

# no separate peace

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## CAMP—Victim of Yellow Journalism

by Mary Stone

The dictionary definition of yellow journalism is "the use of cheaply sensational or unscrupulous methods in newspapers, etc. to attract or influence readers." Recently the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) Eddie Rye, Jr., CAMP director, and the Central Area Citizen's Committee were all victims of yellow journalism in the Seattle Times.

The Times articles center around the "mismanagement" of CAMP by Rye in particular. The allegations are that money from one program was spent in another; purchase orders were signed after goods were received; an account was overspent; Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (Ceta) funds were used to hire employees "illegally"; food for a free food program turned up as hors d'oeuvres at a Central Area nightclub, and more.

While the Times pointed to all of these situations in CAMP, nailing Rye with the responsibility, they also used shaded words and innuendos to paint a villainous picture of Rye. Calling Rye a "dapper executive director" they accused him of modeling at Longacres while CAMP programs failed, using up money to fly to out-of-town conferences and buying a \$60,000 home when winterization money for Central Area homes was almost spent. They also infer that Rye paid the Central Area newspaper *The Medium* "exorbitant" ad prices because Rye won *The Medium's* Community Unsung Hero Award.

### CAMP Positive Influence

When the smoke cleared from all the attacks some facts became clear. CAMP is an important agency in Seattle's black and poor community. Some of its programs are The King County Youth Action Council, Operation Talent Search, Headstart, Consumer Action Agency, Black Arts West, and the Black Academy of Music. Almost everyone in the Black Community has on some level been reached by one of these programs.

CAMP is also the only black directed poverty program in the state, one out of 100 in the whole country. Loss of funding for CAMP will have a negative effect on

our community. Therefore, serious accusations by the mass media should be checked for accuracy and motive.

### Government Bureaucracies Create Difficulties

Most of CAMP's problems can be attributed to government bureaucracy and the resulting inertia. Federal funds are so notoriously slow that according to Rye agencies often have to use money from one program to prop up another, sometimes causing overspending until new money comes in. Otherwise people go unpaid, momentum is lost, and morale is lowered.

The same type of problems have been found all over the country in all sorts of institutions. The January 8, 1978 New York Times reports that government investigations of universities all over the country uncovered the same kinds of irregularities.

Furthermore it is known and accepted in the government that cities throughout the U.S. use CETA money (earmarked for hiring the unemployed to pay present employees working for projects where funding from other sources has run dry.

The charge that workers were hired illegally on CETA payrolls is one-sided. According to the Times a CETA investigation found 12 CAMP employees hired on CETA after having been on CAMP payrolls, a practice illegal according to federal guidelines. Rye's response was "You send them downtown, they're unqualified, they come up here, they're ineligible."

To hire "legally" CAMP would have had to lay off workers already knowledgeable of CAMP operations to hire workers eligible for CETA, who would have had to be trained. This would have interrupted services to our community, and it would not have lowered unemployment at all. If the government were tuned in to the needs and wishes of the people they'd know that 15 weeks of unemployment, the CETA requirement, or 2 weeks doesn't matter. It's still unemployment, degrading and frustrating.

The government bureaucracy caused problems again for CAMP in the summer

food program issue. The fact is the USDA authorized the P&B Caterer's of Tacoma to prepare lunches for the summer food program managed by CAMP. They also authorized P&B caterers to store the food in a Seattle Central Area nightclub which is owned by P&B. The Times' assertion that hamburger patties served at lunch were later served as hor d'oeuvres at night has not been substantiated. Even so, Rye told NSP that the USDA authorized P&B to serve as many children as showed up and they (P&B) could do whatever with the leftovers. "After all, better to eat them than throw them out."

Now CAMP is stuck with a \$7,000 bill, which Rye says he will not pay. P&B is demanding the amount for which they were contracted. Now the USDA says it only pays for meals served. Rye says he sees no reason why CAMP should be penalized for sound management when they cut the summer program after they saw that there were not enough people coming in for the meals. "They don't penalize business executives when they cut a program," Rye said.

### Anderson Attacks

In all of the articles, Rick Anderson, the Times columnist, went no further than CAMP and Rye to place blame for difficulties. Anderson's attack on Rye was exceptionally sensationalistic. Rye's wife's salary and the price of their new house had nothing to do with the situation at CAMP. Anderson failed to say that Rye was modeling at Longacres for the Benefit Guild, a Southern Leadership Council affiliate, a legitimate activity for the black director of a poverty program. Nor did Anderson point out that the community votes, not *The Medium*, decided who was awarded the Unsung Hero Award.

The question then is "Why such an outright attack on CAMP and its director?" The Times could have exposed so-called problems at CAMP in one article. Yet Anderson has written 19 articles about CAMP, 5 of them on the front page. This is especially surprising since there is never this much coverage for anything positive in the black community, especially on the front page.

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