

BLACKS DESTINY IN OWN HANDS.....



"BLACK FOLKS THEMSELVES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK OUT MANY OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT UP TO THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS."

ROY WILKINS

NNPA Editorial

Vernon Jordan Calls For "Back To Basics" For Black Survival

Just before the opening session of the 71st annual conference of the National Urban League in Washington, D.C., delegates, supporters, and friends of the NUL were seriously wondering if the organization could or would have any impact on the "rising tide of radical conservatism," the Reagan Administration, and the Republican Right.

There was concern that in its own black middle-class tradition, the NUL might be manipulated into being "a more mannered, cultured and polite" group of blacks, compared to the NAACP convention and the jolting reception given to President Reagan. The fact that the National Urban League was coming to Washington six months after the inauguration of the new administration, and after major policy decisions have been made was another cause for apprehension.

In addition, the NUL convention has developed a reputation for its big and elegant parties, attracting several thousands of folks every year for this annual conspicuous socialization.

Those concerns, apprehensions, and troubling thoughts were momentarily cast aside as NUL President Vernon Jordan moved into the serious and sombre theme of his opening keynote address. Jordan's speech was not political rhetoric. He spoke as an angry black man, distressed and indignant over what he called a "jelly-bean budget" that robs the poor and gives to the rich.

He lamented the rapid retreat of Democratic liberals in the U.S. Congress. And he lashed out at the prolonged silence of former supporters of civil rights, leaders of the religious community, liberal whites, university students, and elected officials, while the rights of millions of blacks, poor whites, and senior citizens are being sacrificed "on the altar of an outmoded and recycled version of ideas and policies of Herbert Hoover that were buried in the Great Depression.

Vernon Jordan was a profile of courage as he spoke frankly and harshly about the cold, calculated realities of a new "radical conservatism" — produced, packaged and being marketed by the Reagan administration in cooperation with a Republican-controlled Senate and reactionary House of Representatives.

Jordan's speech was a battle cry for blacks "to go back to the basics" of the Civil Rights Movement in fighting to preserve what rights we have left. He sounded the alarm for very difficult days ahead, and for blacks to begin building new coalitions, to devise new strategies and alternatives, and to return to protesting our plight.

Declared Jordan: "The black community today feels itself under siege. It is victimized by the budget cuts. It is harassed by attacks on affirmative action. It is alarmed that state legislatures will redirect our representatives out of the Congress and out of local offices. It is outraged by the Administration's tilt toward racist South Africa. It is threatened by block grants.

"And it is burdened by events beyond the political arena: by growing racial insensitivity and rising anti-black attitudes; by the murders of black children in Atlanta and violence against blacks everywhere; by the continued deterioration of black neighborhoods; by the flow of drugs and the increase in crime; and by the rise of the fanatics of the far Right like the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis.

"The fight for voting rights symbolizes the erosion of black gains. We are now fighting the fight we fought sixteen years ago. And in some ways, we are dealing with basic issues like better race relations that were issues of the 1950s. We moved far beyond that stage, and now we are thrust back to square one."

In his message to black America, Jordan said: "Back to basics also means political action. It's hard to break through the cynicism that grips people who have been subjected to brutalizing poverty and hopelessness. But the 1980s must be the decade of maximizing black political strength. We have the numbers to influence events, but in election after election, we throw away half our power by not voting. So, citizenship, education, and political involvement in all parties must be a major priority in the 1980s.

If we are to survive the "radical conservatism" which provides the climate for a new wave of racism, black leadership must come together, lead us back to the basics, mobilize and let us all march on together to political war to destroy the "jelly-bean budget" and then reconstruct it into a budget more representative of the interests and needs of all the people, especially those in greatest need — blacks, other minorities, and even a larger group of poor whites.

Affirmative Action The 'Immoral Minority', The Black Church And Legal Services

Gerald C. Horne, Esquire

The so-called "Moral Majority" has been making a lot of noise lately. Their fervent and avid hatred of affirmative action — they tend to see it as "reverse discrimination" — is well known; because of this and other reasons, you won't find many blacks in their ranks.

To enforce their dictate in the courts, they have moved allegedly to knock together a "Legal Defense Fund". At the same time, in the recent maneuvers in Congress to dismantle the main legal lifeline of the poor and many blacks — the highly regarded Legal Services Corporation (LSC) which dispenses "legal aid" — the so-called "Moral Majority" has been leading the charge.

The Legal Services Corporation was established by an Act of Congress and signed into law in 1974. Legal Services Corporation currently makes grants to over 320 programs, which operate some 1,400 offices and, as of 1980, has served all 3,000 United States counties. In 1980, Legal Services Corporation funded programs handled 1.5 million cases. The overwhelming majority were routine legal matters on a broad range of issues, including housing problems, consumer disputes, family law matters, and social security benefits. The most frequently provided service — in nearly one-third of all cases — is simply giving advice and counsel on routine matters of critical importance to individual clients. Only 15% of all Legal Services Corporation cases result in litigation. Unfortunately, less than one per cent are the all important "class action suits" that reach beyond individual complainants to affect tens, hundreds, and thousands. Moreover, "class actions" are the most cost-effective way to approach an overburdened judicial system. Legal Services Corporation's sterling labor has been endorsed by the conservative American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the militant National Conference of Black Lawyers, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, state and local bar associations, judges, law professors, private attorneys, trade unions of legal workers and many others.

With this glowing record, the question arises, "Why is the 'Moral Majority' so concerned with destabilizing Legal Services Corporation?" By posing the question, it is answered: This gang of zealots that has been dubbed the "immoral minority" by some, knows that Legal Services Corporation is a potential shield blocking their vain attempt to infect the body politic with their ideological virus.

Thus, in the June 22, 1981 edition of their organ, the misnamed "Moral Majority Report," J.W. Bradshaw assails and lashes Legal Services Corporation. He thoroughly endorses President Reagan's call for a complete abolition of Legal Services Corporation.

He tells their reading audience to concentrate on key House subcommittee members: Chairman Neal Smith, Iowa, Bill Alexander, Arkansas, Joseph Early, Massachusetts; Jack Hightower, Texas; Bernard Dwyer, New Jersey; George O'Brien, Illinois, Clarence Miller, Ohio; and Carrol A. Campbell, South Carolina. These "Republicrats" have been pressured mightily from the right and they need to hear from the other side — which is taking place but needs to be accelerated. For as things stand now, it looks like Legal Services Corporation will find it difficult to escape Congress without a broad slashing of its budget.

The ineptly named "Moral Majority" have not been the only right-wing zealots egging on this massacre of Legal Services Corporation and other "people programs". There is a veritable "interlocking directorate" uniting a scraggly but affluent bunch that includes the "Moral Majority," John Birch Society, National Right to Life Committee, Human Life Amendment Committee, American Conservative Union, National Council Against Forced Busing, Americans Against Union Control of Government, Conservative Caucus, Religious Roundtable, Christian Voice, Heritage Foundation, Stop ERA, Senators Jesse Helms and Jake Garn, beer baron Joe Coors, anti-ERA advocate Phyllis Schlafly. These blood-thirsty, wild-eyed dodos are determined to implant their version of life on the rest of us.

As the recitation of this list indicates, a major source for dollars for the organized right-wing is not only the big corporations like Coors but the lily-white churches. What is needed to counter this force is the institution that may be the most formidable in the black community — the Black Church. The Black Church has not been inactive. Rev. Walter Fauntroy has been spearheading the tireless efforts of the Congressional Black Caucus. Rev. Ben Chavis' campaign on behalf of the National Black Independent Political Party will forever live gloriously in history. Rev. William Howard, who heads the National Council of Churches, has been out front on so many issues that it would take an encyclopedia to list them all. But for every Fauntroy, every Chavis, every Howard, there is a black pastor that is not moving in the footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This is doubly unfortunate because the nation's 20 million black churchgoers contribute to collection plates an estimated \$1.7 billion annually, according to Donald C. Walker, editor and publisher of *Dollars and Sense* magazine. Not counted in this figure is a sizeable sum obtained from benevolent donations, business enterprises and investments. Five million black church members attend church regularly and they worship in 65,000 church properties having

an estimated total value of \$10.2 billion. Black women — from Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth to Coretta Scott King and Angela Davis — have always been in the vanguard. Thus, female church members outnumber males two to one.

When we're talking about the Black Church, we are talking about a powerful institution. We're talking as well about a number of poor, black parishioners who are often forced to call upon the programs administered by the Legal Services Corporation. Black churchgoers often need help against a landlord or about receiving a government check or help with an employment related problem. It is clearly in the interest of black pastors to speak from the pulpit about the decimation of Legal Services Corporation, because if it goes, many black churchgoers will follow shortly thereafter. Rev. Jerry Falwell, the glib orator who heads the "Moral Majority" must know this — and this may explain why they have Legal Services on their hit list.

If they can't do away with LSC altogether, the right wing plans to leave standing legal aid offices that are so weakened that they won't be able to perform their original function. Scheryl C. Portee, of the Civil Division of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association has outlined what Reagan's proposal would do. A central aim is to set up "State Advisory Councils" appointed by the governor that would basically control every move of the lawyers for the poor. One can imagine the impact this will have, especially in southern states where governors have been whipping up and fanning hysteria against these attorneys. Some lawyers and legal workers have been forced to strike in order to bring better services to their constituency. Reagan's proposal would eliminate this. It would also make LSC liable for attorneys' fees and costs incurred by defendants sued.

But perhaps the most pernicious aspect of Reagan's proposal crafted slickly by the right wing, is that it seeks to "privatize" legal services. They plan to use "tuition tax credits" to destroy public schools. They plan to remove subsidies so as to destroy public mass transit, e.g., inner city buses and subways. And the functions of public legal services offered by LSC will be destroyed by turning over many of their responsibilities to the private bar. If you go to a private hospital sick and without money, don't expect to get any service. Reagan wants to provide a similar scenario for those going to a legal aid office.

The right wing led by this "immoral minority" based in lily-white churches that plans to gut LSC and other lifelines needs desperately to be countered by a galvanized black community led by the Black Church. The question has to be posed: *If not now, when?*

A View From Capitol Hill:

Second Trip To Africa To Provide Chance To Probe Problem Areas

By Gus Savage
Member of Congress

In a sense you might say I will be returning to heritage when I visit seven African countries in August as a member of a congressional, fact-finding delegation. I will get a chance to see first hand some of the areas of growing concern on the continent. Stops on the tour are Angola, South Africa, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria.

This will mark my second trip to the continent. I first visited Africa in 1969. I have been invited to participate in the 18-day mission by the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The overall objective of the mission is to provide members with an opportunity familiarize themselves with some of the major issues on Africa which may come before the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Congress.

While in South Africa, the 14-member group is supposed to meet with key black, white, and colored (persons of mixed blood) leaders. The delegation will be determining what reforms, if any, have been made in South Africa's segregationist policies; what reforms are planned; assessing the labor situation, specifically the extent to which American companies are adhering to the Sullivan Code and the attitude of black workers toward the presence of U.S. investment and companies in the country.

The Sullivan Code, which encourages U.S. companies to voluntarily provide equal pay and fair employment for blacks, was developed by the Rev. Leon Sullivan, founder of Opportunities Industrialization Center. It is monitored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Settlement of the Namibian question is a matter of vital interest to the congressional mission. I personally am appalled by South Africa's continued illegal administration in Namibia, formerly called South West Africa. Moreover, I find unacceptable

anything short of complete withdrawal by South Africa and the early independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations.

I am especially distrustful of reports that South Africa is changing its segregationist racial policies. Such reports fly in the face of recent statements that the racist government would take away Bishop Desmond Tutu's passport because he had spoken out against apartheid while visiting in the United States. I also have problems with any plan that calls for the reduction of Cuban troops in Angola as long as South Africa maintains its illegal jurisdiction over Namibia, Angola's southern neighbor, and continues to support guerrilla activities against Angola's established government.

The Reagan Administration is seeking repeal of the Clark amendment, which prohibits covert or other assistance that would promote military or paramilitary operations in Angola without the authorization of Congress. The Administration has explained its proposal as a matter of principle intended to restore the President's rightful authority and practical flexibility in foreign policy by what it regards as an outdated, single-country prohibition.

I strongly support the Congressional Black Caucus' opposition to repeal of the Clark amendment. Opponents of repeal note that such action would be viewed by many in black Africa as symbolic of U.S. policy of neocolonialist intervention in Africa. They are particularly concerned by the possible reaction of Nigeria, the second largest supplier of imported petroleum to the United States.

It should be noted that when the Portuguese government announced in 1975 that it would grant independence to Angola, a three sided dispute erupted among the major

groups that had been waging an anti-colonial war. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) turned to the Soviet Union and Cuba for military aid. Meanwhile, the United States, under President Ford, aided opponents of the MPLA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). South Africa intervened with troops (mercenaries) to stop Cuba.

The congressional delegation also will assess current U.S. relations with Zimbabwe under Prime Minister Mugabe.

While in Somalia and Ethiopia, we will be able to learn more about the refugee situation and how the international community is responding to the needs of these East African nations. Additionally, we will be able to assess tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia.

If proper arrangements can be made, I will be reporting to you while in Africa, August 1-19. Otherwise, I will report to you upon my return to the United States.

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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