

Martin Luther King, Jr.

1929 - 1968

The Legacy

EDITOR'S NOTE: We must not forget or forsake Dr. King's dream. America has not yet reached the point that "justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream" for all of her citizens. America's very survival — and certainly her survival as a great nation — depends on her efforts toward that end. But there are those in powerful positions today who do not recognize the damage their personal prejudices are doing to our country. Who knows but what we, who have suffered the countless indignities she continues to heap upon us, are not here to save her. Our reason for being here could very well be this great task.

Following is Dr. King's famous speech delivered on August 28, 1963 during the historic March On Washington for Jobs and Freedom before some 210,000 people:

"I Have A Dream"

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

In a sense, we have come to our nation's Capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of NOW. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. NOW is the time to make real the promises of Democracy. NOW is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. NOW is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. NOW is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. 1963 is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the question of our true destination. "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveholders will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain-side
Let freedom ring.

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!
Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!
But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!
Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!
Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

To Be Equal

Jordan Made A Difference

By John E. Jacob

It is fitting that this, my first To Be Equal column, be devoted to the man who has, for the past ten years, written this column — Vernon Jordan.

I was somewhat amused to find newspaper and broadcast accounts of his resignation from the presidency of the National Urban League describing Vernon Jordan as a "black leader".

The appellation is an indication of the nation's obsession with defining the limits on black achievement. Jordan, of course, is a "leader", with no qualifiers necessary. I never see the term "white leader" used, so why limit the scope of national leaders who happen to be black?

Yes, Jordan was a major spokesman for civil rights but his leadership ranged beyond that to advocacy for all of America's poor and disadvantaged. The organization he headed, the National Urban League, has its roots in the black community. But it also serves other minorities and addresses issues of vital importance to all citizens of all races, issues such as the fate of urban America.

It was Vernon Jordan's hard task to be an advocate for policies that help minorities and the cities during a period when the national mood was slipping into what he called "the new negativism".

Many people who supported desegregation in the South were now fighting it in their own home towns. Ardent civil rights

supporters drifted away to other causes and other movements, or simply dropped out of the fight for social change.

Jordan's leadership spanned the period of Nixon's "benign neglect," the floundering of the Ford and Carter Administrations, and the current Administration's overt hostility to long-standing social and civil rights gains.

Civil rights leadership in the sixties also had a tough fight, but then the enemies were clearly identifiable — segregation laws, howling mobs, and club-wielding bullies in sheriff's uniforms. The enemies of the seventies were deeply rooted intangibles like inflation, a sluggish economy, and irrational fears.

Victories were harder to come by as the national consensus in favor of greater equality melted away and as economic stagnation eroded gains in employment and much else. The shrinking nation economic pie made people meaner, more selfish, less willing to open opportunities for groups previously excluded.

Despite that negative turn Vernon pressed on, holding successive Administrations and the society as a whole accountable to America's ideals and constitutional guarantees. His forceful advocacy raised high a flag of protest around which others could rally.

Despite the hostile atmosphere, Vernon Jordan made a difference. He made a dif-

ference in his articulate advocacy. And he made a difference in expanding opportunities for many people even in a time of national withdrawal.

His vehicle was the agency he headed, rebuilt and honed to a greater state of efficiency, the National Urban League. It is too little recognized that each year some one and a half million people come to Urban League offices in search of jobs, training opportunities, health care, housing and other concerns, and for aid and counsel.

Vernon's career spanned the frightening days of southern resistance to civil rights when he confronted raw power and defeated it through the even greater power of the law; the exhilarating days of civil rights victories in which he was responsible for registering some two million southern blacks whose voting rights had been denied; through the war on poverty, and distinguished service in behalf of the black colleges.

Capping that extraordinary career with a decade of leadership at the National Urban League, he now moves on to the practice of law, something he has always wanted to do. Given his eloquent advocacy skills, I know he will be a great success. With his great leadership skills, Vernon Jordan will continue to be a positive force in our nation.

Poland's Anti-Worker Crackdown

Bayard Rustin

A. Philip Randolph Institute

A military junta has taken power in Poland, suspended civil liberties, and moved with force and violence against the Polish people. The declaration of a "state of war" by General Wojciech Jaruzelski is a clear indication of the bankruptcy of the Communist system in that country.

Today Poland is an occupied country. It is a country occupied by Polish troops but commanded and armed by the Soviet Union. Make no mistake about it, Poland has been invaded — but from within. Yet despite the brutal provocations of Poland's military junta, the Polish people and their free trade union movement, Solidarity, have exhibited remarkable restraint and discipline. Reports reaching the West indicate that Solidarity leaders are urging the workers to continue in passive resistance and not to respond with violence to government violence.

Despite the virtual cutoff of information about what is occurring in Poland the few reports which are succeeding in penetrating the tight security cordon around that country suggest that the strike movement is spreading and that Solidarity's call for a general strike is being heeded.

I visited Poland last April and met with a large number of Solidarity leaders and rank-and-file Polish workers. Most of the men and women with whom I spoke exhibited a great deal of level-headedness and a profound absence of fear. They were not radicals hell-bent on seizing state power. More importantly, Solidarity's leaders were keenly aware of the weight of their responsibility to millions of members. Solidarity may have been born out of conflict but it functioned and thrived because of its capacity and willingness to compromise. It was the government's unwillingness to strive for true compromise that led to the recent declaration of martial law.

Solidarity conducted a series of approximately ninety per cent of the union's 9.5 million members participated in this process, which was the first nationwide democratic election held in that country since the imposition of Communist rule.

Without question, the leaders of Solidarity, together with the leaders of the Catholic church, represent the true in-

terests and aspirations of the people. It is they, rather than General Jaruzelski and the military junta, who are the embodiment of the Polish national will.

As I write this, strikes continue to erupt in Poland. The Polish workers defy orders to return to work, knowing full well that in their peaceful defiance they risk imprisonment or death.

If the news blackout imposed by the Polish government has not been lifted by the time you read this it will be an ominous sign that Poland is in the midst of a national catastrophe created by the Polish military junta. Whatever the outcome of the momentous events now unfolding in that country, it is clear that there can never be true peace and security until the fundamental rights of free speech and association are denied to the men and women who till Poland's soil, build its cars and tractors, and toil at its foundries.

No one can predict what will happen in Poland; but I believe that no wave of repression, no matter how severe, can thwart the Polish people's desire to live in freedom.

Meeting Black Housing Needs:

Urban Enterprise Zone?

William R. Morris, ASPC
Washington Housing Consultant

Ronald Reagan has yet to fulfill his campaign promise to "move immediately" on urban enterprise zones, but with major tax and budget bills behind him, the White House is expected to focus on this issue early in the new year. The President has embraced the idea. Congressmen of all ideological persuasions have lined up to co-sponsor the legislation. Such varied groups as the Heritage Foundation and NAACP, Sears, Roebuck and the Urban Coalition, Control Data Corporation and the Congressional Black Caucus have taken a strong and generally positive interest in it.

The enterprise zone concept seems to have attracted nearly universal support because it promises to "greenline" rather than "redline" some of the country's worst neighborhoods, to substitute entrepreneurial capital for government handouts, and to open paths for blacks long closed out of mainstream economic opportunities.

What kind of areas, in what cities, will be eligible for enterprise zone designations? A White House Cabinet Council is considering testing the concept in 75 locations over the next three years. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, under legislation now before Congress (H.R. 3824) would be authorized to approve 10-25 new zones per year for at least three years, with each zone lasting until the year 2001. And an increasing number of states are capitalizing on what most folk are calling the "enterprise zone" idea by giving themselves the flexibility to set up zones in areas Washington probably won't consider.

The common characteristic of all these plans is tax abatement or credit against income tax liability. Firms that agree to locate or expand in such zones and hire local workers would be rewarded with reduced corporate, payroll and capital gains taxes. In addition, local governments would be expected to lower property taxes and other levies.

Under the proposed Urban Jobs and Enterprise Zone Act, sponsored by Reps.

Jack Kemp and Bob Garcia, selected cities would designate parts of their communities for economic revitalization. Low-income rental housing will be considered a qualified business eligible for the same tax benefits open to other zone businesses plus an investment tax credit of fifteen per cent. The bill would require a preference to city applications which demonstrate the greatest amount of community support.

The Administration's plan, it has been reported, would require local governments to involve community organizations in their programs. Called "Neighborhood Enterprise Associations" these organizations would be HUD-approved, tax exempt entities owned by the area residents who will share in the zones financial success. It is thought this will help remove the fear of rising property values which can lead to displacement of zone residents and small businesses.

Eight states have already passed their own version of enterprise zone plans. These are Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Oregon and Pennsylvania. Louisiana has gone so far as to create a "rural" as well as urban enterprise zone program. Altogether, over seventy bills have been introduced in state legislatures.

One problem encountered with these plans, and of growing concern to blacks, is that a brand new cadre of urban planners have taken over the urban revitalization process; they decide what sort of incentives are sufficient to attract private investments to slum areas, largely without the participation of area residents. Another concern frequently stressed by local elected officials is the need for up-front capital assistance from the federal government for small businesses to locate in enterprise zones.

Given the limited number of zones to be designated, the competition will be fierce and cities, in their rush to be selected, may well be tempted to overlook or compromise the needs of minority and poor residents in such areas. In the view of

some experts, it also is not certain whether the substantial tax incentives provided by the program will actually alleviate pressing social and racial problems in cities or simply move them into other neighborhoods. And there is a fear that a move to enterprise zones will make it easier for the Reagan Administration to "zero out" existing programs, like community development grants, already suffering deep cuts.

Because enterprise zones will almost always be located in communities where

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