

WE SHALL OVERCOME



Affirmative Action: Reagan and Anti-Black Violence

By Gerald C. Horne, Esquire

Groups active on military bases include the Ku Klux Klan, the white Gestapo, the white Activist Militant Society. Tarver warned the U.S. Army VII Corps of these groups' activities in detail but their response has been silence. In one case they reported a cross burning as "destruction of government property."

More ominous was the involvement of the Klan in an attempt to overthrow the government of the black island in the Caribbean, Dominica. After setting up a puppet government there, they intended to move next against the neighboring black island of Grenada.

Unfortunately, the child slayings in Atlanta have left the public eye and all of the green ribbons have been removed. But the fact is that the young man arrested, Wayne Williams, has not been charged with all of those slayings, which once again raises the question of whether police officers have been asleep at the switch because black victims are involved.

The fact is that, in addition to the child murders, between November 1980 and February of this year, eight black women were brutally murdered in Atlanta through strangulation, stabbings and shootings. The victims, ranging in age from 15 to 38 have been primarily from low-income communities.

These slayings underscore Georgia's role as a hell on earth for blacks. In tiny Willacoochee, Georgia, four months of hate letters, cross burnings and shotgun blasts into houses and automobiles, caused a target of this criminal harassment to flee. No one has been arrested and the Federal Bureau of Investigation began an inquiry only weeks ago.

Julian Bond, State Senator and president of the Georgia NAACP, alleges that such incidents are occurring all over the country. We have received calls and complaints about similar incidents in Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama and Louisiana.

Christopher Coates, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union, says the actions and attitudes of the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Warren E. Burger encourage local judges, law officers and politicians to ignore the rights of oppressed blacks.

Tyrone Brooks, State Representative from Atlanta, alleges that those who would ride roughshod over the rights of others are encouraged by the views of the Reagan Administration which seeks to reduce federal intervention by all branches of Government, including the Justice Department.

It is not surprising that the finger would be pointed at the government, which has been derelict in protecting black rights and aggressive in placing blacks behind bars.

But perhaps the most spine-tingling and ominous development of all is the recent revelation of the government's involvement in ethnic warfare. Documents released under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that beginning thirty years ago, originating at the Mechanicsburg, Pa. Naval Supply Depot, the government experimented with a fungus that infected black people while leaving whites relatively unaffected.

The fungus is "Aspergillus Fumigatus Mutant C-2" which stimulates coccidioides (Valley Fever) among blacks; allegedly blacks are "more susceptible" to coccidioides than whites. The Long Island (NY) newspaper *Newsday* broke aspects of this story as early as 1976.

When a black security guard at the Naval Biosciences Laboratory contracted coccidioides while employed at the West Oakland naval facility recently, this troublesome issue arose once again.

The Navy denied that he received this disease in the lab but it was undeniable that coccidioides was one of several infectious agents being researched.

On the Greek Island of Corfu in the Spring of 1980, a "U.S.-NATO forces" conference on skin diseases took place which, allegedly, took up the issue once more of ethnic warfare methodology.

One does not have to be a raving paranoid to be quite concerned about such activity. Its applicability in Namibia and South Africa — not to mention Harlem, Watts and black communities nationally — is clear.

Moreover, a government that could build a neutron bomb, that kills people and leaves buildings intact is capable of such. It is just a short step from a government that ignores racist violence against blacks to initiate it.

Fortunately, the fightback against all forms of racist violence is proceeding rapidly. The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression has been quite active in this regard, especially in monitoring the situation at the Naval Biosciences Laboratory.

Legislation against paramilitary camps — a particular KKK activity — has been passed in Connecticut. Both Klan Watch and the National Anti-Klan Network have been diligent in filing lawsuits and engaging in mass actions against the racist right-wing. Yet, clearly if these Nazi fantasies and dreams are to be beaten back, more mass action by all people of good will is required.

The fact that it costs more to jail a black youth than send him to Princeton has long been known. Equally familiar is the fact that the flames of unemployment fanned by Reaganomics will be sending more black youths behind bars. Every day more and more blacks are consigned to a life in prison that rivals Dante's Inferno for degradation.

Already blacks are disproportionately on Death Row. Though 11% of the U.S. population is black, a staggering 40% of the inmates on Death Row are black.

Blacks who kill whites are far more likely to be sentenced to death than other racial combinations of murderer and victim. It is estimated that 60% of the victims of homicide in this country are black, yet over 80% of the people who are sentenced to death had white victims.

Blacks are disproportionately located in the Deep South and, not surprisingly, this is where the largest number of Death Row inmates are located. Florida, Texas, Georgia and Alabama lead the country in this grisly category. Seventy-five per cent of those on Death Row are in the Deep South.

The small minds that run this country fully intend to continue their policy of jailing blacks. The planned conversion of the dormitories used for athletes at the 1980 Lake Placid (NY) Winter Olympics into prison facilities that will mostly house blacks speaks volumes.

Striking is the fact that the value of contracts awarded annually for construction, expansion, and renovation of jails and prisons increased 60% during the last ten years, from \$73.9 million in 1970 to \$529 million in 1979. Indicative is that 370 jails are being built or expanded right now — and you can expect more black faces staring out from behind bars.

Though police authorities act like Sherlock Holmes when it comes to tracking down blacks, they revert to Rip Van Winkle when it comes to arresting racist whites.

Thus emboldened, the KKK, the Nazis and their ilk have decided to go international. There have been sharp increases in anti-black activities on U.S. military bases in West Germany, according to a study conducted by Sgt. First Class James Tarver of Philadelphia.

To Be Equal

The Private Sector's Role

By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

The Reagan Administration is committed, on philosophical, political and economic grounds, to private sector solutions for our nation's problems.

By overselling the capacity of the private sector to meet those challenges, the Administration strains its credibility, raises public expectations, and weakens the nation's ability to act constructively.

For there are limits to what the private sector can do. Voluntarism can never be a substitute for welfare, food stamps, and many other vital forms of income supports.

Not should it supplant government's proper role in meeting national needs. Just as no one in his right mind would want to see national defense turned over to a private, profit-making venture, so too it is wrong to turn public functions such as education, police and many social services to the private sector.

But if the central thrust of dealing with social problems must come from government, there is still a vitally important role for the private sector. Instead of looking to the private sector to replace government, the Administration should implement a public-private partnership that will make a difference in peoples' lives.

For its part, the business community will have to understand what many of its leaders have been saying — that without a stable social framework, business cannot

survive.

That means a top priority for the private sector should be job creation — a determined effort to hire and train disadvantaged people. That effort cannot wait until the long-promised prosperity comes about. The Administration's policies are leading to another recession and higher unemployment.

Business should be urged, perhaps with targeted financial incentives from government, to hire and train the disadvantaged, recession or no recession. Business got lavish tax breaks for capital investments and for transferring otherwise unusable tax credits and depreciation allowances. Indeed, the tax legislation might have better been labeled the "Corporate Welfare Act of 1981."

That suggests a corporate responsibility to invest some of its tax savings in training and hiring the disadvantaged jobless. And it also suggests that the tax system might be better used to encourage investments in our long-neglected human capital.

The private sector can also plug some of the gaps opened by the Administration's ruthless cuts in social programs. By aiding community groups and non-profit social welfare agencies, it can alleviate some of the pain caused by the cuts.

The most enlightened sectors of corporate America will respond creatively to

these new challenges. Indeed, there are signs of real concern on the part of business leadership.

The prestigious Business Roundtable has recently called for increased corporate contributions to charities. The life insurance industry has formally announced a campaign to help create jobs. Many companies plan to increase their activities in the social arena.

One concrete idea that should be acted on was made by David Mahoney, chairman of Norton Simon, Inc. He recently called on large national and regional companies to pursue a "one per cent plan" of adding one per cent to their budgeted manpower costs to hire and train the disadvantaged for entry level jobs.

So it is likely that increased business activism is in the cards. But it is also likely that, given the sorry record compiled by large parts of the corporate community in the past, the private sector will fail to meet the public's needs and expectations.

But even if the private sector's deeds surprise the skeptics, it can do no more than alleviate some of the pain caused by the budget cuts. Without a strong federal commitment to restore government's responsibility to meet national social problems, those problems will continue to fester. Meanwhile, Americans will be looking to business to do what it can to meet its social obligations.

The Power of the Black Vote

Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

Though politicians will be mulling over the results of the recent off year elections for some time to come, one satisfying fact comes shining through: the growing power and effectiveness of the black vote. Perhaps nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the Virginia gubernatorial race. Considered to be a close and hotly contested race from the start, and one in which President Reagan actively campaigned for the Republican contender, the large turn out of black voters for the winner demonstrated to Republicans and Democrats alike that black voters can no longer be taken for granted by those who seek political office.

Consider the surprising admission of Richard Richards, GOP national chairman: "Any Republican who runs in an area with a substantial black vote is in jeopardy of being defeated by that black vote."

The Virginia election demonstrated that the black vote is increasingly being recognized as a force that must be reckoned with — and by both parties. This idea is given support when one considers that in the face of a Republican spending spree which, in this case, outpaced Democratic expenditures by a margin of 6 to 1, black voters were not fooled by the rhetoric and managed to deliver a strong message of their own by turning out in large numbers against a candidate who campaigned on issues hostile to their welfare. Estimates are that fully 65% of the registered blacks in Virginia voted on election day. Of this large turn out approximately 90% turned their backs on the conservative Republican candidate.

Undoubtedly, the slickly-produced campaign commercials and sloganeering

tell on deaf ears in communities which are vitally concerned with the actions of a President who has remained unsupportive of the full and unweakened extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; who would considerably shrink the size and enforcement power of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; who has already begun a major onslaught to weaken and nullify affirmative action requirements for government contractors; who is in opposition to the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment; who has decreed that the Federal government will no longer recognize that racism is still rampant in this country and will not combat same with systematic solutions and who has characterized the recent jump in the overall unemployment rate as "a consequence of unwinding the deeply rooted inflation that is embedded in the American economy" — in regard to which the Administration has decided to do nothing. It is clear that in a community which is plagued by high unemployment and where many are the victims of the "last hired, first fired" syndrome there could be no support, even vicariously, of a man who once called unemployment insurance, "... a prepaid vacation plan for freeloaders."

Persons who must literally tighten their belts in the wake of their loss of food stamp benefits, parents who must now dig deeper into their already ravaged pocketbooks to finance their children's college educations, elderly persons who have shivered in fear through the President's nearly defeated plan to cut off the minimum Social Security benefits, union members who have seen one of their own

organizations crushed by the Reagan Administration and many others who have been adversely impacted by the budget cuts and a tax package, which literally takes from the poor to give to the rich, rose up to give the President a startling vote of "no confidence" in his programs.

It seems that after all the years of marching, being beaten and clubbed, jailed and mauled by police dogs, black people are beginning to realize some tangible results from their efforts to gain and keep the right to vote.

As the days of the Virginia gubernatorial campaign dwindled down, issues such as postcard, voter registration (opposed by the Republican candidate) and of course, the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 began to be the decisive issues for black Virginians.

There is a lesson to be learned from the recent Virginia gubernatorial election. That is, if not for the existence of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, fewer black persons would have been registered to vote. Clearly, each time a black voter goes to the polls, especially in one of the covered jurisdictions, they have to thank the existence and enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

As stated, the Reagan Administration and its supporters in the U.S. Senate are not committed to the full and undiluted extension of the Act. We cannot allow the Act to be weakened in any way. Concerned citizens across the country must write directly to the President and the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Strom Thurman, to register their support for this vital bill. The law works — just take a look at the recent governor's race in Virginia!

Coping

Racism: An Over-view

By Dr. Charles W. Faulkner

When I began to write this series of columns on the Psychological Dynamics of Racism, my intention was to write only five columns on this issue. It became clear after having written the first three columns of this series that many, many more would be needed in order to present a reasonable insight.

If you have followed my column the last two years, you will know that I focus on basic human problems without regard to race. This issue of racism suggests the magnanimity of the problem. As a human behaviorist and philosopher, I desire to improve our society by providing advice to all people, black, white, yellow and brown.

Yet, I was called upon to focus on the specific issue of racism because of the enormity of the problem. Until this issue is properly addressed and resolved, none of us, black white, brown or yellow will be able to endure and progress as decent human beings with a clear conscience.

Racism overwhelms us. It is the leading factor that determines the nature of

black existence in this country. The life expectancy for blacks in America is ten years shorter than it is for whites. The psychological trauma of racism makes the very life that is lived by blacks tortuous, demeaning and emotionally punishing.

But, racism is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future; certainly not in our life-time. The kind hearts that broke through the racial barrier in the 1960's are no longer present.

The loud voices of black and white dissent in response to an unfair system are silenced. It is now "every man for himself." It is a system in which it appears that the oppressed get poorer and the rich get richer.

Blacks must forge new alliances with open-minded and open-hearted whites who view the American way of life from the same perspective as they. Blacks must work hand-in-hand with other oppressed minorities in order to make their presence felt and their voices heard.

The strong alliances of the 1960's are not likely to be reborn. In a society in which

everyone is seeking some specific return for his or her endeavors, blacks must search deeply to see what it is that they have to offer society in return for its help. The current status of blacks indicates that society feels that blacks have little to offer to those who can change things. Blacks have almost been beaten to a psychological pulp.

Yet, we are not dead. There is still life in the body of the sleeping black giant. Perhaps this giant will someday awaken. One thing is certain, however: Blacks must throw down the gauntlet and do it themselves rather than wait for a mystical angel of mercy and goodness to awaken this slumbering black giant, take it by the hand and lead it to freedom.

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