

BLACKS' DESTINY IN OWN HANDS....

# RETURNING TO BUILD A BETTER BLACK COMMUNITY.



Editorial

## Let Us Stick Together

Anyone over thirty-five years old remembers the period when blacks pooled their resources and strengths to work for common goals. It was a time when there were blatant reminders everywhere of the assaults on black dignity, and all blacks knew that it was only through a united effort that these assaults could be confronted and annihilated.

It was consequently through black unity that opportunities blacks had previously dreamed of began to become a reality, and the doors reluctantly began to open, for what was often a token black, to slowly enter.

Now, the disturbing phenomenon is that too many blacks who received their opportunities through these collective efforts reflect that they are not compelled to be accountable to those who labored and sacrificed to make these opportunities possible for them. Thus, too many of those who were fortunate enough to enter the newly opened doors ironically believe that they are secure in these token positions, even as they witness the strength of the masses rapidly eroding around them.

But there is yet another side. Not since the late 50's and 60's have blacks forcefully used their voting strength to change the quality of their lives on the local, state, and national levels. In the

last ten years — since the early seventies — fewer and fewer blacks have bothered to exercise their voting strength. The result has often been the election of candidates who are insensitive to the needs and aspirations of poor people and black people.

Presently, the Voting Rights Act is under attack. Some of the elected officials in both the North Carolina state government and the federal government — many of whom were elected because blacks refused to participate in the election process — have vowed to repeal this act.

The awful truth is that the rights of all blacks — affluent and poor — are now under attack. Without the Voting Rights Act, the protection of the only right that all blacks have, the right to vote, may slowly diminish. When blacks can no longer vote in many of the areas of this country, once again, the dignity of ALL blacks will be in jeopardy.

It is therefore time for blacks to put aside political differences, differences in economic status and their petty personal disagreements. It is time to come together in the spirit of unity, for if blacks are going to be saved, the only recourse now is to stick together.

## Things You Should Know

# SCOTT BOND

1852 —

Born in slavery in Mississippi, he went to Madison, Arkansas at 21, rented a farm for \$5! His tiny savings from working this farm went to buy a tract of ruined land—his friends laughed, but, later the Rock Island R.R. made for the gravel there...as a result his lot improved, and by 1920 he owned over 4,000 acres! His total holdings valued at \$280,000!



Continental Features

## To Be Equal

A couple of months ago President Reagan spent a weekend in New York City, and while the news reports gave ample space to the theatres and restaurants he went to, they also found room for some serious comments about jobs that he made.

The President said he read the Sunday paper and found a 48-page section devoted exclusively to want ads. His conclusion: jobs are available if someone wants a job. It's those high unemployment benefits, he said, that keep people from taking new jobs.

Thus, the President of the United States lent the authority of his office and the sanction of his prestige to one of the most prevalent myths about jobs.

The fact is that a close reading of the want ads — not just counting the number of pages — gives a totally different picture of the job market than the one the President got. Reading those ads forces the inevitable conclusion that the jobs advertised cannot be filled by the vast majority of the unemployed without a national program to teach skills needed in the workplace.

There are serious scholarly studies and informal journalistic reports to back that up.

One such report comes from a surprising source, conservative *Fortune Magazine*, which in 1978, analyzed one day's want ads in a small town in New York State.

## Help Wanted: Jobs

By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

The local paper carried 228 help wanted ads. After eliminating come-ons, commission work, part-time jobs, and business opportunities for people with cash to invest, only 131 ads were for actual full-time jobs within commuting distance.

Over two-thirds of those called for special skills, often for skills that are in short supply everywhere. Trained hospital workers, nurses, technicians, experienced automotive mechanics, and similar skilled workers were advertised for. But few people in those categories are unemployed; that's why those ads run week after week. Other jobs demand educational degrees, licenses, or other requirements that effectively exclude most of the unemployed.

Only one out of five of the advertised jobs were for unskilled workers, and they were snapped up immediately. One job in a motel paying \$3 an hour had seventy applicants. And that was typical of low-skill, low-pay jobs in the area — an army of applicants appeared as soon as they were advertised.

So one city's newspaper appeared to be running help wanted ads for 228 jobs but actually ran ads for only 42 jobs that could be filled by the area's jobless, who actively ran after those few openings.

The kicker is that 7,800 people were officially counted as unemployed in that coun-

ty at the time the ads ran, and only about a fourth of them were collecting unemployment insurance.

That is just one story from a conservative source. There are plenty of others. Try it yourself — study the want ads carefully and see how many jobs actually are available that the unemployed could fill. Better still — next time you hear someone say that the jobless don't want to work, ask them to study those ads and then follow up by calling advertisers of unskilled jobs to see what kind of response they got. It never fails — they always report being swamped by applicants.

Most people get their jobs through friends whose employers spread the word that they need additional workers. Impacted neighborhoods where many people are out of work just don't have that kind of job-producing network.

The President should know that the unemployed want to work, that unemployment insurance benefits go to relatively few of the jobless, and that federal programs to provide the jobless with skills employers need would go a long way toward cutting the jobless rolls and boosting national productivity.

The Help Wanted the unemployed need is jobs, and it is unhelpful for national leaders to spread myths long proved false.

## Reagan's Social Security Double Cross

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

The new Administration has been forced to retreat, at least momentarily, from its scheme to cut Social Security benefits — a scheme that would shatter the retirement expectations for millions of workers.

The United States government is honor-bound to the 115 million contributors and the 35 million current beneficiaries to preserve the integrity of the Social Security system. However, preserving that integrity does not mean breaking the promise held out to workers who have so faithfully supported the system. To break that promise now is both unfair and unconscionable.

"Inflation" is the culprit to which the Administration has pointed in its feeble attempt to justify reducing Social Security benefits. However, the Administration's justification becomes suspect when one considers the fact that the older people of America, at whom these cuts are aimed, particularly those on fixed incomes, are precisely those who suffer the most from inflation. That fact, coupled with the fact that one out of every six elderly Americans already exists on an income below the poverty line would make cuts in Social Security nothing short of a national disgrace.

The truth of the matter is that slashing Social Security benefits would only bring shame to our nation and misery to millions of retirees.

Considering the sharp cuts already imposed in programs such as food stamps and medicaid/medical, as a result of the Administration's budget, it would be fiscally irresponsible and morally reprehensible to further reduce assistance to the needy, particularly the elderly needy.

Workers must not be denied the benefits they have worked for and paid for during their working lives. The government must keep its word. Changing the terms for Social Security at this late date would constitute a breach of faith that would undermine public confidence in Social Security.

The concept most touted by the Administration as a way to hold down the cost of Social Security and insure the system's integrity is to simply ask Congress to reduce benefits for all future retirees and to impose stringent new curbs on disability payments. In addition, the Administration has discussed the idea of penalizing those workers who choose early retirement. Under this proposal a worker entitled to the maximum Social

Security benefits who retires next January would receive \$159 a month less than under present law — \$310.50 under the Reagan plan as compared with \$469.60 under the current plan.

Waste, fraud and abuse in Federal spending must be stopped; and all of us have a stake in pursuing efforts to bring about their end. However, concerned citizens should not sit idly by and support a proposal which would unfairly place the burden of correcting government waste, fraud and abuse on the poor and the weak.

As a nation, we must be committed to insuring that senior citizens have sufficient resources and income to live with the dignity they deserve.

The problems of maintaining the solvency of the Social Security system would be greatly eased if the Administration would embark on an effective anti-inflation and full employment program. This would increase revenues and cut costs without harming either Social Security beneficiaries or contributors. The misguided policies of the Administration will serve only to make worse the financial crunch on both the Social Security system and the American people.

## Civil Rights: The Need For A New Approach

By Bayard Rustin

A. Philip Randolph Institute

It is widely recognized that the struggle to improve the social and economic life of black Americans and poor people in the United States has reached an impasse. While we are fully aware of the impending problems and hardships we face, too little thought has been given to three important questions:

1. What economic changes have occurred in the 1970s and 1980s which require changes in the strategies and tactics used so successfully in the '60s?

2. Why do we appear to have lost the support of those allies who stood so firmly alongside us in the 1960s?

3. Why do so many of the major objectives and programs we in the civil rights movement earlier espoused appear to have lost support even within much of the black community: integrated schools and housing, busing, etc.?

To intelligently answer these questions we must ask others:

1. To what degree has race declined as the dominant factor in the continuing inequality of the races, and in what areas is this development most apparent?

2. Which problems have not traditionally received significant attention by black leaders, but require their attention today?

3. Can we develop a strategy to deal with the decline in black political participation? This question involves both the role of blacks in the electoral process (political party participation, registration levels, voter participation rates) and the relationship of blacks to such grass roots forces as community groups, business, the trade union movement, and the like.

4. Can new approaches to affirmative action be devised which can win the support of a consensus of those groups which once

comprised the civil rights coalition? Here it would be essential to carefully look at whether a course of action based on economic and class criteria or on ethnic, religious, racial, and sexual criteria should be pursued.

5. An examination of the process by which blacks can achieve further economic and social progress.

6. An assessment of the differences between the social and economic programs of the traditional civil rights organizations and those of the black political leadership, with a view toward creating a common program for the future.

7. The attitudes and relations of American blacks toward refugees and undocumented aliens who are perceived to be in competition with blacks for jobs and social services, and how these attitudes and relations affect the process of coalition building.

8. The role of heightened racial identity as a motivating force toward progress and, simultaneously, the role of race consciousness as an impediment toward the development of effective strategy and tactics.

9. How can the educational process be modified to meet the changing needs of the job market?

10. Can new careers be created to meet the needs of the poor? Can the very nature of work be redefined?

There is a need to bring together the most creative minds in America to explore these questions. Such a group must try to develop a new social policy for the 1980s, founded upon the results of their philosophical, sociological, and intellectual exploration.

This group, or institute, would need to examine both domestic and foreign policy

issues which affect minorities, women, and the poor. For instance, it is imperative to recognize that blacks may lose a vast number of American jobs, not because of discrimination, but because of the shift of labor intensive industry abroad — a fact largely ignored by the black community. There is a clear and urgent need to respond to this and similar developments.

A broad range of very important issues, require from us a serious analysis, and the formulation of new objectives. If we in the civil rights community do not make such an effort, we will continue to hold on to those policies, programs, and strategies of the past which demonstrably are failing.

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*If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who propose to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean's majestic waves without the awful roar of its waters.*

—Frederick Douglass