

The Voice

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

"Dedicated to the promotion of the cultural, social and spiritual life of a great people."

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Member of the Associated Negro Press and Nebraska Press Association

Entered as Second Class Matter, June 9, 1947 at the Post Office at Lincoln, Nebraska under the Act of March 3, 1879.

1 year subscription \$2.00 Single copy .5c



EDITORIALS

The views expressed in these columns are those of the writer and not necessarily a reflection of the policy of The Voice.—Pub.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Lacking in Leadership

By Dean Gordon B. Hancock for ANP

The uncertainty and confusion of the times make great leadership imperative. The nations are standing confused at their Twentieth Century Babel with not only a confusion of tongues but a confusion of thought and thinking on the graver issues that concern our earthly salvation of damnation. Security and peace are posing questions that cry unto high Heaven for answers; but there is no certain voice and no positive mandates save those which stem from Calvary. But men today are not turning toward the formula of Christ as they must if they would not perish from the earth; instead they are busy trying to find "some other way."

A powerful and far-sighted leadership holds the only hope that mankind can survive the crisis that is already upon us. In this critical day of decisions of destiny, we are floundering about on the sea of abject dismay and uncertainty. What is more, there is no social or economic or political John The Baptist crying in our wilderness. The mediocrity of current leadership is pathetic. How we miss our lamented Franklin Delano Roosevelt! When the cat is away the rats come to play; and it is even so when such as Roosevelt leaves the scene. The little political pigmies whose voices were muffled before the majesty of a Roosevelt come rumbling out with a pathetic fury under Truman who is feeling the impact of a dreadful reaction against Roosevelt whose power lesser men feared.

Truman is not as bad as the reactionary and lean Republicans would have the world believe. He is rather the victim of a cruel circumstance that pits him against the great Roosevelt background. As we look today out upon the nation we cannot see one towering leadership figure. The most powerful leaders are obstructionists. The men who could help Truman put over a great and constructive program are unequivocally committed to obstructionism and obscurantism. It would be interesting to know just how far our leadership is behind our followership.

The defeat of President Truman's civil rights proposals is easily one of the great moral tragedies of the Twentieth Century. It is not so much a defeat for the Negro as for the nation in the eyes of the world. Were it not for the hope of invading our exchequer by the nations, they would hold our nation in derision. They are quite willing to wink at our blunders if we finance their wink at so much per wink. But divested of further hope to cash in on their proffered friendship, the nations show no inclination to

admire our proclivities to preach one thing and practice another.

Our Congress is pathetic. It has flaunted defiance at Truman and gotten away with it. It has broken faith with the people who elected Truman over the protest of the powers that be. But the great defeat has not been for Truman but for the nation which is losing prestige in the eyes of the world. Where would we stand in the estimation of the world without our stuffed pocket-book? The nation today needs a powerful and far-visioned leadership.

Such leadership is sorely lacking. McCarthyism too sadly represents far too large an area of our national leadership. He had a good point but he faltered in its presentation. His was a case of bad lawyer with a good case. This nation cannot survive with a leadership too generally characterized by straddling the fence with ear to ground at the same time. The future of this nation is being crucified on the cross of petty politics.

When we turn from the national picture to the racial one we find the same lack of firm leadership. Very seldom do we come across a reputed Negro leader who is willing to suffer for his convictions. Nearly eleven-tenths of the so-called leadership is directioned by what Negroes want instead of what they need. Nobody wants to breast the tide of opposition. Almost everybody wants to be popular with the crowds with their acclamations. It cannot be seriously doubted that in the defeat of the



by JAMES C. OLSON, Superintendent
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nebraska's Governors—17

Charles H. Dietrich, elected governor in the bitter, close campaign of 1900, served the shortest term in the history of Nebraska—it lasted only five months. Those five months, though, were hectic ones in state politics, and Governor Dietrich probably was glad to retreat to what must have seemed like the comparative calm of the United States Senate—but before going into that, I'd like to give you a little background on the 17th man to serve as governor of the state or territory.

Governor Dietrich was born at Aurora, Ill., Nov. 26, 1852, the son of one of the many Germans who fled to America during the critical year of 1848. He quit school at 12 years of age and went to work on a farm. After four years as a farm hand he got a job in a hardware store. He soon gave this up and went to Arkansas, where he was promptly robbed of the money he had saved to start in business for himself.

Adding to his adventures, he took part in the Black Hills Gold Rush, locating the Aurora mine in Hidden Treasure Gulch near Deadwood in the spring of 1877. The next year he sold his holdings and went back to Aurora. He was not long for Aurora, however, because the next year saw him in Hastings, where he engaged in the mercantile business and became

civil rights program of Truman the race has suffered a major setback. We need a great leadership how to inspire the race. The race's current frustration demands hold leadership. When the Congress of the U.S.A. sides with our foes, which is our next move?

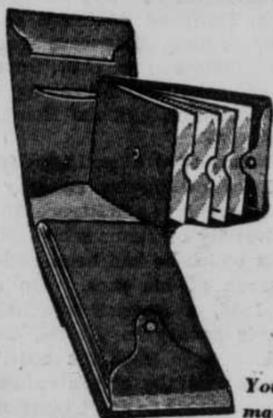
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In 1900, when the Republicans were looking for a way to break the fusionist hold on the state, they unanimously selected Dietrich as their standard bearer. The fusionists renominated Gov. William A. Poynter. As I indicated, the race was bitter and closely fought. The final tabulation gave Dietrich the election by the slim margin of 861 votes out of more than 227,000 cast.

The legislature which convened in January, 1901, had before it the problem of electing two United States senators, one for the regular term and one to fill out the term of Sen. M. L. Hayward, who had died before taking office.

After a long and complicated fight, which occupied the legislature's attention to the virtual exclusion of all other business for almost three months, J. H. Millard, Omaha banker, was selected for the regular term, and Governor Dietrich, to fill out Hayward's term, to expire in 1905.

So Governor Dietrich resigned on May 1, 1901, to become United States senator. Although he had a rather stormy career in the senate, he did valuable pioneering work in promoting the development of the beet sugar industry and reclamation, both of vital importance to present-day Nebraska.

Governor Dietrich died at Hastings, April 10, 1924, and is buried in Parkview cemetery there. He was an enthusiastic collector of Alaskan and Philippine materials.



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