

# PLAIN TALK

BY DAN GARDNER

This letter is a column in itself and, for it I have to thank Jay J. Peters of 5542 Perry Avenue, Chicago. Reader Peters had been reading this column, which is syndicated throughout most of the Negro Press, as it appeared in the Minneapolis-Spokane in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He says:

"Dear Dan: For the last four months I have been reading and carefully scrutinizing your articles appearing in the Spokesman. These articles reflect profound wisdom

courage and vision. Then, in my best judgement, suggest a most comprehensive and scientific program for Negro emancipation along all lines of racial endeavor.

"Your last article, dealing with development of Negro community, is wholly just in its critical attitude toward the NAACP and the Urban League. These two organizations, despite their abundant wealth of training and education, are woefully devoid of adequate stamina in handling the basic problems of securing proper food, clothing and shelter for the masses of the race through self-help and economic planning.

"While it may be 'theologically argued that man does not live by bread alone, it must be remembered that BREAD is the staff of life and he who is able to produce and control it shall never go hungry. Therefore as I see it, we shall have to

seek new and vigorous leadership to initiate the kind of program necessary to straighten out our twisted and neglected economic thinking now!

"The recent convention of the CIO and its positive pronouncements relating to industrial and political action indicate a very promising trend toward inter-racial cooperation and goodwill. The last national election demonstrated a surprisingly high degree of respect cherished by Negroes for the CIO and its militant and progressive leadership. This means, I think, that the field of civil rights and in the business of industrial relations respectively. And in this direction I am safe in saying that virtually all Negro CIO members are convinced that their unions have greater capacity to work for job security and better race relations than any other group.

"Whether they like it or deplore it, the most important work needed to be done among Negroes is that of community building and all it represents. Inarticulate agitation on questions of social justice is not the main issue at this moment.

"If the Negro will learn to do more for himself by way of business enterprise and politics in his own community, he will have a better chance of coming out of the cellar and breaking the vicious control being exercised over him by others.

"Thanks for your inspiring articles. Keep up the nice work! You sincere admirer."

My criticism of Negro organizations such as the NAACP, Urban League and others, has not been one in which an attempt was made to needle these groups for any special purpose beyond that of constructive criticism as a challenging of their efforts into lines of endeavor that would meet current problems and situations.

As Mr. Peters points out the NAACP and Urban League, despite their abundant wealth of training and education, are still unequipped to cope with the basic problems of proper food, clothing, and shelter for the great masses of Negroes through a program of self-education and economic planning.

The reason why this situation exists is that these two organizations, as pointed out in this column before, are interracial and I have yet to be convinced that interracial setups purporting to bring about better conditions for Negroes are basically sound unless the whites are willing to go all the way, giving the Negro the same fundamental economic "breaks" as other groups. These fundamental "breaks" are: the right to establish businesses in locations that are advantageous for sales; the property to manufacture basic commodities and goods; and the property to market the same without strangling competition and left-handed discouragement of such enterprises.

Civil rights are of great moment at all times, and Negroes—above all others—have to be increasingly vigilant in watching out for their rights. However, what good is it to get the right to go into a restaurant to eat if you don't have any money to pay the man after you are through, and of what good is it to win the right to dance with a white girl at some college prom or public ballroom when the men you pay to go in goes to somebody else's pocketbook and doesn't help you at all?

This, as I see it, is a reason why the programs of both the Urban League and the NAACP need revision in the light of current problems that are facing us on all sides today. If such changes are not made and soon these two organizations and others like them might wake up one day to find that the CIO or other labor organizations will have taken over their places in the economic and social thinking of the Negro.

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### Weekly Summary of Editorials About or Concerning Negroes from Daily Newspapers Throughout the Country.

POLITICS . . . . . (Compiled by The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York, 3, New York)

- "Some 'Democrats' (not many now) in South Carolina think it a disgrace to be independent and to vote against an administration that is independent, about as Republican as Democratic and rather more pro-negro' (sic) than the Republican party has been since March 1909, because it is tagged Democratic." (Charleston News and Courier, December 15, 1944.)
- "The 1,000 club is composed of Roosevelt Democrats, with out discrimination as to race, color or creed, who could and did, put up \$1,000 for the fourth term election and were given attractive identification cards of aluminum. The members of the club, or clubs, have been invited to the White House. This is the century of the common man. It is believed that some of the president's recent appointments in the department of state, all of whom have been confirmed by the Rooseveltian senate, are members of the 1,000 club." (Charleston News and Courier, December 30, 1944.)
- "Mr. O. D. Johnston, retiring from the office of governor into the office of United States senator, said at Mullins, last Tuesday that he was leaving the state in the soundest financial condition in its history. . . . For the present, not only the financial condition of the public treasury is fat but so is that of the average man, of all races, creeds and colors. (The colored people are gloriously prospering.) . . . The statement that South Carolina is in the soundest financial condition in its history will be accepted by all the bores in North Carolina and Georgia as irrefutable. There are no bores in South Carolina." (Charles News and Courier, January 4, 1945.)
- "In the second administration of Mr. O. D. Johnston a negro (sic) was tried, convicted and electrocuted for the murder of two white children. The crime was of extreme brutality, and although some excellent persons protested against the infliction of the death penalty on account of the negro's (sic) youth, he was 14 or 16 years old. In the last two or three days before Mr. Johnston retired from the office of governor, in which his people suppose in 1940 that he would serve them four years, he pardoned or commuted life sentences of seven men who had been convicted of murder by juries and also pardoned or paroled two men who had been convicted of rape. Of these persons most if not all were white. It will not be remarkable that two Roosevelt Party negroes (sic) in the house, Dawson of Chicago and the Reverend Powell of Abyssinian Church, Harlem, shall direct attention to it." (Charleston News and Courier, January 2, 1945.)
- "There will be two Negroes in the House for the first time in years. In addition to Chicago's William L. Dawson, Harlem has elected the rip-roaring preacher, Adam Clayton Powell. . . . Although Dawson almost never makes a speech, it is expected that Powell will be a vocal spokesman for his race." (Philadelphia Record, January 3, 1945. Column by Drew Pearson.)
- "The licking administered many legislators who carried the ball for bigots seems to have had its effect on Cong. Hoffman. He is now writing about the need for racial tolerance. We won't take his reformation seriously until he repudiates and actively battles the bigots who support and praise him." (Richmond Times Dispatch, January 1, 1945. Column by Walter Winchell.)

### Statement by The Directors of Your Utilities District

The Metropolitan Utilities District was created more than thirty years ago as the agency to operate and manage public utilities acquired by the people of Omaha. Facts and figures which are well known prove that it has performed its duties well. Regardless of any criticism of its set-up, personnel or policies, this District remains a nationally recognized and outstanding proven example of successful public ownership. It has always possessed powers as to the operation of electric utilities until the last legislature took them away under L. B. 204, and attempted to make them effective through a Peoples Power Commission. It now appears that procedure has failed.

and it is natural to suppose that a new solution of the present difficult situation will be sought. The Metropolitan Utilities District has taken no part whatsoever in the power controversy in Omaha. It has not interfered with any other public agency or unofficial committee nor sought to influence their action. It is not now attempting to force any particular action. Its position is that it is ready, able and willing to take over and operate the local electric service under its own conservative and time-tested statutes, if that should be the public will. A restoration and clarification of its former powers would be a return to long established local public policy, rather than a change in policy.

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### WINS FIRST TWO BOUTS

In his first two bouts in the Golden Glove tournament Wednesday night, Pvt. Charles Green, from the Fairmont A.A. field won both of them very easily. In the first round he knocked out in one round and in the second contest which was stopped after 25 seconds of the second round, he was awarded another TKO decision.

### HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS TO PURCHASE ONE HUNDRED WEASELS

Nebraska High school pupils have set the purchase of one hundred of the army's newest military vehicles, the Weasel, as the objective of a spring War Bond and Stamp campaign, according to Dr. Archer L. Burnham, Chairman of the Education Section of the Nebraska War Finance Committee.

The new vehicle has been shrouded in the deepest military secrecy until now but the amphibious caterpillar-tracked Jeep should, because of the new possibilities of amphibious warfare that it opens, shorten operations in the Pacific, military experts agree.

It was originally designed for reconnaissance and commando raid use in snow area, but since its release it has established itself as one of the most useful of new ground weapons in all manner of field operations, according to reports from fighting fronts where it has been put into operation.

The cost of each vehicle is \$4,810 and according to Dr. Burnham, the plan of Nebraska High Schools to raise enough in bond and stamp purchases to send one hundred of them into operation, is meeting with favorable acceptance throughout the state.

The army designated the small, little carrier as the M-29 in its release. GI Joe had a better name for it. The Weasel, says the dictionary, is "four-footed, notable for the extermination of vermin."

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