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# Race Relations Reporter, 18 October 1971

Race Relations Information Center

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# Race Relations REPORTER

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## Indian community control coalition

A coalition of community controlled Indian school boards was formed quietly early this month, and the group plans a meeting soon--perhaps this week--with key Bureau of Indian Affairs and Department of Interior officials in Washington, D. C. The primary aim of the proposed meeting is to pressure the BIA into speeding up its contracting efforts with such school boards. The basic purpose of the contracts will be to substitute Indian control for BIA control of federally funded Indian schools.

The founding groups in the coalition were the Wind River Shoshone-Arapahoe Education Association from Wyoming, the Busby School Board from the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana, the Red Cloud School Board from the Oglala Sioux reservation in South Dakota, and the St. Francis School Board from the Rosebud Sioux reservation in the same state. The group will also seek support from the Lone Man Day School Board (also from the Oglala Sioux reservation), the Miccosukee school board from southern Florida, the Ramah school board from the Navajo reservation in New Mexico, and possibly others as the concept spreads. \* \* \*

## Mississippi redistricting challenged

The U. S. Department of Justice has filed a federal suit against the Hinds County Board of Supervisors, charging that their re-drawing of county supervisor districts violates the Voting Rights Act. The suit, filed Sept. 14 in Jackson, asks that a three-judge panel order the supervisors to redraw the lines, but does not ask that the upcoming county election be delayed until that has been done.

According to a Justice Department spokesman, Hinds County held two primary elections in August on the basis of the new districts, despite the "entering of a valid objection to the plan" by Attorney General John N. Mitchell on July 14. Section five of the Voting Rights Act requires that any changes in voting regulations, requirements and procedures be submitted in advance to either the attorney general or the U. S. District Court for the District of Columbia for "prior approval."

The attorney general objected to the redistricting--which was ordered in

## Inside This Issue

Chicago's Wall of Respect is losing its bout with urban renewal...Blacks in HEW have formed their own caucus... A court ruling on the Mississippi Highway Patrol may have national implications...

## Publications of Race Relations Information Center

In addition to publishing *Race Relations Reporter*, RRIC also offers a number of special reports:

- Stuart, Reginald. "The Black Contractors' Dilemma" August 1971. ca. 20 pp. \$1.00  
 Nelson, Jack. "The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights: A More Activist Role?" June 1971. 32 pp. \$2.00  
 Egerton, John. "The Black Public Colleges: Integration and Disintegration" June 1971. 31 pp. \$2.00  
 Gaillard, Frye. "Indians in Revolt—1970" Dec. 1970. 14 pp. \$1.00  
 Staff. "Nashville's Model Cities Program" Jan. 1971. 34 pp. \$1.00  
 Hooker, Robert W. "Displacement of Black Teachers in the Eleven Southern States" Dec. 1970. 30 pp. \$1.00  
 Garnett, Bernard E. and Gaillard, Frye. "The Black Athlete—1970." Part I, "Blacks in Pro Sports" (B. Garnett). Part II, "Crumbling Segregation in the South-eastern Conference" (F. Gaillard). August 1970. 40 pp. \$1.00  
 Garnett, Bernard E. "Invaders from the Black Nation." The story of the "Black Muslims." June 1970. 32 pp. \$1.00  
 Walls, Dwayne. "The Klan: Collapsed and Dormant." A case study of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina. May 1970. 24 pp. \$1.00  
 Garnett, Bernard E. "How Soulful is 'Soul' Radio?" March 1970. 42 pp. \$1.00

The following RRIC special reports are out of print but Xerox copies are available on special order at \$5.00 a copy.

- Egerton, John. "Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act: A Program in Search of a Policy" March 1970. 32 pp.  
 Egerton, John. "Racial Protest in the South—1969 Style." Case studies of Forest City, Ark., and Somerville, Tenn., Oct. 1969. 33 pp.  
 Garnett, Bernard E. "Black Protest: Will It Split the United Methodists?" Nov. 1969. 23 pp.  
 Leeson, Jim. "The Constitution and the Courts: New Issues and New Faces" Dec. 1969. 21 pp.  
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 White, Jack E. "Black Politics in a Dying City" (Newark, N. J.) Jan. 1970. 25 pp.  
 Staff. "Majority-Black School Districts in the 11 Southern States" July 1970. 102 pp. (Xerox copies \$7.50)

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1969 by a federal court on the basis that the old districts violated "one-man, one-vote" rulings by the U. S. Supreme Court--because "the proposed changes appear to dilute black voting strength in the City of Jackson." Prior to the redistricting, at least two supervisor districts were majority black; after the redistricting, at least two supervisor districts were majority black; after the redistricting, all five districts were majority white.

The Hinds County suit is considered extremely important by civil rights attorneys for two reasons. First, the case will test whether court-ordered redistricting is subject to the "prior approval" provisions of the Voting Rights Act. The Justice Department and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law--which had filed a separate suit seeking to have the primaries thrown out and the county election delayed until new lines could be drawn--say that court-ordered redistricting is subject to review by the Attorney General. Hinds County says it is not.

Second, civil rights lawyers feel the Justice Department has waited too long and is asking for far too little by way of remedies. They say privately that Justice's entering the case after the primaries were held, and its failure to ask for a delay in the Nov. 3 county election are evidence of a lack of concern for the rights of black voters. Hinds County contends that the attorney general's failure to object to the plan within 60 days makes the redistricting valid.

The Justice Department spokesman said that although the department was not specifically asking for such a ruling in the case, the three-judge panel would probably issue an order similar to the one handed down in Issaquena County. That order permitted elections on the basis of illegally drawn supervisor districts, but required that another election be held--on proper districts--within one year.

Ironically, the Justice Department's only involvement in the Issaquena case was as a "friend of the court," not as an active participant in the case. The bulk of the legal work was handled by the Lawyers Committee. In the Hinds County case, where it is likely that the Justice Department suit and the Lawyers Committee suit will be consolidated, a spokesman for the Lawyers Committee said, "We're glad to have them with us." \* \* \*

## Indian bureau concessions

In the face of mounting protest--both militant and moderate--the Department of the Interior has pledged a new emphasis on reforming the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Indian groups across the country had been bitterly protesting what they saw as the systematic dismantling of the reform program initiated by BIA commissioner Louis Bruce and a group of young Indian leaders whom he had brought into the Bureau. (RRR Vol. II, No. 18.)

But on Oct. 4, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton, announced several important concessions at a Washington, D. C. press conference. He promised that a new Indian water rights office would be created. He announced a stepped-up program of road-building on Indian reservations. He said there would be a renewed emphasis upon contracting with Indian tribes and groups to take over BIA services. Morton also agreed to review with the National Tribal Chairmen's Association and the National Congress of American Indians exactly where BIA money is to go in future

years. And he announced the creation of a National Indian Advisory Board, consisting of representatives from Indian tribes and organizations--including, apparently, such militant urban Indian organizations as the American Indian Movement (AIM).

Indian response to all of this has been cautious. "We are going to watch with interest how these things work out for the benefit of Indians," said William Youpee, president of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association. "I personally am not ready to pass out any medals just yet." Another Indian leader said he thought the promises--particularly concerning the budget review and the composition of the National Indian Advisory Board--are so significant that he doubts that the government will implement them fully. "The fact that they would even promise that shows how out of touch the White House and the Interior people are," the leader said. "Like, those guys in AIM are not the type to deal patiently with any bureaucratic bullshit. If they are really put on the advisory board, it ought to swing."

AIM is considered one of the more militant Indian organizations in the country. It sponsored, along with the National Indian Youth Council, the September 22 demonstrations at the BIA. (RRR, Vol. II, No. 18.) And yet many Indian observers believe AIM has become even more effective in recent months because it has concerned itself less with rhetoric and more with concrete issues, seeking alliances with more moderate Indian groups concerned about the same issues.

Conspicuously omitted from Morton's press conference was any mention of personnel changes, although the controversial transfer of BIA water expert William Veeder has been rescinded in response to Indian pressure. But BIA Commissioner Louis Bruce had asked for a large number of additional changes including the firing of some key opponents of his reform efforts, and the promotion of several members of his reform team. Alexander McNabb, one member of that team, told RRIC that he and Ernest Stevens, another member, talked with Secretary Morton before the press conference. The talk itself was a rarity, since in previous months Morton had generally ignored the team. But McNabb said, "he talked pretty straight with us and told us he supported the reform. His conversation was much better than his public statements. We will just have to wait and see." \* \* \*

## Unrest among territorial peoples

An independence movement in Puerto Rico appears to be growing (see RRR, Vol. II, No. 13), and while discontent among America's territorial peoples may be most publicized in the Carribean, it is by no means confined to that part of the world. This summer, for example, the U. S. -appointed governor of American Samoa, John Hayden, angered some islanders by trying to remove a judge who was popular among the Samoans. While Hayden was mildly reprimanded by Interior officials, many Samoans and sympathetic Americans charged that the real issue is self-government for the islanders. "The Samoans themselves could not possibly misgovern and mismanage their lovely islands with the facility displayed by the current political appointee," contended Dean Kaufman, a former VISTA lawyer who served in Samoa under Gov. Hayden.

Concerning another of America's Pacific possessions, Micronesia, negotiations are now underway about the future of the island group. Meetings were held from October 3-9 on the Hawaiian island of Maui between Interior Department negotiators and a Micronesian Future Status Delegation. Lazarus Salii, the chairman of the



Micronesian delegation, said, "Either we come up with something or we go on to independence." He added that a crucial issue in the negotiations would be the U. S. power of eminent domain. Inside this issue is a story about two examples of the use of that power in Micronesia and the questions it raises about self-determination for the islanders. \* \* \*

## Rent control law attacked

Members of a citywide coalition of tenants' groups in New York City charge that the amended Rent Control Law has not improved anything. The city law specifies that landlords can raise rates by up to seven and one-half per cent, provided that 90 per cent of the increase is used for increased services or improved maintenance. But Barbara Klopfer, a spokesman for the Federation of New York Tenant Organizations, told the Community News Service that "scores of tenants have been in our office saying they haven't seen any changes in maintenance or services." The tenants' federation, with 25 member groups, maintains that landlords are required only to mail a pre-printed postcard to the city Housing and Development Administration (HDA), certifying that they have invested most of their increased rent proceeds in their buildings. The Community News Service reported that HDA spokesmen were unable to explain the agency's procedures for verifying landlords' claims. \* \* \*

## Hawaiian studies program created

In recent years, a new pride and identity has affected such groups as blacks, Chicanos, Indians, Puerto Ricans, white ethnics and others. And even very small and isolated groups have been caught up in the proliferating ethnic consciousness. For example, within the last few years, native Hawaiians--who now number only a few thousand--have been protesting bitterly about the way their islands were taken from them, and they have contended that the process continues today. They have expressed a renewed pride in native Hawaiian culture, and have demanded that others acknowledge the validity of that pride. In apparent response to such attitudes, the University of Hawaii has announced a new Hawaiian Studies Program, which is the first of its kind for the young Hawaiian islanders (although the university has a Micronesian studies program). The Hawaiian program will concentrate on Hawaiian languages, history, music, sociology, and even botany. \* \* \*

## Wall of Respect: Doomed By Renewal

BY JACK WHITE

The Wall of Respect is located at the intersection of 43rd and Langley Streets in South Side Chicago. It was painted in 1967 by the now defunct artists workshop of the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC). It depicted, in its original version, black heroes, from boxers and musicians to spiritual leaders and polemicists. It looks different now than it did in the fall of 1967, having been repainted from time-to-time because of squabbles that resulted from "ego problems" on the part of various artists engaged in its creation. But at all times, at least up

to a year ago, it occupied a special place in the hearts of the people, mostly poor and mostly black, who lived around it.

"People came from all over the world to see that Wall," said James Mims, the elderly owner of a newsstand located next to the Wall. "It's a masterpiece. A lot of people used to think that colored people couldn't do anything but plow and work in the field until they saw it. But after they saw it, they knew colored people could make something beautiful too."

It was more than a tourist attraction. It was the scene



The Wall of Respect, Chicago, circa 1967

By Bobby Sengstacke

of rallies and poetry readings and musical performances. In a neighborhood where the defacing of buildings and monuments is the norm, "didn't nobody ever touch that wall," Mims said proudly.

But despite all the good feeling about the Wall of Respect, its doom is now sealed. The building on which it is painted will soon be demolished, perhaps during the fall. And although some parts of the original Wall have been carted off to Malcolm X Community College, where they will be preserved, it's just not the same anymore.

"Selling the paintings to Malcolm X was disgraceful," said William Walker, one of the OBAC members who painted it. "It was a gift to the community and it ought to be preserved right where it is." At one time, his feelings were widely shared, and there were rallies and petitions to save it. But that's all over now, and most people seem to feel, along with James Mims, that "the Wall has served its purpose now, it's time to let it go."

Said Walker, on the same theme, "the people there are too concerned about day-to-day survival to get worked up about something like the Wall. They have more important things on their minds."

Indeed they have. They are concerned about the accelerating pace with which their already run-down community, Oakland-Kenwood, is deteriorating. They are concerned about the rumors that their community is going to be "reclaimed" by the city government for whites, at their expense. And some of them see, in the story of the Wall, a foretelling of what is in store for them.

*What is happening to Oakland-Kenwood is a classic example of the confusing interaction between city and federal agencies and programs, absentee owners and low-income citizens that characterizes so much of urban redevelopment today. In such a confusing situation—where a community does not even*

*begin to understand the forces that are acting upon it—it is difficult to make predictions about the future. The only things that can safely be said are that something is going to happen to Oakland-Kenwood, and the chances are most of the people who live there now won't be there ten years from now. Neither will the Wall of Respect.*

No one, not even the most militant critic of what seems to be happening in Oakland-Kenwood, questions the need to re-develop the area. It is a community of eyesores: the empty hulks of burned-out, abandoned buildings; the high-rise ghettos of massive public housing projects; the windowless, concrete monolithic schools that look more like prisons. There are no parks or playgrounds for children. There are massive problems of unemployment and crime and drugs. There are dreadfully few community facilities, such as shopping centers. What there is more than enough of is despair.

"Many people now have lost all hope," said Rosie Simpson, a community organizer for the Chicago Urban League, whose office is located only blocks away from Oakland-Kenwood. "All you have to do is go through there and see all the abandoned buildings and broken windows. There's just no more sense of pride."

Oakland-Kenwood was designated in 1969 as a part of the Near South Neighborhood Development Project (NDP), a recognition on the part of the city government that its problems were massive and in need of treatment. But so far, nothing has been done, and it may be that picking the area for redevelopment has contributed to its problems.

"When people think their home might be torn down at any time, they just don't bother to put in any improvement," Mrs. Simpson said of the few home owners in Oakland-Kenwood. "They look at the conditions around them and figure there's no use in trying to keep things up."



Chicago's Department of Urban Renewal is aware of the effect that the empty shells of buildings have on the community. "There's 75 to 85 buildings along Lake Park (a street that forms the eastern border of Oakland-Kenwood) that need to come down now, but we just don't have the money to do it," said Earl E. Corebin, director of the DUR's site-clearance division.

The problem, he said, stems from the way the DUR handles site-clearance. When a building is condemned, the DUR contracts, on the basis of competitive bidding, with a private firm to handle the demolition. A lien is then attached against the property to enable the city to recover the costs of the demolition. In Oakland-Kenwood, however, the value of the property on which many of the abandoned buildings stand is said to be less than the cost of the demolition. And the absentee owners, many of those names are buried underneath layers of legal camouflage, simply leave the problem of paying for the demolitions in the city's lap. The result is that the hulks remain standing.

The building on which the Wall of Respect is painted is an example. It caught fire several months ago and was gutted. It was condemned as a hazard to health and safety. But it remains standing. There are no funds available to either tear it down or fix it up, and it is because of this quandry that the Wall of Respect remains in any form at all in its original location.

Some residents and activists in Oakland-Kenwood reject this explanation. "They say there's no money to fix this area up, huh?" said A. A. Rayner Jr., a former alderman in a nearby South Side Ward and, with his father, the owner of a funeral home near 43rd and Langley. "Well let me tell you, [Mayor Richard] Daley can get money to do anything he wants, and the only reason they haven't done anything around here is because they don't want to. They're out to re-claim this area for whites. Let me tell you."

The proximity of Oakland-Kenwood to Chicago's business-rich Loop district and to rich park areas along adjacent Lake Michigan lend credence to Rayner's views. Oakland-Kenwood is extremely valuable property—not so much for what it is, but because of what it could become. And should the development of the Near South NDP follow the pattern of other renewal efforts nearby, Rayner's fear that what will remain will consist of public housing projects for the blacks and low and medium income developments for whites can easily be believed.

Rayner and other blacks point to the developments known as Lake Meadows, Prairie Shores and South Commons, all of which are far too expensive for black families and the recent development of several massive public housing projects in their community as evidence to support their views.

*While these developments have gone up, Rayner pointed out, the Chicago Housing Authority has built several new public housing projects, none of which contain adequate recreational facilities, and new schools which "have that state prison look about them." The reason for the housing projects is, claims Rayner, to "concentrate as many of us as possible into one place, so they can control the vote. Everybody knows that the backbone of the machine's vote is in those projects, because everybody's gonna*

*vote the way their precinct captain tells them to, or they'll get thrown out."*

Further complicating the problem of redeveloping Oakland-Kenwood is a recent federal court ruling that prohibits the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from granting urban assistance funds to Chicago until the city government begins to build public housing in predominantly white areas. DUR officials and HUD apparently both agree that the ruling was a mistake, and both plan to appeal it. It is unclear today what the effects of the ruling will be on Oakland-Kenwood.

DUR officials say that no urban renewal plans have been developed for the Near South NDP because of a shortage of federal funds, they privately admit that they would like to build a "new city in the city" where Oakland-Kenwood now stands. When citizens complain that they haven't been let in on the planning, DUR officials like Deputy Commissioner David N. Larsen say that is because planning has not yet begun. And when citizens complain that the DUR is tearing down buildings and dislocating families, Larsen pleads "not guilty."

"They're probably saying that because the DUR handles relocation in that area because it's covered by the Model Cities program. And perhaps some of our relocation people aren't as careful as they should be about saying why they are offering assistance. But urban renewal hasn't cleared any buildings over there at all."

"We get all the credit . . . or all the blame, depending on how you look at it," said Larsen. But the city agencies that should be receiving the "credit or blame" for what is going on in Oakland-Kenwood, he said, are the Board of Education, the Chicago Housing Authority, the Park District and the housing code enforcement agency, all of which are engaged, in one way or another, with condemning property, acquisition of sites and clearance.

The DUR would like to move ahead with planning and executing a project in Oakland, should the federal funds become available, Larsen said, but right now "all we're handling is re-location."

Mrs. Simpson and Rayner are extremely skeptical about this justification. "The land could lie dormant for five or six years, just like it did in Hyde Park (the area surrounding the University of Chicago, just south of Oakland-Kenwood)," Mrs. Simpson said. "They cleared that in 1960, and they are just now rebuilding, and it's all high-rises, and high-priced townhouses. Whatever apartments are in there are either co-ops or condominiums. There are very few apartments for rent. And what apartments there are are too expensive to rent for poor families."

She feels that the buildings are being purposely allowed to deteriorate, that vacant land is being permitted to stay that way, and that new development is being delayed for the purpose of running people out of Oakland-Kenwood. The U. S. Census shows that between 1960 and 1970, the population in the major part of the community dropped from over 24,000 to 17,000. "All the population change can be put up to urban renewal," she said.

At one time, Mrs. Simpson had hopes that the Wall of Respect could become a community rallying point, something for the citizens to organize around. They would then be in a stronger position to determine what happened in their neighborhood. But that hope has now faded.

The Wall no longer seems as important to Oakland-Kenwood as it once did. One striking evidence of the ebbing of importance attached to the Wall was pointed out by newsstand owner Mims: About a year ago, he said, people began to write on the Wall for the first time.

Also, community activists like the Rev. Jesse Jackson lost interest in the fight to preserve it in its original site. According to William Walker, Jackson, who heads Operation Breadbasket, was in the forefront to save the Wall of Truth (which is on a burned-out building across the street from the Wall of Respect) until one day a black youth "told him to get the hell out of the community," when Jackson came to pay his respects. "It was getting dangerous around there, and I had to start discouraging people from getting involved," said Walker.

"You see, we [the artists] were too immature to really deal in a meaningful way with that community. That area could have been one of the great study centers for black people in this country," Walker said.

*Hoyt W. Fuller, one of the founders of OBAC and still an active member in its only surviving vestige, the writers work shop, puts the same idea in a different way. "We failed," he said. "We let the moment pass by. We failed to build institutions that systematically dealt with the consciousness of black people. The problem was that nobody sunk down roots in the community."*

That failure to mold the community around the Wall of Respect may in fact contribute to the re-making of Oakland-Kenwood in the way that Rayner and Mrs. Simpson fear. As Larsen put it, "only the ones who participate can expect to have influence." And certainly most of the residents of Oakland-Kenwood are in no condition to effectively participate in any redevelopment planning today.

## Patrol Prejudice In Hiring Halted

A federal district judge has ordered the Mississippi Department of Public Safety and the Mississippi Highway Patrol to halt racially discriminatory hiring practices and begin a program to recruit and hire qualified blacks.

Judge Walter L. Nixon Jr. made the ruling Sept. 29 in a class action brought by two Rankin County blacks, Willie L. Morrow and Jerome Mangum, who sued the agencies after they were repeatedly denied forms to apply for positions as highway patrolmen. Morrow and Mangum were represented by Frank R. Parker and Constance Slaughter of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

*In his written ruling, Judge Nixon found that the plaintiffs had established a "prima facie case of racial discrimination." Of 743 employes in the Department of Public Safety, of which the Highway Patrol is a part, only 17 were black—and these held jobs as janitors in the maintenance division and cooks in the training division. The department, the judge found, "has never employed any blacks in any responsible position."*

The agencies were ordered not only to cease racial

discrimination in hiring, but also to take affirmative steps to recruit and hire qualified blacks. Some key components in the affirmative hiring plan are: a five-year "freeze" of standards and qualifications to prevent discrimination against new applicants; the prohibition of advertising that suggests that the Highway Patrol or the Department of Public Safety employ whites only; the advertising of vacancies in both agencies which prominently indicate a non-discriminatory hiring policy; a ban on the use of racial epithets; a five-year program of extensive record keeping regarding applicants and employment; and an extensive program of recruitment at black high schools, junior and senior colleges. The ruling also granted the plaintiffs \$500 for attorneys' fees—"the first instance in which plaintiffs in a case challenging racial discrimination in public employment have been awarded attorneys' fees," the LCCRUL said.

The recruitment program at black educational institutions is considered the most significant portion of the ruling by legal advocates. "We've forced them to change their whole style with that one," George P. Taylor, head of the LCCRUL's office in Jackson, said. "For the first time, they have to admit that there are qualified blacks for those jobs. For Mississippi, that's a big step." But, Taylor said, the absence of any numerical minimums for black employment was "disappointing." It may be necessary to "go back to court in six months," to make sure Judge Nixon's ruling actually results in any hiring of blacks, he said. The Lawyers Committee had sought a suspension of white hiring until the Patrol became 40 per cent black.

Both Morrow and Mangum's applications for patrolmen's jobs have been "processed," Taylor said, but there is no assurance that either of them will enter the next class of trainees. Morrow is a former Air Force policeman with extensive military training in police work. Mangum is a student at Jackson State College.

One of the LCCRUL attorneys who handled the suit, Frank R. Parker, told RRIC that an appeal of the suit to the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals was likely. The appeal would ask for specific relief of Mangum and Morrow's grievances, i.e. their instatement in the next class of highway patrol trainees since the judge ruled that both were objectively qualified, and the setting of specific hiring goals for black patrolmen. Parker said it was likely that the Highway Patrol would also appeal.

The U.S. Department of Justice, which filed a "friend of the court" brief in the case asking that a proportion of all new recruits be blacks, entered the case only after pressure from the U.S. Congress. At a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee concerning the appointment of Jerris Leonard as head of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, three Democratic senators—Birch Bayh (Ind.), Philip Hart (Mich.), and Edward Kennedy (Mass.)—asked Leonard if the department were going to intervene. The Senators' aim at the time, it was reported, was to force the LEAA to commit itself not to make grants that would strengthen discriminatory hiring practices in police departments.

The Mississippi ruling is expected to have far-reaching effects. Some lawyers say that it could be applied in virtually every state, many of which have no black state police officers at all (RRR Vol. I, No. 21).



# Blacks in HEW Form Caucus

BY BERNARD GARNETT

For years, "getting a government job" was the epitome of success to thousands of blacks in Washington, D. C., most of whom had fled the South in search of economic opportunity "up North."

True, they would be confined to the lowest paying assignments—as laborers, messengers, elevator operators, and clerks. A few—and only a few—might advance to skilled labor, office secretarial (as opposed to secretarial "pools") or supervisory positions. The black workers knew they would be discriminated against and would feel powerless to fight it. Nonetheless, the security and fringe benefits of a Civil Service job certainly beat working at a domestic, filling station, or similar private industry task—which was the principal alternative to government service.

**Blacks in the U.S. government are organizing caucuses, to protect black employes and to influence their agencies' decisions concerning blacks. This small, but apparently growing, trend reflects a change in the attitude of the black federal worker. RRIC staff writer Bernard Garnett found that the new black caucus activists more often come from the younger government workers, but the older employes also are taking part.**

Today, a new breed of black federal government employes is emerging. Spurred by the black activism they read about in the papers, the advancement of blacks to higher-level positions once reserved solely for whites, and official federal policy against racial discrimination in hiring and promotions, they are fighting the very injustices they once accepted as an unpleasant fact of life.

A few—especially younger blacks—have even organized special-interest caucuses within their agencies. One notable example is the Minority Concerns Committee (MCC) at the Health, Education and Welfare Department's Parklawn branch outside of Washington, in Rockville, Md.

*Formed about two years ago and officially recognized by the department since last December, MCC is a somewhat loose-knit group of blacks with a two-fold objective. They want to protect the rights of black employes at Parklawn and serve blacks outside of their agency. The principal organizers include black professionals—such as equal opportunity officer for the National Center for Health Statistics, William Jenkins; James Robinson, president of the HEW local, of the federal employes' union; and Ronald Lyles.*

Many of the members, however, are what Jenkins calls "the oppressed, in lower-paying positions." He said that originally, the average member drew a five-figure annual salary, but that a number of blacks at the bottom of the pay scale, encouraged to see a group addressing their needs, have spread MCC representation through the entire Civil Service employment range.

*Though most of MCC's thrust comes from younger workers—who often participated in a number of protests and sometimes were jailed, before joining the government work force—MCC activists range in age from mid-20's to mid-50's.*

Through *Drum*, a newsletter that startled some officials with its bold, black unity symbols, MCC members and members of a caucus at HEW's main building seek to advise their black co-workers of their rights and of other pertinent information both inside and outside of the agency.

MCC once rushed to the aid of a black woman who reportedly had been struck by her white supervisor, according to Jenkins. The caucus led a number of demonstrations, until top agency officials stepped in and resolved the situation. "But mostly," Jenkins explains, "we strive to give more functional kind of support, such as advising the aggrieved employes of their rights, helping them set up grievance procedures, and the like."

In non-labor matters, MCC members voluntarily impose a two per cent "self-taxation" on their take-home pay, to benefit outside black groups. Recipients of this special fund have included a foundering D.C.-area community credit union and the Cairo, Ill. (black) United Front, according to Jenkins. When HEW withheld the methadone treatment funds for Blackman's Volunteer Army of Liberation Col. Hassan Jeru-Ahmed, earlier this year, MCC members intervened.

The following excerpts from MCC's position paper help to explain the caucus's purpose:

"We pledge ourselves to correct injustices that exist in equality of employment, health, transportation, education, and any other area that has a direct bearing on the mental and physical welfare of minorities."

"We recognize the fine line that separates our social and work environments and experiences. Our philosophy is 'an undying love for our people'—realizing injustices that affect one of us affect us all. With this thought in mind, our program strives for self-development. First, on an individual basis, by economic and political education . . . second, on a local level, by supporting efforts of others for the betterment of our people, and . . . third, on a national level, by supporting those organizations which are designed to function for the good of our people."

"MCC assists, as resources permit, our poor who live in this land of plenty."

"MCC is attempting to establish new methods of making EEO programs more relevant to the minorities they are designed to serve."

Washington's predominantly black postal employes union and the local Urban League chapter have been responsible for helping a number of federal agency black caucuses to organize. Among agencies with active groups are the General Accounting Office, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (main office, near Capitol Hill), Department of Housing and Urban Development, Govern-

ment Printing Office, Civil Rights Commission, General Services Administration, Department of Agriculture, Navy Department, and Labor Department.

Citywide, the caucuses have banded together, to form Government Employees United Against Racial Discrimination (GUARD). Reginald Booker, an outspoken black activist and one of the city's most important foes of free-way plans that would destroy a number of viable black areas, is recognized as the head of GUARD.

*Neither Booker nor many caucus members will discuss their movement with outsiders. Aware of agency officials' reputations for "dealing with trouble-makers" through promotion denials, job phase-outs, undesirable transfers and assignments, and other retaliatory measures (skirting Civil Service regulations), they often feel that the less said about who does what in their caucuses, the better.*

But another reason is that the top-level structure of these caucuses often are similar to other recently formed groups—especially among blacks and radical whites. Less emphasis is placed on individual roles, and there is more concentration on "collective leadership," in which all members are assigned equally important roles.

According to one important source, the federal government black caucus idea grew out of black workers' disenchantment with white-dominated employes' unions. The relationships between blacks and unions in three departments (Navy, Labor, and the several HEW offices that settled at Parklawn) are said to have worn particularly thin when white guild officials failed to fight these agencies' projected moves from the inner city to suburban Maryland and Virginia.

Why wouldn't blacks prefer the spacious, suburban complexes to their old, often cramped and antiquated quarters? First, the out-of-town offices would be centered in areas where, despite the recent fair-housing ordinances, blacks would have difficulty finding decent housing convenient to their jobs. Secondly, lower-grade black employes who depended on public transportation would be forced to pay up to \$1.80 or more per day in bus fare, while spending as much as three hours a day travelling to and from work.

According to the RRR source, Navy headquarters moved to Virginia, and the HEW offices moved to Parklawn, despite black protests. But Labor Department blacks were able to block their department's planned move out of the city. RRR was unable to reach Booker or any Navy or Labor black caucus representatives, for confirmation or denial.

But Jenkins said MCC definitely was not the outgrowth of any anti-relocation sentiment. He explained that about seven or eight workers, who'd been active in various community and government projects before their bureaus moved under one roof, simply decided to pool their efforts. Even though blacks disliked relocation to the suburbs, he said, MCC and other caucuses have organized basically because, "Blacks are just tired of the pervasive kind of racism in the government."

As with their non-federal counterparts, the black government workers' quest for unity reflects a growing belief that every Afro-American has a role in the struggle for racial equality. To the chagrin of Washington-area civil rights leaders in the 1960's, black civil servants there ap-

peared the least likely to become involved in protest. That seems to be changing.

And the black caucus movement seems to be spreading to other parts of the country, including Galveston, Tex., and Atlanta. While caucus members still comprise a definite minority, their movement—coupled with similar efforts by other black government workers—signals a new, black determination in federal circles.

## Micronesians Ask Return to Island

BY FRYE GAILLARD

In the late 1940's, the United States compelled the inhabitants of the Pacific islands of Bikini and Eniwetok to move. The reason: so the U. S. could use the islands for a variety of military purposes, including the testing of nuclear bombs.

The tests were completed more than a decade ago, and the former residents of the two islands, who have been asking to return to their homes since even before the tests began, are beginning to grow impatient. The story of the U. S. response to their demands illustrates the contradictions in American policy toward what are in effect the country's Pacific possessions.

Both Bikini and Eniwetok are among the 2,100 islands known as Micronesia. The islands, since the end of World War II, have been administered by the United States under a United Nations trusteeship, and their future status is still very much in doubt.

*During the week ending Oct. 9, negotiations were underway between U.S. officials and the Micronesian political status delegation, appointed by the Micronesian congress. A spokesman for the U. S. Department of the Interior described the talks as "prelimi-*

**The Trust Territory of the Pacific—or Micronesia—is comprised of the Marshall, Mariana and Caroline Island groups. After being ruled in turn by the Spanish, Germans and Japanese, the islands are now administered by the United States under a United Nations Trust Agreement dating back to World War II. The agreement obligates the United States to help prepare the 100,000 Polynesian people who populate the islands for self-government. In recent months, serious questions have been raised by such publications as *The Washington Monthly*, *Ramparts* and *The Nation*, as well as a Micronesian newspaper called *The Micronitor*, about whether the U. S. is actually fulfilling its obligations. This story provides an update on the situation, plus a look at the problems of the inhabitants of two particular Micronesian islands.**



nary"—part of a sincere effort, he said, to discern the wishes of the Micronesians.

But many Micronesian leaders are inclined to doubt it. Self-determination for the islanders, most of whom are Polynesians, has never been a recognizable feature of American policy toward its Pacific trust territory. And Bikini and Eniwetok are cases in point. First Bikini:

Bikini is an atoll, which means that it is actually a ring of tiny, connected coral islands with a salt water lagoon in the middle. The Bikinians, before their removal, made their living from fishing the relatively calm and safe waters of the lagoon.

But when the U. S. decided to test atomic weapons on Bikini, the inhabitants were required to move to the island of Kili. Kili is not an atoll, which meant that the Bikinians, if they were to fish, had to do so in the open sea—a much more dangerous undertaking in that part of the Pacific.

For that reason, and a variety of others including a profound homesickness, the Bikinians repeatedly demanded to return home. President Lyndon B. Johnson, in the waning years of his administration, bowed to their pressure and agreed to have the island prepared for re-habitation.

The preparations are not yet complete, but a spokesman for the Interior Department said work is progressing. "Obviously, before the people of Bikini can return the place has to be fixed up," explained Sam Heller of the Interior's Office of Territorial Affairs. "Presently, there is a

program to build houses and plant new trees. Bikinians are providing the labor for this undertaking, which gives them jobs and a source of income while they are waiting to return permanently.

"There is no certain date for the return," Heller said, "because we don't know yet when the preparations will be complete. We are trying to expedite the matter."

Although some Bikinians are reported to be growing impatient at the delays, their status appears far more promising than that of the Eniwetokese. There are at present no plans to allow the latter to return home because, according to Heller, "the military still has Eniwetok."

*Exactly what the military is doing with Eniwetok is unclear, for government sources informed the Eniwetokese in the early summer that there were only 10 people on the entire island. This information convinced many of Eniwetok's former residents that the island was no longer being used, and it sparked a new desire to return there.*

The Eniwetokese have been thoroughly unhappy in their new home, the island of Ujelang. Although Ujelang is an atoll (unlike Kili), its new inhabitants found that it had distinct disadvantages. For one thing, it was so infested with rats that the children of the islanders were bitten frequently, and according to Peace Corps volunteers who served in Micronesia, U. S. administrators were unresponsive to pleas for help in controlling the rats.

One former volunteer, Jerry Fite, writing in the Janu-

ary, 1971, issue of the *Washington Monthly*, said then High Commissioner William R. Norwood once proposed that the rat problem be solved by shipping BB guns to the residents of Ujelang. When incredulous Peace Corps volunteers pointed out that the method might be inefficient at best, Norwood laughingly agreed, adding that BB's won't even kill rats in the first place. He then closed the meeting, and, according to Fite, when Peace Corps volunteers protested what they described as Norwood's insensitivity, the High Commissioner tried to have them removed from Micronesia.

Herties John, the chief magistrate of Ujelang, also says the people of his island were visited infrequently by supply ships for many years, and that they suffered severe deprivations as a result. "For many years, we went as much as six months without a field-trip ship," he told the *Honolulu Bulletin* last July.

He pointed out that in October, 1968, conditions had become so bad that the islanders of Ujelang massed together in a boat to protest their dissatisfaction with living conditions on Ujelang and to demonstrate their desire to return to Eniwetok. The people said they planned to ride the ship to the capitol of their district and demonstrate before the district administrators.

They were dissuaded from doing so when Ataji Balos, now a Micronesian congressman and then a government field trip officer, offered himself as a hostage until their demands were satisfied. He remained on Ujelang for three weeks until U. S. administrators provided \$22,000 worth of emergency food for the islanders.

*When discontent flared up again 11 months later, the United States gave the people of Ujelang \$1 million to be put in a trust fund that would draw six per cent interest. The gift undercut complaints that the islanders had been paid only \$150,000 when they were removed from Eniwetok, and the protest temporarily subsided once again.*

But it became clear this summer that what the Eniwetokese really want is not money, but rather the opportunity to return home. And according to Interior officials, that won't happen until the military completes whatever it is doing on Eniwetok.

Many Micronesian leaders see U. S. policies toward Eniwetok as being at odds with the U. N. trust agreement under which America was charged with administrative responsibility for the islands. For the agreement was not military in character. Instead it charged the U. S. to "promote the development of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory toward self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the circumstances of the Trust Territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned. . . ."

But some leaders are also deeply skeptical of American gestures of benevolence, such as preparing Bikini atoll for the return of its former inhabitants. They believe, in the first place, that such events occur only when it suits the convenience of the U. S. government. And in addition, many leaders fear there may be an ulterior motive.

Joe Murphy, a Peace Corps volunteer in Micronesia, who stayed on after his tour of duty to edit a Micronesian bilingual newspaper called *The Micronitor*, told RRIC that it is clear to him and to many Micronesian leaders that the U. S. is seeking to keep the islands permanently, as a new Pacific outpost for its military power. "Many of the [island] leaders surprised Washington's representatives with their understanding of the real situation here," Murphy said. "The leaders impressed me, and I think they are the hope for the future.

"Nevertheless," Murphy said, "the military is stepping up public relations so much that it must be a little embarrassing to them to be so open and callous about it. It is not exactly certain that it will work but nonetheless they press on as though it will."

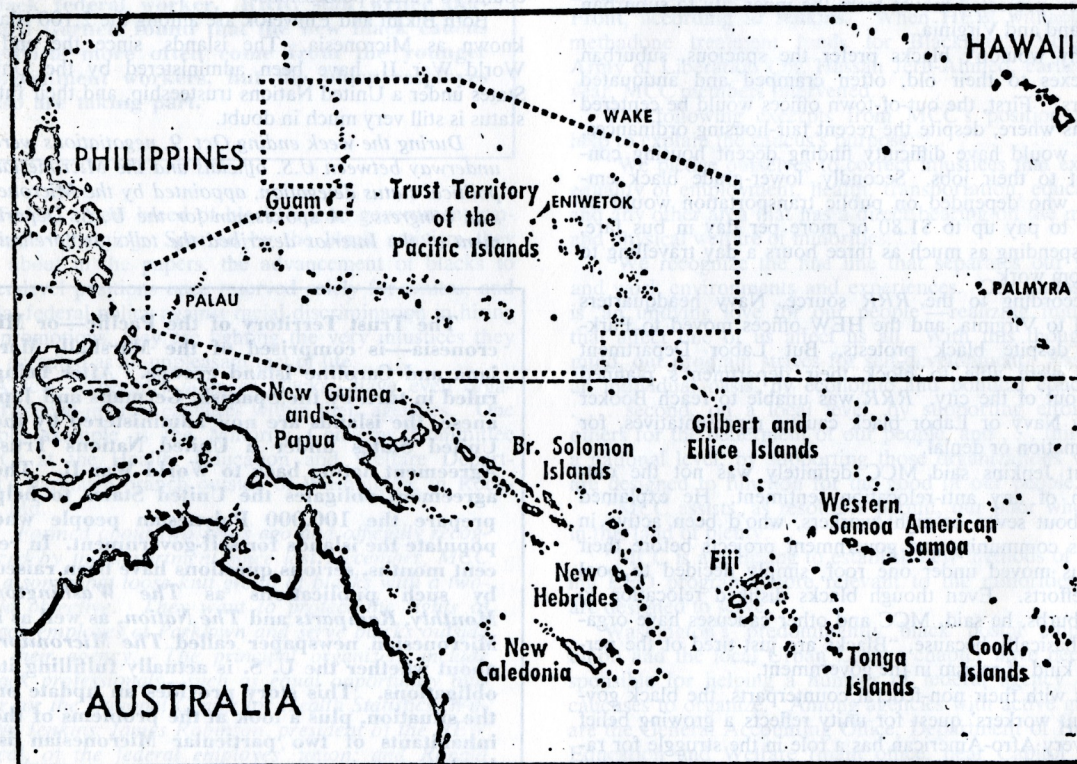
If that is what the military leaders are doing, however, there are indications that they may be simply acting on an assumption common among America's civilian leaders, i.e., that Micronesia will always belong to the U. S.

*For example, a group of Micronesian students at the University of Hawaii unearthed (earlier this year, before the disclosure of the Pentagon Papers) what they said was a classified government study, commissioned during the Kennedy Administration, with recommendations about Micronesia's future. "We cannot give the area up," the document said, "yet time is running out for the U. S. in the sense that we will soon be the only nation left administering a trust territory. The time could come, and shortly, when the pressures in the UN for a settlement of the status of Micronesia could become more than embarrassing."*

Whether or not the document is authentic, its conclusions are not at odds with the statements of high-ranking congressional and administration officials. Congressman Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the House Interior Committee, has made no secret of the fact that he would like to see Micronesia a part of the U. S. And former Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel was even more blunt. The U. S., said Hickel, simply "is not going to give up Micronesia."

Against this background, the assurance by an Interior official, Sam Heller, that "the future of the Micronesians will depend upon what they want," seems questionable. Heller was reminded that the Congress of Micronesia (created by the U. S.) rejected an offer by the Nixon Administration to grant Micronesia commonwealth status. The Micronesians proposed instead that the islands enter a free association with the U. S.—an association which could be terminated any time by either side. But the U. S. rejected the counter-proposal. Heller also was reminded that, as of this summer, 11 Micronesian congressmen favored outright independence; 27 wanted autonomous free association with America; and only six supported a commonwealth arrangement.

To this, Heller replied, "Well, there will have to be some meeting of the minds."



The Trust Territory of the Pacific, also known as Micronesia.