

Should Racist Attacks Be Concern of Government?

Part V

By Pat Bryant

EDITOR'S NOTE: During the first two weeks in September, ten blacks who are active in North Carolina political life were asked ten questions relating to the status of Afro-Americans in North Carolina and the nation. They have singled out racism and economics as the most pressing concerns. They also note that capable and honest leadership is a key ingredient necessary to struggle against oppression. The majority of the ten Afro-Americans interviewed in this column said they were not satisfied with today's black leadership. This is the fifth of six articles. North Carolina and the United States governments should be involved in stopping racist violence directed upon blacks, said the following who were asked: "Do you think the violent attacks by white racists upon blacks should be a concern of the state and national governments?" Responses to the question have been edited to conform to space requirements. We encourage reader reaction to the series and the views expressed in these columns.

Ms. Virginia Newell, Winston-Salem alderman and chairman of the Mathematics and Computer Department, Winston-Salem State University:

There is only one way for us to get rid of the Klan and that is through our state leadership. Back in the 1960's when Malcolm Seawell was attorney general, he said, "we aren't going to tolerate the Klan in this state." Now I don't think he cared much for blacks as many of the whites don't. But he did not want the Klan to come forward and they went back where they were. We have had governors who have said that we aren't going to tolerate this. But we have had more activity with the Klan with Jim Hunt. Why has the Klan come forward with

more force since Hunt has been governor. The only way to squelch that kind of thing is for our leaders to do it or it's just going to be a bloody revolution. The people are going to take to their guns like the Lumbee Indians. Blacks aren't afraid of ghosts anymore.

Rev. Thomas Walker, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Rocky Mount.

State and federal governments must be concerned if this nation is to stand. Sooner or later this kind of unchecked violence will result in untold destruction. There was a thing that government was doing that we said violated our rights. That was when they infiltrated groups like the KKK and Nazis. Government now must infiltrate these groups and just totally eliminate them because they are violent groups. When you have groups with military camps for the sole purpose of destruction, the burden rests upon our government to understand that as an internal enemy. But we have to remember also that when government has permission to infiltrate, it tends to lean more toward infiltrating black groups. That shouldn't be. There must be a real effort to purify the agencies whose responsibility it is to uphold the law.

T.C. Jervay, publisher-editor of the Wilmington Journal.

Governor Hunt said he thought they ought to all be infiltrated. I don't think that he was talking about the NAACP. I think he was referring to the Communists and the Klan. You would have never opened up some of those cases down in Birmingham and other places had the Klan not been infiltrated.

Dr. Earl E. Thorpe, professor of history, North Carolina Central University and National President of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History.

Governments should be involved for at least two reasons. First, there is

evidence that these violent attacks are too often acquiesced in or fomented by elements of national and state governments. So, those in national and state governments who are opposed to this kind of thing for good reasons ought not want to be contaminated or tainted by those who actually foment the Klan. The second reason is this type of thing is the cancer which spreads and cannot be controlled as the manipulators often think. I have in mind the wave that the industrialists and financiers of Germany in the 1920's and early '30's used Hitler and his bully boys to foment violence against unions and all progressive forces. Eventually, they couldn't control those people.

Ms. Jennifer Henderson, executive director of the North Carolina Hunger Coalition, Fayetteville.

I think that any reasonable, intelligent citizen of this country should be appalled and angered to the point of action against the racist and violent acts directed against black people, perpetrated by both government — meaning CIA, FBI, police — and KKK and Nazis. Inadequate response of government gives me a clear warning and helps to substantiate my mistrust of government. It's left up to citizens to demand adequate responses, but not wait on them. We must expose this type of racist behavior and those people who back it both with their money and their protection under the law. The Church and other black institutions should go on record publicly denouncing any organization, any government, or any other association involved in racist attacks upon blacks.

W.J. Kennedy, III, president of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company and board member of several multi-national corporations.

Violent attacks definitely should be the concern of government. The upsurge of the KKK particularly is somewhat alarming. We should not

stand idly by and permit this to develop in the way it has in the last few years without making some effort to counteract the effects with publicity from our organizations. We will not see any substantial reduction in the rates of attacks on blacks unless the state and the federal governments show a disposition to deal harshly with those people who are convicted of violating laws and constitutional rights.

Clarence Lightner, former Raleigh mayor and Democratic Party activist.

All of our facets of government will have to turn their attention to the wave of racism that seems to be sweeping across the country. People are suffering from delusions when they think that the federal government is not going, in the future, to address this problem. I think that the purpose of the federal, state and local governments primarily is to protect our people, the citizens, from this kind of attack. The President might have indicated by his philosophy that he would be lenient on these kinds of things, but I think that after the budget and the other things that are pressing on his agenda, he and other officials will have to turn their attention to keeping this kind of activity from becoming a permanent fixture in our country.

Leonard Dunston, president of the North Carolina Association of Black Social Workers.

These attacks are a direct result of a passive kind of support by those in leadership positions across the nation as well as in the state and local levels. These groups could not exist without the federal support and endorsement of those who make policy and those who head correctional institutions in this state and the counties. If they were able to infiltrate and destroy all of the progressive organizations of the 60's and 70's, you can't tell me that they are not aware of the leaders of these attacks. On one hand, I support the idea that surveillance of the

Nixonian era is not the way to go. I do think that when groups are legitimately out exercising their constitutional rights, then it's up to government to ensure that these individuals are given the opportunity to exercise their freedoms.

Ms. Carrie Graves, director of the North Carolina Project on Human Needs Vs. Military Spending of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, Charlotte.

State and national governments should not allow the Klan and Nazis to walk down the street and hold news conferences with lethal weapons. Had it been us or the Black Panther Party that was going to Greensboro, some of them would have been in prison right now with long inhuman sentences and a lot would be dead. I think that it is the role of state and national governments to make sure that everybody is protected in this country. But we can't be fools. We have to open up some self defense mechanism within our communities.

Gordon Dillahunt, postal worker and organizer of the Raleigh Black United Front.

Governments should investigate the rise of right wing terror that is spreading across the country. The Klan and Nazi training camps, the various attacks on black people, the ways the local judicial systems have let off the Klan and Nazis in Greensboro, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and numerous other places throughout the land warrants strong governmental action. I think that the Congress should have a full investigation of racist terror. But on the other hand, history has taught us that we cannot rely on the government to do that for us. While we push government, we have got to rely on our own ability to protect ourselves from different kinds of terror, and other means of protecting our families and property.

Bentson Supports Private Black Colleges

NEW YORK—Speaking to over 1,000 United Negro College Fund supporters in Houston, Texas Senator Lloyd Bentson said private black colleges have a vital role to play in U.S. higher education.

Senator Bentson was the keynote speaker at the 37th Anniversary Dinner commemorating the founding of the United Negro College Fund, which was held in Houston October 1. Dolph Briscoe, former governor of Texas, was the evening's guest of honor.

"I believe in what you are doing," said Senator

Bentson, to an audience that included the presidents of all 41 United Negro College Fund colleges and universities and the organization's Board of Directors. "I share your pride in what has been achieved in the past against incredible odds. And, I look forward to helping you build an environment in which independent black colleges can continue to bring education and opportunity to our people."

Briscoe was honored for his years of dedicated service to the United Negro College Fund. He was the first Governor of

Texas to serve as Honorary Chairman for UNCF, a position he held from 1975-79.

The 37th Anniversary Dinner was the highlight of a national gathering of the organization's 41 college presidents and its Board of Directors, whose semi-annual meetings were held on October 1 and 2, respectively.

A major topic of conversation during the two-day gathering was how a sluggish economy and recent budget cutbacks will affect the private, historically black colleges that the United Negro College Fund

helps support.

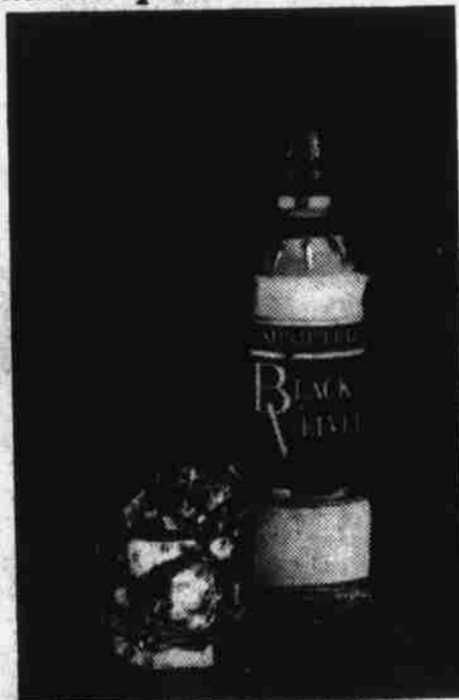
"The historically black colleges have always had fewer financial resources than the average college and university, so these schools know how to do more with less," commented Christopher F. Edley, Executive Director of UNCF. "But the twin ravages of inflation and the energy crisis have put a tremendous strain on their budgets. Our institutions are relying on the United Negro College now more than ever before to raise the funds that will help them

close the budget gap." Over half of the students studying on UNCF campuses come from families earning less than \$12,000 annually. More than ninety percent of these young people require financial assistance to pay for tuition, room and board. Many of them will be af-

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fect by the federal budget cuts in students loans and grants. Maximum Pell Grants, which assist the nation's most financially disadvantaged young people who want to attend college, were reduced by \$80 this semester from \$1,750 to \$1,670.

"On the outset, \$80 may not seem like a great deal of money," Edley continued. "But many students at UNCF colleges receive full financial aid. They have no place to turn to find the extra \$80. So, they get discouraged and drop out of school. Our colleges are searching frantically for new sources in

the private sector." This year the United Negro College Fund plans to raise \$21 million to help the operating expenses of 41 private, historically black colleges and universities. The organization is known by its motto: "A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste."

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