenfranchise thousands of black voters. Registration campaigners say they will not be able, between now and the state's off year gubernatorial election in November, to place anything like the number of blacks on the books who were registered in the five years following passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Dr. Aaron Henry, chairman of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, has asked the U. S. Department of Justice to nullify the re-registrations. In the state as a whole, 67.7 per cent of eligible blacks were registered last fall, compared with 92.2 per cent of eligible whites. \* \* \*

## Black information index

A new black publication has been established to provide a bi-monthly index of important writings on black people. Called the "Black Information Index", the publication is based in Herndon, Va., and edited by a black librarian and scholar, Burton E. Lampkin. Lampkin says his publication's indexing efforts will center around the following categories: Africa, Art and Artists, Children and Youth, Economics, Education, Employment, Entertainment, General Information and News, Health and Medicine, History, Housing, Law and Enforcement, Literature, Media, Military, Politics and Government, Race Relations, Reference Sources, Religion, Sports, Urban and Rural Issues. In addition, each category will have up to 13 sub-headings, and considerable attention will be given to miscellaneous writings and events that do not fit neatly into the established categories.

In its first issue, the periodical indexed some 100 articles, books and reports. Articles from the index, at this point, are expected to come from some 80 regular publications, but Lampkin said an attempt will be made to index materials that his readership might not normally see--even theses and unpublished materials. Help in indexing is being provided by such institutions as Federal City College in Washington, D. C., the Race Relations Information Center Library and others. The cost of subscriptions will be \$50 a year.

## Consolidation plan rejected

Voters in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, N. C., by a majority of more than 2 to 1, rejected a city-county consolidation plan that would have opened the council and the school board to greater participation by blacks. (*Race Relations Reporter*, March 15, 1971) Only 15 of the county's 88 precincts voted in favor of the new charter. Each of those had a majority or a substantial number of black registered voters. The only group of white precincts that didn't vote overwhelmingly against the charter was in the high-income sections, but even there the charter lost. \* \* \*

*RACE RELATIONS REPORTER* is published twice a month by Race Relations Information Center, Box 6156, Nashville, Tenn. 37212, Robert F. Campbell, executive director; Jim Leeson, editor; Mrs. Pat Braden, assistant editor. RRIC, the successor to Southern Education Reporting Service, reports on race relations in the United States. Other publications and the broadcast media are welcome to use any or all of this newsletter, with or without attribution. Telephone: 615 327-1361.

## Richmond Officials Ask Consolidation

BY CHARLES COX\*

Richmond, Va.

Blacks were taken aback and local officials howled last July when the Richmond School Board asked U. S. District Court to solve the mounting desegregation problem by combining the majority-black city school system with those of two county neighbors to make a 106,000-pupil system under one, court-ordered unitary plan.

County citizens haven't stopped protesting since the city school board made its merger ambitions known last summer. It is a "share the blacks" plan for them, and they don't like it. Neither does the influential Virginia Association of Counties, to which 95 of 96 counties belong, nor the Commonwealth of Virginia, and both organizations will be arrayed against the city in the coming hearing.

The merger move caught blacks by surprise. Upon reflection, though, they decided they liked the prospect of mating heavily black city schools with largely white suburban schools. The city system is almost two-thirds black. The merged system would be two-thirds white. So the black plaintiffs in this hideously complex, 10-year-old litigation have now joined the prime defendant, the Richmond School Board, in the quest for metropolitan merger.

*Trial of the case begins April 26 and could take three weeks. Then, qualified legal observers, expect District Judge Robert R. Merhige Jr. will order Henrico and Chesterfield county schools consolidated with the city's before the next term opens in the fall. Maybe that consolidation order would be stayed, maybe not. In any case, whatever his decision and its timetable, Judge Merhige has already predicted a rapid appeal up to the Supreme Court.*

What the board is asking, in a cross-claim filed Jan. 15, is a Merhige order directing the State Board of Education "to bear the ultimate responsibility for the preparation of a unitary plan . . . in accordance with the specific guidelines established by this court; to utilize its power to require the respective governmental subdivisions to provide adequate funds for the operation of the combined system. . . ."

Merhige on Dec. 5, 1970, "joined" as parties to the suit the State Board of Education, the chief state school officer (Dr. Woodrow W. Wilkerson, state superintendent of public instruction), the school superintendents of both counties, as well as both the boards of supervisors and school boards of both Henrico and Chesterfield, both indi-

*\*As education writer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Charles Cox has reported extensively on the city's school desegregation suit. He also has written a series on the school problems of all the major Virginia cities, which was printed in the Times-Dispatch earlier this year.*

vidually and collectively. That is to say that all are now defendants, with the Richmond School Board, school superintendent and Richmond City Council.

Petitioning for their "joinder" in November, the Richmond School Board argued that merger is the best way to slow white flight into the two "bedroom" counties and thus create a racially unitary system that would not be "defeated" by resegregation. Richmond, with 248,000 people, is the nation's 56th largest city. It is 47 per cent black. Only eight cities are "blacker." Its schools are 64 per cent black. Only Washington, Newark and a few other cities outrank it here. Currently, Richmond schools get blacker by at least one per cent a year.

Both board and judge noted that the State Board of Education is empowered to establish and consolidate school districts.

In the trial ahead, the city will be relying heavily on the legal muscle it thinks it sees in the case of *U. S. v. State of Texas*. The issue there was the continued existence of nine all-black East Texas school districts. The black plaintiffs charged that the district lines were drawn to segregate them, and that the Texas Education Agency (TEA), chief supervisory body for schools in that state, was constitutionally required to eliminate them.

*And so, Dec. 4, 1970, U. S. District Judge William W. Justice required the TEA to merge the all-black districts with neighboring districts ". . . to ensure equal educational opportunity for all. . . ." That judge was of the opinion that the TEA's "affirmative duty" to create a racially unitary system ". . . can no more be defeated by the maintenance of separate educational units which perpetuate segregation than it can by the maintenance of attendance zone lines drawn to perpetuate racial segregation within single school districts."*

Judge Merhige will, presumably, be asked for a finding of state-sanctioned segregation on somewhat different grounds. The Richmond School Board will probably concede that Henrico-Chesterfield county boundaries weren't drawn for segregation purposes alone. But, it might be argued, the manner in which segregation arises is not so crucial as the determination that there is in fact segregation. The board will maintain that because the city is two-thirds black and the counties less than 10 per cent, there is indeed *de facto* segregation. And since the state runs the schools, that segregation is state sanctioned--therefore subject to prohibition by the court.

Such a broad holding by the court, if upheld on appeal, would seem applicable in *de facto* Northern city situations.

Noting that a number of federal courts before his have required consolidations for desegregation purposes, Judge Justice recalled that *Brown II* (1955) ". . . gave specific authority for such relief: 'The courts may consider problems related to administration, arising from the physical condition of the school plant, the school transportation system, personnel, revision of school districts. . . .'" (Emphasis added.)

Judge Justice, taking note of consolidation of two all black districts ordered by the U. S. Eighth Circuit in *Haney v. County Board of Education of Sevier County (Ark.)*, quoted the circuit: "If segregation in public schools could be justified simply because of pre-Brown geographic structuring of school districts, the equal-protection clause would have little meaning."

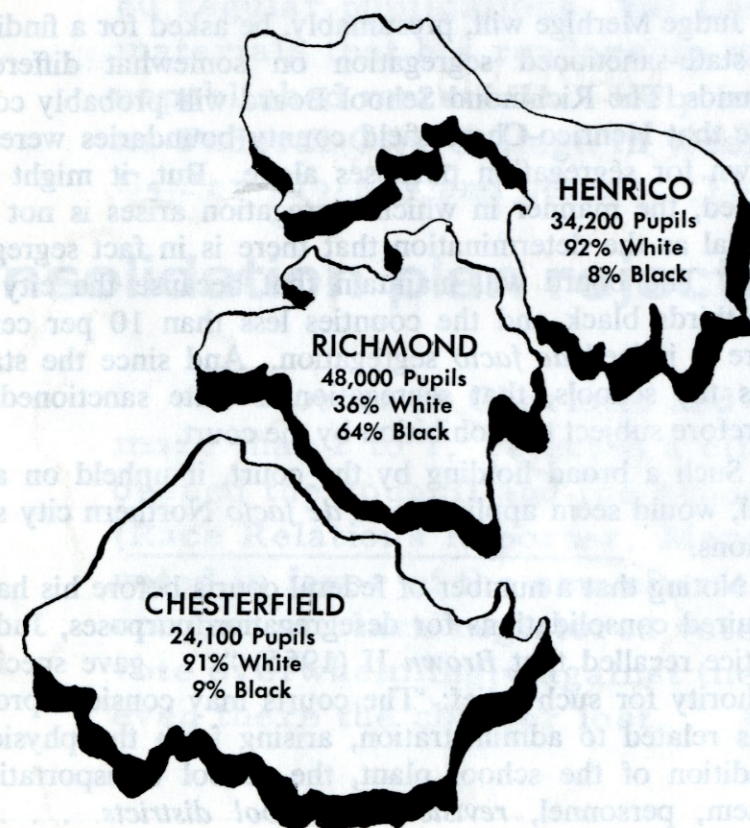
Merhige, who referred to the Sevier County consolidation edict in his order directing joinder, has said that District judges like himself wouldn't mind having fresh directives from the Supreme Court on mergers. Merhige recalled that in the Northcross decision a year ago, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger implored his colleagues to clarify as soon as possible the circumstances under which "... school districts and zones may or must be altered as a constitutional matter. . . ."

Filing their amended complaint Dec. 14, a month before the school board filed its cross-claim, Richmond's black plaintiffs asked about what the board had asked. The plaintiffs want a court order directing the defendants to merge the three systems under an acting superintendent before the 1971-72 school year starts.

The acting superintendent would manage things "... pending the selection, by election, appointment or otherwise, of a new (consolidated) board of education. . . ." (All Virginia school boards are appointed. Some theorize that an elective school board with independent taxing power—familiar elsewhere but foreign to Virginia—would be best for a merged system.)

The plaintiffs, according to the amended complaint, would also be agreeable to the idea of the court directing the three jurisdictions to come to some agreement on joint operation "... to the end that no school within the respective defendant school systems shall be racially identifiable."

*The amended complaint makes it clear that the plaintiffs, in the trial ahead, will try to prove that the state (via state-regulated schools, segregation in public accommodations, discriminatory voting quali-*



*fications, zoning regulations and the like) has made a segregated society in the capital area. It is this policy of "racial containment" that keeps the black school population of the counties below 10 per cent, the plaintiffs maintain.*

Both Henrico and Chesterfield counties now have, in effect, "neighborhood" school assignment plans. Merhige has noted from the bench that neither is in trouble over its desegregation arrangements with either the courts or federal authorities. Chesterfield, with 77,000 citizens, has 24,000 school children, nine per cent black. Henrico, with a population of 154,000, has 34,000 school children, eight per cent black.

Richmond enrolls 17,000 whites in its public schools, and 31,000 blacks—more blacks than any other system in the state. Merhige approved a new "interim" desegregation plan for the city last August, two weeks before school opened, triggering a loud public outcry. Every school's faculty is half white, half black. Secondary schools are substantially desegregated. Nearly 14,000 children ride buses, about 25 per cent more than would have been hauled in the absence of a new desegregation plan.

Judge Merhige is expected to approve a replacement plan before April 1. Under one school board plan now before him—one he could approve with some modifications—around 21,000 children (including more than 7,000 elementary youngsters), would get cross-town assignments and ride buses. Merhige thinks his city-only ruling could be altered when the Supreme Court decides the Charlotte-Mecklenburg and other "busing" cases argued before the high court last October. But he says he can't wait any longer for that court to act.

Obviously, an unstayed merger order would supersede any city-only order Merhige hands down. To implement the latter, city spokesmen have said they would have to buy nearly \$500,000 worth of buses. Unofficially, it is understood that the city spokesman will testify in court that the bus fleets of the two counties would suffice for a merged system and that the city would not have to buy any new buses if merger were ordered for the fall.

As if all this were not enough, Richmond annexed 23 square miles of Chesterfield County territory on Jan. 1, 1970, and now, it seems, Richmond could lose that land under the Canton, Miss., voting rights case decided by the Supreme Court in January of this year. A black civil-rights leader has already sued for "de-annexation," citing intent to dilute black votes in this increasingly black city. This case, too, will be heard by Merhige.

Eight thousand school children, all but a handful white, live in the annex territory. That's almost half of all of this city's white school children. If removed via "de-annexation," to put it another way, the system would have only 9,000 white children left and would climb from 64 to 77 per cent black. Plainly, also, departure of the 8,000 whites would wreck the new desegregation plan the Merhige court is about to approve for the city alone.

So, when the merger case comes to the trial at the end of April, the school board is sure to point to the de-annexation threat as yet another reason why consolidation is a good idea. If the Richmond and Chesterfield school systems were one, it can be argued, the requested federal order for de-annexation would be no threat at all.

Blacks aside, county reaction to the board's merger gambit has been fairly predictable—in some part because many people think it all started with Merhige. Merhige in early July did write a letter to plaintiffs' lawyers suggesting the school board might wish to explore the "feasibility or possibility of consolidation of school districts" with officials of the two contiguous counties as a step toward meeting the board's "obligation to establish a unitary, non-racial school system here."

*Added the judge: "I am sure that all recognize that the manner in which desegregation is to be achieved is subordinate to the effectiveness of any particular method or methods of achieving it. It is obvious that the U. S. Supreme Court tests the plans by their effectiveness."*

Judge Merhige, 52, graduate of High Point (N.C.) College and the University of Richmond Law School, is an Air Force combat veteran, a Catholic and a Democrat (vice chairman, Virginians for Johnson, 1964). He was a well-known trial lawyer in Richmond when President Johnson appointed him district judge in 1967. A friendly man in private, he runs a tight-ship court. He likes to jog and to run the flag up mornings at his Henrico County home, and he owns a big Chesterfield County farm. He has heard some three dozen school desegregation cases and has been the target of blistering attacks by Richmond newspapers for his Richmond decisions. One result is that federal marshals guard both his home and court around the clock.

The man who was then vice chairman of the city school board, A. C. Epps, sold the merger ploy to board colleagues behind closed doors last summer after the judge wrote his famous letter. Two of the seven board members were not, however, it came out later, sold. Both the board chairman and a new board member, a prominent banker, abstained in the first merger vote.

Not that the "metropolitan" solution to this vexing problem is a new idea. Alexander M. Bickel wrote in "The Supreme Court and the Idea of Progress," (1970), "For given the geographic concentration of Negroes in neighborhoods and very nearly in whole cities, enlargement of the administrative jurisdiction offers the only hope of alleviation." A Yale University law professor and former clerk to Mr. Justice Frankfurter, Bickel is a certified liberal in some books—but surely no favorite of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund lawyers representing black plaintiffs in Richmond and much of the South.

*Three years ago, U. S. District Judge Skelly Wright of the District of Columbia suggested in Hobson v. Hansen that "... integration may be accomplished through cooperation with school districts in the (Washington) metropolitan suburbs. . . . Certainly if the jurisdictions comprising the Washington metropolitan area can co-operate in the establishment of a metropolitan transit authority, the possibility of such co-operation in the field of education should not be denied—at least not without first sounding the pertinent moral and social responsibilities of the parties concerned."*

Judge Wright's suggestion has never been followed, though the issue may not be entirely dead there.

On July 23, asking Merhige for approval of a desegregation plan which the judge later approved on an "interim" basis, the city board in open court asked Merhige to order the tripartite merger. That went off like a bomb. Virginia's attorney general, Andrew P. Miller, a Democrat who wants to be governor soon, publicly doubted a federal judge had the power to merge districts. Said the vice chairman of the Henrico Board of Supervisors: "For the federal courts to merge the services of the municipalities would amount to the destruction of all local government within the United States."

Back in court again in early August, the city board secured Merhige's permission to withdraw the motion that he order consolidation and announced it would sue to "join" the two counties as defendants in the case. Merhige characterized as "sick" and "foolish . . . anybody so naive as to think this court" suggested such a lawsuit. Nevertheless, soon after the first of the year, because of that July letter, the counties asked Merhige to "recuse" himself on grounds he had prejudged the case. Saying no to that, Merhige also refused a request from the counties and the state that a three-judge federal court hear the case.

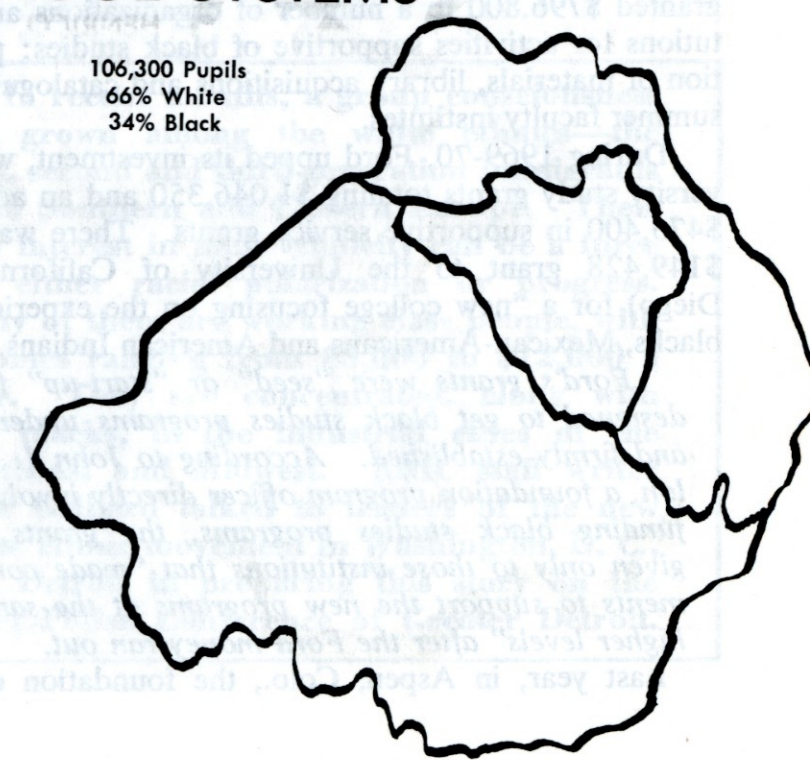
As the county opposition to merger mounted, Henrico announced it would no longer deposit county money in a city bank, a city councilman tried to force the school board chairman to resign, both counties sought city charters from the General Assembly, and both began looking for ways to end various joint city-county projects.

Virginia's ambitious Republican Gov. Linwood Holton said he favored "co-operation," not "coercion," and announced that he, the attorney general and the state superintendent of public instruction agreed the proper course for the Commonwealth was to fight the city in this venture.

At first, as the merger campaign was launched, City Councilman Henry L. Marsh III—the only black councilman here, also the top lawyer defending black plaintiffs in the Norfolk desegregation case—declined comment on

## MERGED SCHOOL SYSTEMS

106,300 Pupils  
66% White  
34% Black



what struck many as an entirely new desegregation approach.

A bit later, Marsh was one of six councilmen (out of nine) voting to ask the school board to abandon its merger attempt. Marsh later still explained he voted that way because his only concern then was to get the city a new desegregation plan for the coming year. At the time of that vote, he said he feared the merger idea might be used as an excuse to sidetrack a new plan. Once he was sure that was not the case, he said that he fully supported merger.

Norman J. Chachkin of New York, a Legal Defense Fund lawyer for the black plaintiffs, said that initially the plaintiffs would probably raise no objections if the school board did decide to ask Merhige's approval to withdraw the merger motion. But he, too, soon changed his mind. He said that the plaintiffs would have sought merger on their own if the board had not. Finally, with the filing of the amended complaint in mid-December, Chachkin and the black plaintiffs lined up beside the defendant city school board to seek a metropolitan-wide desegregation plan. The result would mean that inner-city blacks could be schooled in the suburbs, and white suburbanite youngsters might be bused into ghetto schools.

## Black Studies Funding Ended

Three years ago on April 4, Martin Luther King was gunned down in Memphis. His death ushered in a round of black rebellions in the cities and on the campuses. During the summer of 1968, a record number of swimming pools were built in black ghettos and, that fall, a record number of black studies programs were begun at colleges and universities.

One of the biggest movers in funding the new programs was the Ford Foundation, the nation's largest private philanthropic agency. During the 1968-69 school year, Ford's Education Division made seven grants totaling \$883,533 for university study programs, mostly for undergraduates, in black studies. The foundation also granted \$796,800 to a number of organizations and institutions for activities supportive of black studies: preparation of materials, library acquisitions and cataloguing, and summer faculty institutes.

During 1969-70, Ford upped its investment, with university study grants totaling \$1,046,350 and an additional \$475,400 in supportive service grants. There was also a \$149,428 grant to the University of California (San Diego) for a "new college focusing on the experiences of blacks, Mexican-Americans and American Indians."

*Ford's grants were "seed" or "start-up" funds, designed to get black studies programs under way and firmly established. According to John J. Scanlon, a foundation program officer directly involved in funding black studies programs, the grants were given only to those institutions that "made commitments to support the new programs at the same or higher levels" after the Ford money ran out.*

Last year, in Aspen, Colo., the foundation officially

notified representatives from the 14 black studies programs it had funded that its original purpose had been met. The Ford "start-up" money had gotten the programs under way and, beginning in the 1971-72 school year, Ford announced it would no longer fund undergraduate black studies programs. The task ahead for the foundation, it was stated, would be to fund programs designed to train scholars to man the already established programs. "Since Afro-American studies seems to be solidly established, the priorities have moved upward to the graduate level, and outward, to embrace the study of other minorities," Scanlon told RRIC last week.

But an RRIC survey of black studies programs funded by Ford suggests that the Foundation's assessment is considerably over-optimistic and that, in some cases at least, the cessation of foundation support could bring about diminution or dissolution. On the whole, Ford-funded black studies programs appear to be facing the same problems that *New York Times* reporter M. A. Farber found bedeviling the field as a whole.

*"Black studies programs have established a hold at many predominantly white universities and colleges," Farber wrote. ". . . But they are still beset by problems of financing, staffing and autonomy. . . . The practical problems facing the programs have made their presence on some campuses tenuous. . . . There is increasing disenchantment among black educators who say that white schools are thwarting the growth of solid, independent programs by indifference, design or ineptitude."*

The consensus that emerged from RRIC contacts with black studies directors at seven of the 14 schools funded by Ford is that many of the original grants were too small, too poorly thought out and too short in duration to truly nurture the growth of competent programs. And the Ford decision not to continue support next year may "throw the baby out with the bath water," as one black studies director put it.

There are exceptions to this view from some directors, who feel that some of the other directors were "naive," in their expectations or were hoodwinked by their respective institutions that did not make clear the short-term nature of the Ford grant. None of the directors contacted seemed to believe much in Ford "commitment" to black studies.

"What happened is that black students were building a fire under the administrations, and the foundation helped them to put it out," one director said. "All they were really seeking to do was pacify the students." Said another: "If they were really committed to it (black studies), they would have committed themselves to an entire generation of undergraduate students: four years."

Here is what some of the directors contacted by RRIC said:

• Margaret Walker Alexander, of Jackson State College, believes that Ford support is crucial to the continued existence of the program. "Without government and foundation support, no college is about to adequately finance black studies," she said. She pointed out that Jackson State depends for its operational funds on the Mississippi legislature, which is notoriously hostile to black studies—or anything else black. This year, she "begged"

\$102,000—\$23,000 of it from Ford—to operate her program. The college contributed only \$3,000—and no one realistically expects an increase next year.

• Badi Foster, of Princeton University, said that Princeton has "fulfilled its commitment, but it has not provided funds for expansion. By standing still, you're actually falling back." Princeton has had to "shelve" a number of programs, including a faculty development seminar for teachers from Princeton, Rutgers and Lincoln Universities. "I don't know how long these things will last on the shelf."

• Harold Weaver, Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J., said that his school was one of the six in the Rutgers University system that shared an \$89,800 Ford grant. Rutgers College's share—its entire administrative and program budget—was \$6,000. With his money, Weaver started a "black studies reading room," but the end of the grant probably spells the end of this project because "Rutgers has failed to honor its commitments."

• At Stanford University, Prof. St. Clair Drake, said the university had met its financial commitments to support the program "if you count the money the way they do." But there is little if any black control of the over \$200,000 the university says it has committed to black studies. And of the original \$135,000 Ford grant, one-fourth was spent "on a course that had nothing to do with black studies." Drake concludes: "We don't have a black studies program here. We have an African and Afro-American Studies program in which we're trying to build a black studies component." . . . J.W.

## Poles in Detroit Ally with Blacks

BY FRYE GAILLARD

Forming an alliance between blacks and blue-collar workers, many of whom are European ethnics, has long been a vague dream floating around movement circles, but it has seldom amounted to much. Uniting the have-nots and the have-a-littles has never been easy, and many who have tried, simply haven't known how to go about it. But the effort continues today, and in a few places there are some hints of success.

One such place is Detroit where two-thirds of the population is either black (40 per cent) or Polish (25 per cent). Nearly three years ago, at the instigation of a group of Polish priests and a black congressman, the Black-Polish Conference of Greater Detroit was founded. It has grown slowly, has received a little funding, and has raised the hopes of a lot of people who want to see better race relations in Detroit.

"We have passed the stage now where people laugh, or ask us if we are serious, or ask us to repeat the name of the organization," says Jerry Ernst, the staff director for the conference. "I think that today the leadership of both the black and Polish communities is strongly behind the conference."

*The purpose of the alliance is to "further the dual goals of promoting each group's independence and*

*separate cultural values while, at the same time, promoting maximum cooperation and understanding between the two largest ethnic groups in the Greater Detroit area."*

The organization is based on several key assumptions: that blacks and Poles have much in common; that the very real tension between the two groups has been artificially created; that the interests of both groups would be served if the two could get together; and that Poles are not essentially racist. The last assumption is particularly important, for many white liberals and black radicals have believed that the most racist people in America are the white ethnics—the recent arrivals from Southern and Eastern Europe. A couple of years ago, when it first became apparent that ethnic consciousness was growing among such groups, Eldridge Cleaver wrote an article for the Black Panther newspaper entitled "Racist Ethnic Groups Battle for Pig Power." White liberals may have phrased the idea more gently, but their assessment has often been equally harsh—and equally resented by many white ethnics.

"It really annoys me," says Father Leonard Chrobot, a young Polish-American who is Dean of St. Mary's College near Detroit, "to hear white liberals who have fled to the suburbs accuse my mother of being racist when she has lived next door to blacks in the inner city for years."

"It was not the Polish people who enslaved the Negro," points out Dr. Joseph Wyrwal, a Polish-American assistant principal at one of Detroit's black high schools. "The first big migration of Poles occurred just prior to World War I. And unlike some other whites, the Poles have not created institutions which have discriminated against and exploited blacks in more recent years. We have no guilt in that regard."

There is other evidence that Poles, if they are racist, are less so than many of the more established white groups. As the blacks have moved into the surrounding areas, the Poles have not panicked. Their communities have remained remarkably stable. Driving through Detroit, one passes almost imperceptibly from Polish to black neighborhoods with integrated buffer zones in between.

"The Black and Polish communities often share the same neighborhoods, schools and places of employment," asserts the statement of purpose adopted by the Black-

**In recent months, a group consciousness has grown among the white ethnics—the first, second and third-generation immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. Their new interest in their ethnicity can be a force for either racial polarization or progress. Many of them are working class people, with incomes ranging from \$5,000 to \$12,000 a year. They are concentrated, along with any blacks, in the industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest. RRIC staff writer Frye Gaillard talked to leaders of the new white ethnic movement in Washington, D. C., and Detroit in preparing this story on the Black-Polish Conference of Greater Detroit.**

Polish Conference. "This daily contact results in their sharing many of the same problems and goals."

*But in a tense, crime-ridden city—"the murder capital of the country," some Detroit newscasters were calling it last month—the close daily contact among blacks and Poles also leads to friction. "The crime problem is very severe," says Congressman Lucian Nedzi, a Polish-American from Detroit, "and there is a feeling in the Polish community that blacks contribute disproportionately to the crime rate. Of course, blacks are also disproportionately victimized by crime, but that is a fact that is difficult for the Poles to fully appreciate. I would say that crime is the leading cause of tension between the two groups."*

Perhaps. But there are other factors as well. The Polish community, as Nedzi, points out, is generally one step up the economic ladder from the blacks, and the fact that blacks and Poles often "share the same places of employment" means that they are often in economic competition with each other. On top of that, there are what Father Daniel Bogus, the Polish co-chairman of the conference, calls "the normal problems and tensions that exist among people who live close together"—the neighborly disagreements and quarrels, which can become aggravated by the injection of racial differences into the situation.

In addition to all of this, there is another factor that blacks and Poles in Detroit are only recently beginning to appreciate. The two groups, because of the cultural differences that exist, often bring entirely different perceptions to the same situations. For example, when RRIC interviewed Joseph Wyrwal, the Polish assistant principal at Detroit's largest all-black high school, a student strike was in progress. Although students were boycotting classes, they jammed the hallways, sitting-in in support of their demands. Wyrwal walked the halls easily, stopping to chat with students here and there, and he had clearly established an informal rapport with many of the protestors. But back in his office, he explained the situation in a way that the young dissidents would later take sharp issue with.

"The students are upset because some teachers are being laid off here," he said. "But there is no way around it. In the past, school administrators have overspent the budget, and eventually that catches up with you. You have to live within your means, which is something that the Polish community has known for a long time. Unfortunately, some of the teachers being laid off are black, and the students are upset, but they don't fully understand the situation." There was no hostility in his voice, no scorn for the students' position, but also no doubt in his mind that he was right.

"All I know, man," a student protestor told a visiting reporter, "is that when the school officials figure it's time to cut back, it's always the black schools that are hit and always the black teachers that go."

Of course Wyrwal's position and that of the student are not mutually exclusive. It may be that recession has forced budget cuts, which in turn required lay-offs. But it is also possible that blacks have suffered most in the process. And if that is true, it is conceivable that Wyrwal and the student could talk it out and reach agreement. But

the point is that the initial perception, the angle of vision, was very different, and at other times in Detroit's history, such differences have severely inflamed existing problems.

*Against this background of tension and frequent misunderstanding, the staff of Detroit Congressman John Conyers (D), one of the better known black office-holders in the nation, was surprised in the spring of 1968 to learn of a strong civil rights resolution passed by the Detroit Archdiocesan Priests Conference for Polish Affairs. The Polish priests, led by Father Bogus and Father Fabian Slominski, expressed their support for open housing and for equal opportunity in employment, education and the use of public facilities.*

"I thought it was an extraordinary statement," recalls Leon Atchison, then an administrative assistant to Conyers, and now the coordinator of an urban-studies program at the University of Detroit. "I called it to the Congressman's attention, and he agreed. He decided that he wanted to respond, and that he would make his response on the floor of Congress. The Polish priests came down to Washington for the occasion, and there was a strong feeling of unity."

"After that," Atchison continued, "we asked ourselves, do we want to let this thing die? The answer, of course was no, and so the Black-Polish Conference was born. Father Bogus and the other priests passed the word through the Polish community, and those of us on the Congressman's staff got the message out to the blacks. A meeting of interested people was called, and the mood was hopeful.

"Some representatives of the Public Broadcast Laboratories were in town at the time on another matter, and I mentioned to them in passing that the first meeting of the Black-Polish Conference was to be held that day. They asked permission to film portions of it, and we finally said okay. Well, the fur flew at that meeting. All the fears and animosity, the latent and overt hostility were very apparent. It was almost a shouting match. Anyone who was there, or who saw the PBL broadcast, would have thought it was the end for the Black-Polish Conference.

"But it was not the end. The meetings continued, and a healthy respect began to develop. People were candid. They got things out of their system, and the sincere people from both groups stayed. Since then, the conference has weathered some severe storms, and both it and the city of Detroit are the better for it."

One of the biggest challenges to confront the Conference (and also the city) came less than a year later, in the spring of 1969. The Republic of New Africa, a black nationalist group that wants to set up a separate black nation in the Southeastern part of the U.S., held a convention in Detroit, and two Polish policemen patrolling nearby were shot—one of them fatally. Police responded by arresting nearly everyone at the Republic of New Africa convention. There were charges by blacks of police brutality, and bitterness began to grow. Things became even more tense, however, when a black Recorder's Court judge, George W. Crockett, set up court in the jailhouse and, along with the local prosecutor, released all the black prisoners against whom there was no substantive evidence—which included nearly everyone arrested.

"The local newspapers erroneously accused Judge Crockett of wholesale, unjustified releases," recalls Leon Atchison, "their distorted coverage inflamed things quite a bit. A meeting of the Black-Polish Conference had been scheduled at the time, and the meeting was heated, to say the least."

Here again, according to the people who were there, the two ethnic groups brought different perspectives to the situation. The Poles, fearful of radicalism and concerned about law and order, were enraged by the death of the Polish policeman and by what they saw as the obstruction of justice by a black judge. The blacks, on the other hand, were concerned about the civil liberties of the blacks who were arrested.

"We were convinced that the incident was provoked," recalls Atchison. "We knew that the police overreacted and beat people, and that they nearly destroyed the church in which the Republic of New Africa was meeting. The Poles, however, believed that Judge Crockett had released people before they could be questioned, and that he had acted very irresponsibly.

"We assumed that they knew better, and that their opposition to the activities of the black judge was simply an act of racism. But after considerable shouting back and forth, we determined that this was not the case. In the first place, they had been influenced by what they read in the newspapers—and why shouldn't they have been? And in the second place, it became clear that their big objection to Crockett was not that he was black, but that back in the 1930's, when he was an attorney, he had defended an accused communist. Communism to Poles is like the Klan to blacks. And hearing them talk about it taught us something about the dynamics of the Polish community.

"Anyway, we made the point that everyone is entitled to legal defense, and that if a lawyer defends a murderer it does not mean that the lawyer is a murderer. And because Judge Crockett had once defended an accused communist, it did not mean that he was a communist."

In the end, the point was made. Stanley Krajewski, the editor of *The Polish Daily News*, an influential Polish-language newspaper in Detroit, concluded that Crockett was legally entitled to do what he had done, and he printed an editorial to that effect in his newspaper. Detroit's black newspaper, *The Michigan Chronicle*, printed a translation of the editorial, and a very dangerous situation had been effectively cooled.

"There have been several episodes like this," says Father Bogus, "but we hope to move now from crisis solving to the more positive role of seeking our areas of agreement and common interests. This, of course, requires some hard organizing and a realistic approach. You don't accomplish this goal through idealistic pronouncements about brotherhood or the value of good race relations."

*"You also don't impress these Poles with statements about how guilty white people are and how bad the blacks had it during slavery," adds Father Chrobot. "These people went through concentration camps in Europe, or they had relatives who did, so they know what suffering had meant to their own group, and they don't feel primarily responsible for the injustices that have been heaped upon blacks.*

*Therefore, you have to find genuine common ground."*

Among the areas of common interest, according to Leon Atchison, are the fact that Poles and blacks both suffer from the at-large method of electing Detroit's governing council; that urban renewal and highway construction have had a devastating effect on both black and Polish neighborhoods; and that both ethnic groups could benefit from the inclusion of ethnic studies programs in the public schools and in nearby colleges and universities.

In addition, the conference staff is convinced that blacks and Poles have common interests in the areas of crime-control, taxes, physical environment, city services and housing, health care, and the rights and needs of senior citizens.

If indeed there are common concerns in these areas, they could compensate for the vast ideological differences that may be a problem, ironically, because the conference has attracted such a broad range of support. Among the leaders who actively support the alliance are Polish priests and black ministers, the president of the Polish-American Chamber of Commerce, the head of the local black businessmen's association, university professors and administrators; political figures such as Conyers and, to a lesser extent, Nedzi; civil rights workers; neighborhood organizers; journalists such as Krajewski of *The Polish Daily News* and Mitchell Lewandowski of *The Hamtramck Citizen*; leaders of the traditionally conservative Polish-American Congress; and Frank Ditto, the head of a militant black organization called the East Side Voice for an Independent Detroit.

"The Polish people will never support a radical," asserts Stanley Krajewski. "We have had bitter experiences with communism and the left."

Ditto, who is a radical, says he respects the Poles' feelings, but adds that in return he expects them to understand his position. "I am strongly behind this conference," he says. "I think that as both ethnic groups develop their identity and struggle to solve their problems, co-operation will be needed. But there are some potential hang-ups. The Poles, for example, are really concerned about communism, while black people couldn't give less of a damn about it. But that's okay. I understand that communism has oppressed them in Europe just as so-called democracy has oppressed black people here. But what I ask is that the Poles understand our feelings about the oppressive nature of the government in this country. And I am not so sure that will happen if this conference ever gets past the stage of leaders talking to leaders.

*"Still, we have to try," Ditto continued. "That is the next step. We have to develop the mechanics to make the conference effective on the grass roots level—among the population at large."*

One step in that direction occurred recently when a black businessman named Homer Waterman addressed a meeting of the Michigan chapter of the Polish-American Congress. Waterman was one of the last speakers on the day-long program, and he was the only black. He listened as Polish speakers discussed their group's quest for cultural identity, the discrimination and racial slurs (Polack jokes, for example) that they have experienced, and their priorities for the 1970s.

When his turn came to speak on his assigned topic,