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Race Relations REPORTER

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Information Center, Nashville, Tennessee

Vol. 2, No. 18: Oct. 4, 1971

NAACP challenges quality of schools

It may be mid-school-year before the wheels get rolling, but officials of the NAACP (national headquarters) in New York City are working on new plans to challenge public education systems. According to Mrs. June Shagaloff Alexander, education director of the NAACP, guidelines for use by local associations are being prepared "to enable them to go to school officials and make it clear to them that if student skills have not changed by the end of this school year, they (the school officials) will be held accountable. We want to get rid of the notion that is so prevalent in public education now that poverty is the cause of some students failing in their work. That's an excuse for the failure of the public education system," Mrs. Alexander said.

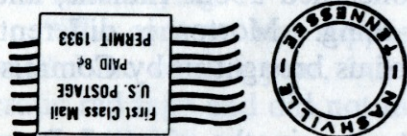
Although she did not specify what cities would be the targets for this new area of concern for the NAACP, Mrs. Alexander said the association's work in this area was a move from "talk to action, and would be followed by community action and if necessary legal action" to correct inequities within present public education systems. "There's something wrong with schools, standards, teachers and administrators," Mrs. Alexander said. Citing one criterion on which the local associations will be able to hold school systems "accountable" is to check the reading progress of students in the schools. "The simplest way of finding out how good schools are is to find out how well a child reads," she said.

The new thrust toward holding school officials "accountable" is one of four areas the education division of the NAACP will work on this school year. Others include: (1) Continued pressure for desegregation of public schools in Southern urban areas; (2) Elimination of discriminatory practices within newly desegregated school systems. "Not only are blacks being discriminated against in the newly desegregated school systems," she said, "but they are being suspended when they protest;" (3) A move toward holding public school system educators across the country "accountable" for the education system they make policy for and operate; and (4) Selection, purchase and use of school textbooks. "We're changing our position in this area from one of persuasion to actually challenging the misuse of public funds for purchase of textbooks which are discriminatory in nature," she said. Although she would not comment on the textbook matter in detail, reportedly several lawsuits are being prepared and will be filed by the end of the calendar year.

Black Congressmen are showing more interest in U. S. relations with African nations.... Frye Gaillard reports the reasons behind the Sept. 22 slugfest at the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington....

Inside This Issue

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RACE RELATIONS REPORTER
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call for a new "war plan" were, as a matter of fact, only two episodes in a groundswell of protest. In addition, there have been letters to the President by the National Congress of American Indians, by dozens of inter-tribal and tribal groups, and most recently, there has even been some Congressional reaction. Sen. Henry M. Jackson has questioned the transfer of Veeder. Sen. John Tunney has issued strong statement on the whole range of BIA policies. Congressman Sam Steiger of Arizona, whose district includes the Navajo reservation, issued a blistering attack on BIA backsliding, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy announced Administrative Practice and Procedure Subcommittee hearings next month "on possible administrative actions that could reverse the continuing breach of trust between the federal government and the Indian people."

Several leaders within the BIA are nearly as skeptical of Kennedy as they are of Nixon. They believe he may be using the Indian cause as a political tool. They know that he is a leader in the Democratic Congress that failed to act on Nixon's legislative package for Indians. And at least one new-treater has expressed private reservations about some of Kennedy's staff advisors.

But they do see the hearings as one more important

source of pressure, and some of them are becoming more optimistic. "I think we may get some concessions," says Leon Cook. "I understand that (White House staffer John) Erlichmann has laid the law down. He supposedly sent a memo telling some of the shitheads that he wants movement on the fronts of Indian water rights, contracting, road-building, and personnel—which means Indian preference hiring.

"Briefing papers are now being prepared for the White House, and it is absolutely crucial who prepares them," Cook added. "There have already been attempts by the old-liners to tamper with some of the memos and water down the contents. But we may be able to correct that."

Richard La Course, a writer for the American Indian Press Association, reports that Secretary Morton was called to the White House twice on the day of the AIM demonstrations and was told that the job of the Department of the Interior was to assist and not impede the reform efforts of Bruce. And so the pendulum may swing back.

"One thing makes me optimistic," says Leon Cook. "We are moving into an election year, and Richard Milhous Nixon is just dying to tell the American public about all the nice things he has done for the poor Indian people."

Asked about the depths to which the NAACP would go in challenging the present public education system, Mrs. Alexander said she is not projecting any challenge of "tenure policies," which many in public education charge have allowed some unsuitable persons to remain in the school system for years. "If there's something wrong with the teacher or administrator, they should be given special help or they should not be in the schools," she said. "Our objective is not to remove teachers or administrators," Mrs. Alexander said, "it is to assure the high educational standards and expectations are achieved." * * *

CCR appointment pending

Staff members of the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights have had no indication about whom President Nixon will name as the new staff director. John Buggs is serving as acting staff director following the resignation of Howard A. Glickstein. The 1957 law creating the commission says that the full-time director shall be appointed by the President, who shall consult with the commissioners. The nomination must be approved by the Senate. The six commissioners meet again in early October. The commission's \$3.96 million appropriation request from Congress was cut to \$3.4, and a supplementary request will be introduced in the House soon for an additional \$460,000. The commission and its future role were the subject of a special RRIC Report prepared by Jack Nelson of the Los Angeles Times. The 32-page report, "The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights: A More Activist Role?", is available from RRIC for \$2. * * *

Two views on black newsmen

Finding black newsmen "is a difficult and at times almost a hopeless task," says the Personnel Committee of the Associated Press Managing Editors, summarizing the results of a survey of member editors. The committee's report defined the dilemma that many editors said they face: They can be frantically searching in vain for black reporters at the same time outside groups are pressuring them to add more blacks to their staff.

Several editors are quoted in the report, signed by the Personnel Committee's vice chairman, Robert E. Rhodes, executive editor of the New Brunswick (N. J.) Home News: Art Mayhew of the Daily Times in Chester, Pa., said, "We have had several black reporters and deskmen in recent years but we simply train them for the Philadelphia Bulletin and the Washington Star." Woody Wardlaw of the Buffalo Evening News said, "The whole matter of minority hiring has been distressing to us. We have spent a disproportionate amount of time and attention in this endeavor, with very spotty results. At one point, we got up to five minority journeymen and within a month we were back down to one."

Race Relations Reporter asked Dr. Lionel C. Barrow of the Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee whether black newsmen are as scarce as the APME survey suggests. Barrow is acting moderator of the Minorities and Communications Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and has been active for many years in minority placement. Barrow replied that too many newspapers are looking for "an instant black hero." He said

they bemoan the shortage of talent "without doing anything, really, to encourage the development of black newsmen." Barrow added: "I'm not certain they really mean it." Large numbers of people who complete journalism programs at predominantly black colleges are not being placed in jobs, Barrow said. Since the termination of the Minority Skills Bank in New York a year ago, Barrow has been serving as a sort of unofficial clearinghouse for prospective employers and employes. He has placed three black journalists in jobs since July but has had no requests from newspapers in the past two months. He invites inquiries in care of the Department of Afro-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisc. 53201.

In addition to surveying its own members, the APME committee asked the dean or chairman of the English departments in black colleges why young blacks aren't more interested in newspaper work and what papers can do about it. Of the 24 respondents, eight said interest was either "definite" or "growing." Among the 16 others, interest ranged down to "poor or none." The reasons given for lack of interest included: "Lack of exposure." . . . "Lack of opportunity of employment in this area." . . . "Jobs have generally not been available. When they were, blacks were used mainly for window dressing--that is, given jobs with no real meaning or depth."

W. Rick Carr, journalism instructor at Virginia State College, had this to say: "Unfortunately, the best recipe might doom the black press, though I sometimes feel that racial publications have outlived their constructive usefulness. I would first recommend that the white press get off its ass about covering the black community thoroughly and regularly. Second, the white press should make vigorous raids on black newspaper staffs to snatch up the best of the personnel, and that means more money for less talent than normally. More than half the black college students attend black colleges in the South, which rarely teach journalism and are not eligible for Newspaper Fund programs. It seems likely that the black kids will continue attending the black schools, so the press should round up funds and equipment for the black schools. Finally, every major newspaper should have a prominent scholarship program to spot talented black high school journalists. If each major daily supported one black journalism major in each graduating class at State U., the problem would rapidly solve itself."

The APME has been active for the past three years in encouraging employment of minority newsmen--especially blacks--on newspapers. Its first Black News Committee found in 1969 that "there are still far, far too few Negro employes on editorial staffs of American newspapers." The committee's directory of training programs and scholarships has been through two annual editions. Within the past four months, the American Society of Newspaper Editors has started its own study of minority staffing on the nation's newspapers. ASNE President C. A. McKnight appointed Norman Isaacs, editor in residence at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, to head a seven-man committee charged with the study.

Aramco psychology in Chinatown

The Chinese minority in the United States has never had an organization like the NAACP or CORE, and it has none now. Why not? asks Tom Wolfe in New York magazine (Sept. 27). It's not, says Wolfe, because the Chinese are not segregated.

"If any other racial or economic group had the same figures for overcrowding, poverty, unemployment, suicide, one would hear about it every night until the Alan Ladd movies came on. As far as discrimination is concerned, the Chinese have been through the entire drill since 1850, plus some harassments that were thought up especially for them."

Wolfe attributes the absence of a Chinese civil rights organization to "pride" coupled with what he calls "Aramco psychology." He explains: "Most Chinese who have come to the United States since 1850 have looked upon their experience in America as an interlude in their careers in China. It is the same state of mind an American has when he goes to work for Aramco in the Near East. He may run into all sorts of religious and even statute laws that bar him from Arab life. Yet it would never occur to him to think of it as 'discrimination.' Weird cockamamie foreigners, nothing more . . . (The Chinese) didn't come to the United States with the faintest notion of America as a promised land or a land of freedom."

Now, says Wolfe, the Chinese community in San Francisco is bound together by resistance to court-ordered school busing. He reports that thousands of Chinese youngsters are enrolled in "Freedom Schools," open for bilingual instruction during regular school hours. The term, says Wolfe, is a piece of "reverse English." "The original Freedom Schools, of course, were set up in the South as part of the fight for integration. In Chinatown the clenched fist now rises for . . . freedom from your brand of enlightenment, you pious crazies." * * *

NAACP chapter in West Germany

The NAACP is now trying to raise sufficient funds to send a team of lawyers --preferably black--to West Germany to represent minority U. S. servicemen stationed there. The civil rights organization has recently chartered a chapter in West Germany--its only overseas chapter--consisting of black GI's. The chartering of the chapter came after an intensive, three-week investigation of complaints by minority servicemen in Germany carried out by the NAACP last January. NAACP Assistant Executive Director John A. Morsell said "there is a need for decent legal representation for black servicemen in Germany," but he also added that raising the funds to meet the need is "expensive and difficult." He said negotiations are now under way between the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union and several American law firms with offices in England.

Morsell also said NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins does not believe the U. S. government has done more to alleviate military racism under the Nixon administration than at any time in the nation's history. The last issue of RRR carried a quote from Defense Secretary Melvin Laird in which Laird attributed that view to Wilkins. The NAACP's actual position, Morsell said, is that the government has made a number of moves in the direction recommended by an NAACP report on GI problems in West Germany, and that there seems to be "a disposition to remove injustices." But Morsell also says "this is going to take a while," and that it is too soon to make the kind of sweeping generalization offered by Laird. * * *

The Army's race relations packet

"Negro soldiers seem to have lost faith in the Army system. They are not aware of the many accomplishments of the Army in their behalf and their leaders are either unaware their troops have complaints or are unprepared to handle the problems which come to their attention. All young black troops and a large number of white troops expressed a desire to openly discuss the racial differences and misunderstandings in order that tensions can be lessened."

So states a briefing for seminars on racial tension and equal opportunity included in an information packet being distributed by the Race Relations Coordinating Group, U. S. Army Infantry Center, (Attn: AJIGP-EO, Fort Benning, Ga. 31905).

Among other items in the packet is a reprint of an article from Commanders Call entitled "Race Relations in the Army." "Most blacks and many whites," says the article, "seem to believe that the degree of racial understanding in the Army is low and that tensions are getting more critical. Assessments of the degree of danger vary, but some believe that if nothing is done there are likely to be large-scale disruptions in a year or two." The packet also contains a handbook for the conduct of race relations seminars by moderators, coordinators and commanders; a suggested reading list; a film handbook; and several other article reprints.

* * *

Poetry at Attica

In its article on the prisoner rebellion at the New York state penitentiary at Attica, Time magazine (Sept. 27) cited the circulation of the following poem, described as "written by an unknown prisoner, crude but touching in its would-be heroic style."

"If we must die, let it not be like hogs,
hunted and penned in an unglorious spot,
while round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
making their mock at our accursed lot."

Rather than being the work of "an unknown prisoner," the stanza is part of one of the most famous poems by a black writer in the twentieth century: "If We Muse Die," by Harlem Renaissance figure Claude McKay. Literary critic Hoyt W. Fuller, editor of Black World, noted that "no less a personage and a writer than Sir Winston Churchill found the poem perfectly suited to his own purposes. Not only did he read it before Parliament at the start of World War II, but he also read it before the Joint Houses of Congress when he was attempting to persuade this country to enter the war on the side of the allies." * * *

Campbell leaves RRIC

Robert F. Campbell, executive director of the Race Relations Information Center, has resigned to become editor of The Daily Times in Gainesville, Ga. Dr. Luther H. Foster, chairman of the center's board of directors and president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, said that Jim Leeson, editor of Race Relations Reporter, will serve as acting director until the board of directors elects an

executive director at its next meeting in the early fall. Foster also announced that the Ford Foundation had awarded a grant of \$150,000 toward the future operation of the center. This is the second grant the foundation has made to the Race Relations Information Center. The center's predecessor, Southern Education Reporting Service, received grants of more than \$2.2 million from the Ford Foundation between 1954 and 1969. Campbell had previously served for four years as executive director of Southern Education Reporting Service, before the agency became RRIC in mid-1969.

Black Congressmen Prepare African Bill

BY BERNARD GARNETT

After virtually annihilating Japan and Germany in World War II, the United States inaugurated generous aid programs that rebuilt both countries into world trade leaders. This fact is not lost on the black congressmen. In what amounts to a Pan-Africanist zeal, they are saying if America can rehabilitate two nations whose people once were considered her worst enemies, certainly she can increase her assistance to emerging black nations in Africa. At the same time, the black solons are stepping up their fight against white domination of black African majorities—as in South Africa and Portuguese colonies in Africa.

Reps. Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.) and John Conyers (D-Mich.) are drafting a bill designed, according to one spokesman, "to force U. S. corporations out of South Africa." No details of the bill are available at this time. The measure reportedly is about "80 per cent completed" and due for submission to the Congressional Black Caucus later this month. Then, in its finished form, it will be introduced.

Meanwhile, Black Caucus chairman Charles C. Diggs (D-Mich.) has resumed hearings on U. S. private and public interests in southern Africa. Rep. Diggs, as chairman of the House Africa Subcommittee, is interested not only in economic investments in the area (which includes South Africa, Namibia, Rhodesia, the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, as well as some black states). He also is concerned in such "public" involvements as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's space tracking station in South Africa.

A longtime advocate of increased aid to black Africa and decreased aid to white-controlled sectors of the continent—as long as the latter continue to oppress black majorities—the veteran Detroit congressman is considered an expert on Africa. In 1969, after South African Airways inaugurated flight service between New York and Johannesburg, Diggs proposed that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) be required to suspend the landing permits of any country that practiced racial discrimination against Americans in that country (Diggs was among several black Americans denied visas to South Africa). His measure died in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, parent of the Africa Subcommittee.

The only black U. S. Senator, Edward W. Brooke, (R-Mass.), is another veteran legislator on Africa. Three years ago, as a member of the Senate Banking and Cur-

rency Committee (recently renamed the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee), Brooke embarked on an extensive economic development tour of several African states. It was known in Washington that one of his aims was to check into the need for increased economic involvement in black African nations. Though plans for his fact-finding mission were first announced about a half year earlier, the Brooke trip was given little press notice. This was largely because on the same weekend Sen. Brooke was scheduled to depart from the United States, then Vice President Hubert Humphrey—whose journey was given wide, day-by-day coverage—returned from a hand-shaking tour of Africa.

Last summer, Brooke decried the fact that the Senate Finance Committee sustained South Africa's sugar quota—reportedly over 57,000 tons, representing some \$8.6 million—while eliminating Uganda and Malawi quotas and reducing Mauritius's from 30,000 to 17,000 tons.

And last month, Brooke and Senate Africa Subcommittee chairman Gale W. McGee (D-Wyo.) fought unsuccessfully against a military procurement bill provision that would have, in effect, required the U.S. to purchase chrome from Rhodesia as long as it purchased the commodity from Soviet Russia. Brooke and McGee are now hoping that with the help of Sen. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), the provision can be defeated some other way, according to a Brooke aide.

But despite the longtime efforts of Diggs, Brooke and a handful of white lawmakers on Capitol Hill, the majority of the nation's legislators have not bothered to handle the matter. Or, if they have, their actions have not been in favor of any massive "reform" legislation. In fact, the cries for increase in aid to black Africa come at a time when many people want to decrease U.S. aid to all foreign nations.

In representing the "Black Masses," it probably was inevitable that the black congressmen would make Africa a priority issue. As black activists, including "moderates," have sought to develop closer ties with the "Mother Continent," general U.S. policies toward Africa have been criticized.

In their 60-point list of recommendations that they presented to President Richard Nixon in May, the Black Caucus suggested, "This country should take the lead in isolating the Republic of South Af-

rica, the world's most racist nation." To this end, the black solons urged withdrawal of the U. S. sugar quota for South Africa, and disincentives for further development there by U. S. businesses.

The Congressional Black Caucus also asked that black nations of Africa "be given priority and attention on an equal basis with other parts of the world."

They called for:

- Increase in the percentage of American aid to 15 per cent, from the present 8.5 per cent.
- An executive-level task force to review U.S. policies toward Africa "and whose recommendations would be effectively implemented."
- Allocations of increased shares of multi-lateral resources for Africa, by various international financial institutions.
- More U.S. participation in the African Development Bank.

In August, Diggs finally was granted a visa to tour South Africa, after a number of previous unsuccessful tries. He had also sought to visit Namibia, the disputed territory that South Africa had annexed in June in defiance of the World Court. But he was rebuffed. Diggs also stopped in Guinea-Bissau, one of the Portuguese

areas where blacks are fighting colonial rule. Diggs also stopped in a number of European capitals, where he and his delegation talked with officials handling South African matters.

At a news conference back in Washington a month later, Diggs said minority-rule forces were excessively oppressive, while the black majorities were fiercely determined to gain their freedom. Despite many pessimists' evaluations of the black mood in South Africa, Diggs was impressed that "the countdown has begun" for the end of the white, minority rule. "I have returned," he declared, "with the conviction that majority rule in South Africa is inevitable and that the rest of the world, in particular the United States, has no choice but to get on the side of freedom."

He said U.S.-owned firms in that country should provide non-whites with equal pay on the same level with white employees, inaugurate training programs that would assure fair job practices, and refuse to adhere to South Africa's racial practices. He also called for the United States to end its complicity with apartheid regulations in federal installations.

But at the moment, chances for any pro-black-Africa measures to become reality are slim. In addition to the already mentioned unsuccessful attempts by Diggs, Brooke, and others, there have been other recent developments frustrating to African policy reformers.

Last July, a hard-fought Senate campaign to cancel South Africa's liberal sugar quota was defeated. At roughly the same time, Reps. Dellums and Jonathan Bingham (D-N.Y.) attempted to tack an anti-Portugal amendment onto the Foreign Assistance Act. Their measure would have denied aid to Portugal because of the country's use of the aid in its wars to retain colonial rule in Africa. The two sponsors withdrew their amendment, rather than submit it to certain defeat.

A spokesman for Dellums said amendments to the International Tax Equalization laws and Investments Credit Act, to exclude southern Africa and Portuguese colonies, are under consideration. He declined to go into detail. He also declined to assess feelings about the Dellums-Conyers bill now being prepared. But thus far, Congress has not shared the reformers' pro-black majority zeal on Africa.

Indians Demand Bureau Reform

BY FRYE GAILLARD

On Sept. 22, more than two dozen Indian protestors were arrested after a brutal slugfest with police in the lobby of the sprawling Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D. C. The event was dramatic enough to make national headlines, but many Indians believed its real importance lay not in the drama, but in the breadth of its support.

The demonstrators—members of the American Indian



Rep. Charles C. Diggs

Movement and the National Indian Youth Council—were protesting attempts by old-line bureaucrats within the BIA and the Department of the Interior to undermine the reform efforts of BIA Commissioner Louis Bruce. To native Americans, the issue is so basic that nearly every major Indian organization and tribal group has taken a stand on it. Old antagonisms have been buried, at least for the moment, and there has been a very explicit fusion between the left and the center of the Indian political spectrum.

On the same day the Indian militants clashed with D. C. police, a more moderate confrontation was taking place right across the street in the Department of the Interior. A delegation of tribal chairmen—including Peter MacDonald of the Navajos, Buffalo Tiger of the Miccosukees, Wendell Chino of the Mescalero Apaches, and William Youpee of the Assiniboines—were presenting their grievances verbally to Interior and White House officials. The demonstrators from AIM and NIYC specifically endorsed the negotiating efforts of the chairmen, and the chairmen, in turn, endorsed the militant action of the youthful protestors.

The government, as a result, found it impossible to write off the BIA demonstrations as the irresponsible and unrepresentative actions of a few militants. Indeed, there was considerable support for the demonstrators within the BIA. "All of those people are my brothers," said Alexander McNabb, the BIA's director of operating services. "And many of them are my friends." His sentiments were shared by Community Services Director Ernest Stevens, Deputy Director of Economic Development Leon Cook, and BIA legal advisor Browning Pipestem—all of them Indians, all former activists, all brought into the bureau by Louis Bruce as part of what has become known as his "new team."

The team is almost universally despised by the white (and some Indian) career bureaucrats within the BIA, and the events surrounding the AIM demonstration illustrated the rift very clearly. "They also illustrated," said one new-teamer wryly, "which group is on top at the moment . . . and it ain't us."

The protestors, as the new-teamers acknowledged, had arrived at the Bureau with the avowed intent of making a citizens' arrest of Deputy BIA Commissioner John O. Crow, the man they consider a leading saboteur of reform. Crow was not there. He was consulting with angry tribal chairmen across the street in the Department of Interior offices. So the protestors initially barricaded themselves into an office, blocking the door with filing cabinets.

Alexander McNabb was watching the situation carefully since, as director of operating services, he is responsible for building security, and since, as a friend of the demonstrators, he did not want anyone to get hurt. He told RRIC that because he knew the protestors personally, knew he could talk to them effectively, he saw no need for the presence of police. Cook, Pipestem and Stevens offered the same assessment.

"But a couple of our finks," said Cook, "namely Calvin Bryce and Conrad Broadt, called the General Service Administration officers and the metropolitan riot squad, and pretty soon the place was crawling with police. The police rioted, and there you had it."

"It was insane," said Pipestem.

RRIC attempted to contact Bryce, the BIA's deputy associate commissioner for support services, to ask if indeed he had summoned the police, and if so, why? But Bryce, as he has done on several previous occasions, failed to return the RRIC call.

In any case, whoever called them, the police turned out in force and evicted the demonstrators from the office in which they were barricaded. McNabb says the protestors then went down to the auditorium on the first floor of the bureau to wait for Crow and Bruce and to decide what to do next.

"Meanwhile, I sought out Conrad Broadt, our building supervisor, who works for me, to ask him why so much security," said McNabb. "He seemed very confused. He didn't give any clear answers about why the security was necessary or who had ordered it. So I asked some policemen who their orders came from, but they wouldn't—or couldn't—tell me, even after I identified myself. I was shoved several times by police and threatened with arrest. And I was supposed to be in charge."

Later, McNabb said, the GSA police placed some of the protestors under arrest, without informing them of the charges. "I asked one policeman what the charges were," he recalls, "and he told me 'I don't know, I'll have to check.' All this led to verbal hassles between the police and the AIM people, and there was some pushing and shoving.

"There were some hard feelings by now. Some protestors and BIA staffers were concerned about the way they had been treated. So Ernie Stevens agreed to go upstairs and call the commissioner, who was at the NBC studios, taping an interview for the 'Today' show. Some of the AIM people, including Russell and Ted Means, started to follow him upstairs. But the GSA cops blocked the way, and when Ted tried to get by, one of the cops shoved him down the stairs. He landed in the midst of a bunch of other cops, who immediately started punching him. Of course the other Indians started punching back, and the fight was on. The metropolitan civil disturbance squad

An internal power struggle has been under way for some time within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and America's Indian leaders have been growing increasingly apprehensive about the outcome. Letters have been sent to the President and calls for a new "war plan" have come from the usually moderate tribal chairmen. Then, on Sept. 22, the issue came to a dramatic head. More than two dozen Indian protestors appeared at the BIA and tried to make a citizen's arrest of a top official. RRIC's account of the story behind the confrontation is based upon lengthy interviews carried out over more than a month. The story would have been impossible without the help of the American Indian Press Association, and especially its Washington bureau correspondent, Richard La Course, a member of the Yakima tribe.

swooped in and began throwing people to the floor and beating them. People were dragged out roughly and the doors to the building were locked. It did not take an astute observer to see that Indians were being locked out of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"I witnessed all this," McNabb concluded. "And I think I am rather an expert witness. I am a lawyer. I used to be a policeman in Suffolk County, N. Y., and I was appalled at the way the whole thing was conducted."

"And to top it off," added Leon Cook, "the kids were charged with unlawful entry. Can you believe that? Unlawful entry into a public building during working hours. The charges were dropped because they were too absurd to hold up. They were about as absurd as everything else that's been happening around here lately."

Some background on Cook's concerns:

On July 8, 1970, President Nixon handed down his lengthy pronouncements on federal Indian policy. The Indians were stunned. The statement was more than they ever dared hope for: an explicit endorsement of the principle of Indian self-determination without any accompanying termination of federal treaty responsibilities. And more than that, the President spelled out explicitly what he had in mind. He called for the hiring of more Indians within the BIA. He asked Congress to create an independent Trust Council Authority to represent Indian interests in land and water disputes. He urged the BIA to contract with Indian groups to do for themselves some of the same things that bureaucrats had attempted to do for them in the past. And above all, he called for a greater involvement of Indians in federal policy-making.

Some of the Presidential proclamations required congressional action. Others did not. And while the Democratic Congress, perhaps realizing that it had been outflanked, chose not to act on Nixon's package, BIA Commissioner Louis Bruce took significant administrative steps.

Most importantly, he brought into the bureau some 16 young, tough-minded and progressive Indian activists, and put them in key policy-making decisions. He told them to innovate, and he pointed out that their innovations, while unlikely to endear them to the BIA's more traditional thinkers, would be firmly based in Presidential policy.

Exactly why Bruce moved so boldly is open to question. Some, like new-teamers Ernest Stevens and Alexander McNabb, believe he did so because he is a courageous man, an Indian leader determined to do what is right for his people regardless of the odds. Others more cynical, such as Leon Cook, point out that Bruce had little choice, that once Nixon's policy had been announced, the Indian people throughout the country were unwilling to tolerate anything less than an all-out effort to translate the words into results.

Regardless of Bruce's motives, the new-teamers took his instructions seriously. And for a while, things happened around the BIA that had never occurred before. As acting director of economic services, Leon Cook, with the help of such lieutenants as William Veeder and Phillip Corke (who happen to be white), began an enthusiastic defense of Indian land and water rights. Browning Pipestem unearthed the legal justification for a broad range of

policies, including an obscure 1946 solicitor's opinion that upheld preferential hiring and promotion of Indians within the Bureau. Ernest Stevens, as director of community services, began revamping the BIA's urban relocation program, and Alexander McNabb plunged into the task of negotiating self-determination contracts with various tribes and Indian groups.

McNabb's experiences were typical. He came to his current position in April, 1970, and he was soon put in charge of contracting, which may be the most important area of reform suggested by the President or undertaken by Bruce's team. Basically, under this procedure, the BIA agrees to pay Indian groups to build their own roads, publish their own newspapers, run their own schools, and provide other services.

"Much of the contracting is routine," says McNabb, "but it pumps between 10 and 15 million dollars into the Indian economy each year. This is first aid. But beyond that, we wanted to use contracting as a device to give Indians genuine control over their own lives. We don't push contracting on the tribes. We don't view it as a panacea. But we believe it is one way that things can be made better.

"I have seen Indians come in here after years of thinking it over," he continues, "and they will sit down and begin speaking in their native language through an interpreter. And what they will say is that 'we want to control our own lives, to make our own mistakes.' And then the bastard bureaucrats try to fight it."

McNabb, like the other young bureau activists, has made it clear that he is not afraid of such fights. And he knew they would come. He had worked in a similar contracting program for the Office of Economic Opportunity, had even written the contracting procedures for that program during the Johnson Administration. When he arrived at the BIA, he found its procedures very narrow and confining by comparison, but he tried to live with them at first and wrote numerous routine contracts between April and November of 1970.

Then, Walter Hickel, who was Secretary of the Interior at the time, appointed a departmental task force to study contracting. The task force deliberated from November until March, and according to McNabb, it came up with a direction, a guiding philosophy, but no real procedures. So from March until May, McNabb wrote new contracting procedures, which were basically accepted by the bureau.

He felt good about the way things were going, believed he was beginning to accomplish something, but in June his mood changed abruptly. More established and more powerful bureaucrats within the BIA and the Department of the Interior solidified their opposition against him, and on June 28 he received a memo from Commissioner Bruce telling him that "because of the critical importance [of contracting] . . . I am taking steps to improve management." Those steps, Bruce said, included taking contracting out of McNabb's hands and putting it under the direction of Calvin Bryce, a white man of the older school, who would report directly to Bruce.

Why? McNabb is convinced that it was a move Bruce did not want to make, a response to growing political pressure both inside the bureau and out. He

believes two contracts in particular were responsible for the pressure.

The first was with *Dine Ba Hani*, a hard-hitting and controversial Navajo newspaper that deals bluntly with the problems confronting the nation's largest tribe. "I was proud of that one," says McNabb of the contract. "You have people starving out there. You have Navajos lining the roads drunk. You have Black Mesa, which is being ripped apart by the coal companies. You have a bunch of unscrupulous white traders who systematically cheat their Indian customers. And you have that damn Apple newspaper, the *Navajo Times*, that caters to powerful interests and gives you the latest results from the tribal bowling tournament. So *Dine Ba Hani* was needed. And Howard Leonard, the publisher, has the guts to say the things that need saying.

"The contract was supposed to run from June of 1970 until June of this year, but it got caught in the bureaucratic red tape and did not take effect until November. It was a \$40,000 agreement, and the money was to be given out in three payments. Once the agreement was finalized, we got Howard Leonard the first \$20,000 within 24 hours. He needed the money bad. The second payment was supposed to be in March, the third in June. He was required to submit reports on what he was doing to prove he was complying with the terms of the agreement. He submitted them, and they seemed to be in order. But then the bureaucrats—once they saw the things he was doing and once they felt a little pressure from the powerful interest groups in the Southwest—began to say the contract was illegal. They cut off the funds.

"Well, that didn't stop Howard Leonard. His staff is working for nothing, and somehow they have continued to publish. But now he is literally starving. He has received no money since the original \$20,000 payment back in November. Of course we have fought the ruling, and now it has been reconsidered, and the bureaucrats have decided the contract was legal after all. Leonard will get more money, but he is nearly ruined. That's how these bureaucrats operate. Maybe the contract was not a model of procedural excellence, but it was damn sure legal."

The second contract—the one that sealed McNabb's doom—was a \$211,000 agreement with the tiny Miccosukee tribe in the Florida Everglades. The Miccosukees, a fiercely independent, proud and highly traditional group, negotiated to take over the entire range of BIA services, the most important of which included a school (RRR, Vol. I, No. 17). McNabb viewed the contract as immensely important, a model for Indian self-determination, a sort of pilot project for full implementation of President Nixon's proposals.

"But it turned out to be a toughie," he recalls, "largely because of Aspinall and Haley."

Aspinall and Haley, of course, are both powerful congressmen. Wayne Aspinall, a Colorado Democrat, is chairman of the House Interior Committee, and James A. Haley, a Florida Democrat, is chairman of the House Indian Affairs Subcommittee. They both threatened to add prohibitory language to Interior appropriations bills to stop such contracts in the future.

"We would never have gotten that one through," says McNabb, "if there had not been a lot of counterpressure—from us, from the tribe, and from a few congressional

friends." But it was his last major contracting effort. However, the day after he was told informally that the contracting was being taken away from him, he flew to Nebraska with Ernest Stevens and negotiated six routine contracts, which, taken together, greatly increase the flow of federal money to the impoverished Omaha tribe. "In the past the bureaucrats had gotten it all," McNabb explains.

The question then arises, what has happened since Calvin Bryce took over contracting? And the answer, very simply, appears to be nothing. There were 119 contracts pending when McNabb was removed. He had ranked them by priority. But Art Allen, a Sioux lawyer who works for Bryce, has confided to McNabb that no one has even read the contract applications since Bryce took over. In addition, Bryce no longer publishes a weekly list of pending contracts, as McNabb used to, and the contract review committee set up by McNabb has not met since May.

Deputy Commissioner John O. Crow points out proudly that 93 contracts have been renegotiated since May 1, and he says he sees no difference between a renegotiated contract and a new one. But to McNabb and others, the difference is clear: No prog-



Peter MacDonald

ress has been made in contracting, because the old-liners are merely covering the same ground.

All this has not gone unnoticed among the country's Indian leadership, and the most outspoken critic has been Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald. MacDonald, in a blistering speech to his fellow tribal chairmen earlier this month in Window Rock, Ariz., scoffed at the contention that McNabb was removed in the interests of better management. "If good management is incapable of writing any contracts," MacDonald said, "then maybe management Indian-style is better. At least it gets results."

MacDonald also pointed out that McNabb's problems were not isolated, but instead were part of a general bureaucratic retrenchment affecting other members of Bruce's new team. Leon Cook, who had been functioning as acting director of economic development, was returned to the post of deputy director, the position in which he had been hired. William Freeman, a white man, was made director. In addition, two of Cook's top aides, William Veeder and Phillip Corke, were ordered to Phoenix and Denver, respectively. Both would have been limited in their geographic scope, and Veeder would have been compelled to participate in a project that he feels will be disastrous to Indian people. (Veeder refused to go. Corke may do the same. And the transfers are being reviewed.)

Ernest Stevens had been functioning as acting associate commissioner for education and programs, one of the top posts in the bureau. But BIA Deputy Commissioner John Crow, who had also reduced Cook's responsibility, returned Stevens to the post of director of community services (the job for which Stevens was originally hired). Crow recommended that the position of associate commissioner for education and programs be abolished entirely. And finally, an Indian preferential hiring policy for the bureau, devised by Pipestem as a step toward self-determination, has been frozen.

Who is responsible for all these decisions? The buck can be passed all the way to the President, but there are a number of intermediate stops in between. MacDonald has his own explanation.

"We are on a collision course with the Department of the Interior," he told the tribal chairmen. "We thought we had a real and permanent victory when Commissioner Bruce and his new team took over the bureau. It is now clear that as soon as Indians gain control of the bureau, that the Department of the Interior created a super BIA operating out of the Secretary of the Interior's office by the Secretary and William Rogers and Wilma Victor. The dominant interests in that department, represented by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Mines, and the Bureau of Fisheries and Wildlife, have interests which are hostile to Indian interests. These bureaus and these interests are once again in control of the department and are able to stop the bureau in its efforts to protect Indian rights and to assist the Indian people to achieve self-determination. . . ."

William Rogers, the deputy assistant secretary for Indian affairs, was in the audience at the time, and he was reported to have been stunned by MacDonald's bluntness. But MacDonald had even more unkind words on Wilma Victor, Interior Secretary Rogers Morton's special assistant for Indian affairs. He

pointed out that Miss Victor was once superintendent of the Intermountain boarding school, which has been accused of physical and mental cruelty to the Navajo children who have attended it. (RRR, Vol. 2, Nov. 15-16.)

The new-teamers, too, are outspoken in their appraisal of Miss Victor. "I hate her," says Ernest Stevens. And Alexander McNabb compares her quite unfavorably to Morris Thompson, an Alaska native who held the same post under Secretary Hickel.

But McNabb is more inclined to place heavier responsibility on Secretary Morton himself. "Hickel was a pretty good guy," McNabb says. "He had some strings on him as far as Alaska was concerned, but elsewhere, he was pretty clean. He was concerned about Indians, and usually tried to do the right thing. Morton is different. He never even talks to those of us brought in by Commissioner Bruce."

Two of Morton's biggest sins, in the view of Peter MacDonald and other Indian leaders, were the appointments of Miss Victor and of John Crow. MacDonald contends that as deputy commissioner, Crow is the "tool" of those who have interests hostile to Indian interests.

Crow denies this. He says he is deeply committed to Indian self-determination and that he has changed no policies. He also says that he respects Bruce's new team, believes many of their ideas are good ones, and has confidence that their managerial skills will continue to improve.

That Crow has played a key role in the bureaucratic retrenchment is clear. What his motives were and what role he will play in the future are matters of dispute. Louis Bruce, in a meeting with the AIM protestors, described Crow simply as "an old football player who has taken the ball and run too fast," and he added, "I think I can work with this man." Ernest Stevens, whose responsibilities were reduced by Crow, shares the commissioner's assessment. "I am willing to try to work with Crow," he said. "My biggest problem with him, in fact, is the company he keeps—Wilma Victor, and the old-line bureaucrats, who are the most arrogant people alive. You try to talk to them about a program and they will interrupt you in the most patronizing way, and say 'Well yes, Ernie, but you are overlooking several points'. . . . I get pretty damn tired of it."

What emerges from all of this is that those who support Bruce's reform program often differ slightly in singling out the major obstacles to it. Some point to Crow. Others condemn the old-line and middle-management bureaucrats in both the BIA and the Department of Interior. Some focus on Wilma Victor, and others on Rogers Morton. But few are willing to leave out the man who raised their hopes in the first place, Richard Nixon.

McNabb and Cook are both convinced that the President's Indian policy statement was rooted in Pat Moynihan's now famous advice that Nixon concentrate his attention on Indians and practice "benign neglect" of blacks for a while. "And to top it off," says Cook, "Nixon has tried to placate the Indian people with mere words. Well, we are smarter than that. It hasn't worked."

Clearly it hasn't, if that was what the President had in mind. The AIM demonstrations and Peter MacDonald's