

BLACKS DESTINY IN OWN HANDS

BLACK AMERICA
ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES



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

Editorial

Reaganomics and Black Survival

Caught as we are in the clutches of "Reaganomics," or supply-side economics, whichever term you favor, blacks must answer three critical questions.

- How can we survive this drastic switch in political and economic policy?
- How can we learn to thrive and prosper in this atmosphere?
- How did we get caught in this crunch in the first place?

The third question is the most critical, because if we understand the mistakes that have devastated our struggle for equal opportunity in this country, we can avoid them.

In his book, *The Shaping of Black America*, Lerone Bennett succinctly defines our struggle. "The story of black people in America is, among other things, the story of a quest for the hard rock of economic security."

However, a current analysis of our struggle reveals a disquieting dilemma. Noted black economist, Andrew Brimmer, recently said: "A fundamental revolution in favor of a conservative economic policy is far advanced in this country, and it will have significant adverse effect on blacks. . . but. . . the black community and its liberal allies have virtually no capacity to mount a campaign to counter the conservative thrust."

But how did we get from Bennett's definition to Brimmer's analysis? The answer will give us a distressingly clear picture of our mistakes.

Largely because we don't plan very well, particularly in the long range, our purposes have often been thwarted by self-serving charlatans, devious con artists and various political demagogues masquerading as our friends. And sometimes we have been done in by folks with good intentions, but short-sighted goals.

These so-called friends have been both black and white, and history records much of their chicanery.

Booker T. Washington stumbled into this category when on September 18, 1895 during an Atlanta speech, he offered whites an alarmingly devastating proposition. Washington said: "In all things that are purely social, we can be as SEPARATE as the fingers, yet one as the hand (EQUAL) in all things essential to mutual progress." [Emphasis this writer's]

With that proposition, Washington acquiesced us to the "separate but equal" doctrine even then before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1896, the court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, ruled that the separate but equal doctrine was indeed constitutional. We had no argument against the decision, because we had foolishly supported the decision a year earlier.

It took us half of the 20th century to undo that mistake. And the price we paid for the error, for our failure to consider the long range implications of Washington's proposition, was our inability to take advantage of the great American economic shift, from agriculture to manufacturing, which began around 1900 and culminated in the late '50's.

But even when the Supreme Court reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* with the school desegregation decision in 1954, our's was a hollow victory. Having failed to establish a strategy to implement the victory when it came, we found ourselves at the mercy of federal bureaucrats, the same people we had fought for fifty years.

They told us to take it slow and not risk economic drowning by plunging headfirst into the country's mainstream. We bought that hogwash, and missed the country's economic boom, from about 1950 to 1975.

During that time, our emphasis was the Civil Rights movement, a struggle for social and moral freedom with little economic emphasis.

And then beginning in the late '60's, after the riots, and peaking about the mid-'70's, whatever economic principles still alive in our struggle were brutally slain by white liberals.

Those liberal politicians and social scientists, masquerading as our friends, used us to justify the rewriting of many basic economic principles, along with the bending and twisting of the economic system to force it to accept a philosophy called "entitlement."

And in so doing, they stole our struggle for equal opportunity, and reshaped it into a fight for equality. Thus did egalitarianism become the liberal battle cry. The dictionary says egalitarianism is: ". . . a philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among men."

That sounds almost like our struggle, and in fact, most blacks believe it is our struggle. But there are some subtle, but very significant differences between what we have always wanted, and what the liberals said we wanted.

Our struggle has never been to eliminate inequality that is predicated upon superior effort, dedication, to excellence, and hard work. Rather, we have fought to remove those barriers reared before us because some people believe that being black is synonymous with being inferior.

The liberals, on the other hand, not only wanted to keep us from the mainstream at all costs, tossing us programmatic crumbs to keep us quiet, but were willing to sell the free enterprise system down the drain in the process.

Thus, what we see today, this so-called "Reaganomics," is a last ditch effort by America's producers to save the free enterprise system.

In a "Special Report on Major Business Problems," *Business Week* Magazine reported in 1976 on the business community's assessment of the problem: "Business, for its part, sees the egalitarian push as a threat — not just to its pay scales — but to the fundamental principles of a market economy."

The challenge to which the business community has responded, tapping Ronald Reagan as their champion, was noted by Caspar Weinberger, former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, who said: ". . . we have built an edifice of law and regulation that is clumsy, inefficient and inequitable. Worst of all, the unplanned, uncoordinated, spasmodic nature of our responses to these needs — some very real, some only perceived — is quite literally threatening to bring us to national insolvency."

Now that we know how we got in the mess we're in today, it is quite a simple matter to determine where we go from here, and how we get there.

Black people must not only survive, we must thrive and prosper in this new, actually renewed, economic environment.

To survive, blacks must learn the five basic principles of American economics:

- Consumption must be commensurate with production.
- The greatest rewards go to those who take the greatest risks.
- People make money, not just because they need money, but because they satisfy the needs of other people willing to pay to have those needs met.
- There are but three things to do with money: spend it, save it to spend, and invest it, and only the latter has governmental sanction.
- The only way to curb racism is to make the financial gain of being non-racist outrank the personal pleasure of being racist.

To thrive and prosper in this "return to the basics," blacks must stop trying to market oppression, because America's "guilt bank" is bankrupt. Rather, we must marshal and market our resources — more than \$100 billion annually — and invest them wisely based upon a carefully crafted strategy, designed to ask not how much more the government should do for us, but to prove rather how much we can do for this country.

It is time that we put up or shut up!

Affirmative Action:

The Voting Rights Act —
The Battle is Not Over

By Gerald C. Horne, Esquire

Burke County, Georgia is living proof of why the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is still needed.

Though a majority of the U.S. Senate apparently has endorsed extension of this landmark legislation which has changed the political landscape of the nation, President Reagan is still hedging and waffling on this crucial question.

Extension of the Voting Rights Act should not just concern those of the South for by extending the ballot to blacks, right-wingers and enemies of progress were weakened. Blacks voting in the South moved the entire political spectrum of the nation decisively to the left and brought curmudgeons like J. Strom Thurmond and George Wallace kicking and screaming into the twentieth century.

But the Voting Rights Act did not bring heaven on earth and Burke County, Georgia — almost as large as the state of Rhode Island — illustrates this graphically.

Pending before the U.S. Supreme Court is the case of *Lodge v. Buxton*, emanating from this deep South bastion of racism, which will influence not only efforts in Congress to amend the Voting Rights Act but will also affect the course of litigation seeking to dismantle at-large election systems.

The *Lodge* case involves, *inter alia*, a challenge to an "at-large" system where officials are elected by the city as a whole rather than by individual wards. Blacks have long charged that this kind of system dilutes their voting strength.

With the advent of the *Bolden v. Mobile* case, it is no longer sufficient to point to the lack of blacks in the city council to show discrimination. It is necessary to show that the system had been deliberately designed with a racist purpose in mind.

Obviously, even psychiatrists and lie detector machines can't always divine whether one was motivated by racist intent. But the Supreme Court has ignored this simple fact and with the *Lodge v. Buxton* case the possibility arises that proving racist intent in order to show constitutional violations will be even further imbedded in U.S. Law.

The lack of political power of Burke County blacks is inextricably connected to their depressed socio-economic state. Dilapidated shacks, screen doors hanging by their hinges and lack and indoor plumbing pock-mark the landscape.

In fact, records show 73% of all black homes lack some or all plumbing facilities compared to 16% of the white households and it is evident in the number of tiny, aluminum outhouses behind the shacks.

Soon after schools were ordered to integrate, the segregationist Edmond Burke Academy was opened with the help of the county commissioners. Commissioner

Quenton Rogers, named in the suit before the Supreme Court, donated the land for the school and county equipment was used to construct it.

The lower court decision in *Lodge v. Buxton* also said the commission had made road paving decisions "in a manner so as to ignore the legitimate interests of the county's black residents."

The court also noted that a public swimming pool was closed and sold for \$1 to a private group. The pool has been reopened as another private pool. Like apartheid South Africa, whites swim in the private pool while blacks use the inadequate public pool.

Burke is one of the poorest counties in Georgia but there is vast wealth — held by a few big landholders.

The wealth is seen in the endless fields of cotton, soybeans and peanuts. These feudal barons receive tens of thousands of dollars each year in federal subsidies, all the while complaining about "welfare cheats."

But *Lodge v. Buxton* has reached the Supreme Court because of the question of voting rights. Initially, all Burke County voters were required to register at the courthouse between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Understandably, blacks' memories of this courthouse are colored by the fact that lynchings occurred there regularly at one time.

While other registration sites have since been opened, the county has been accused of developing "ingenious" plans to thwart black attempts to register.

Herman Lodge, the lead plaintiff in the suit, said frequently there are no voter registration cards at these sites or voters show up at the wrong time or when the appointed registrar is away.

"They make it inconvenient to register," Lodge said, noting that there are only four places to register in the 882-square mile county. "If this place is as large as Rhode Island and there are only four voter registration sites, there (isn't) much going for you. That's enough to discourage you."

The bottom line is that no black has ever been elected to the county commission, even though blacks have made up 58% or more of the county's population since the present form of government was adopted in 1911.

Opponents of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 wish to bring all of the south down to the level of Burke County. The 1980 Census has meant that reapportionment must take place and here the right wingers have sought to make inroads.

Black groups and white allies have filed suits in federal court seeking to overturn reapportionment plans in Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama and Texas on the ground that they violate the Voting Rights Act.

Further, the Justice Department has been asked to reject reapportionment plans in Georgia, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Blacks in every state of the Old Confederacy have substantial reason for pushing for the Voting Rights Act's extension.

In Alabama, which has a population that is 25.6% black, a meager two of 35 state senators are black and 13 of 105 representatives are black. In Mississippi with a 35.2% black population, the comparable numbers are two of 52 and 15 of 122. In Georgia, with a population that is 26.8% black, the comparable numbers are two of 56 and 21 of 180.

In North Carolina with a 22.4% black population, one of fifty state senators and three of 120 representatives are black. South Carolina with a 30.4% black population has no blacks in its State Senate of 46 and 15 blacks among 124 state representatives.

These sorry statistics point to the continued need for the Voting Rights Act and underscores why the "intent" requirement should be knocked down in *Lodge v. Buxton*.

A closer look is even more revealing. In Alabama, the legislature drew a reapportionment plan that reduced the proportion of blacks in more than a dozen legislative districts in the predominantly black agricultural belt. In Birmingham, the new lines have meant that several black legislators are the only incumbents in the state to be pitted against one another for re-election.

In Texas, blacks who have one representative and Latinos, who have two, have argued to great effect that they have made no gains in the redistricting plan, though the Texas House has gone from 24 to 27 members as a result of the state's increased population.

Yet, it is not only in the south that blacks are getting the short end of the sticks. In New York City, the predominantly white city council has resorted to what one commentator has called "creative cartography" in order to stymie increased black representation.

In Chicago, a city with three black congresspersons, great energy has gone into an effort to redistrict in such a way as to insure their defeat. Particularly targeted has been the outspoken Gus Savage, former black journalist.

The list is endless but the point is clear: Blacks gaining the ballot have made it increasingly difficult to be a successful right-wing politician.

If *Lodge v. Buxton* is lost in the Supreme Court and if the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is not extended, many blacks will be pushed back to the ante-bellum days of Burke County, Georgia with no rights whites are "bound to respect."

Reagan Rewards Schools
That Discriminate

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

Reacting to a storm of protest, the Reagan Administration recently waffled on its decision to grant tax exempt status to schools and academies which discriminate against blacks.

With its tail between its legs, the Administration announced that at some time in the future it will introduce legislation in Congress which, if passed, would deny tax exempt status to schools that discriminate against blacks. However, there was no indication that this legislation would have the strength of the original Internal Revenue Service ruling. Further, given the current climate in Congress, it is uncertain whether such a law would pass.

At the heart of the current dispute is a 1970 IRS ruling which declared that the purpose of the tax exempt status was to reward or aid nonprofit institutions which were furthering public policy. A school that discriminates on the basis of race, the ruling concluded, is acting against public policy and, there, isn't truly charitable.

According to the Administration, the IRS should not be able to decide what constitutes good public policy. However, as recently pointed out by *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen, "it is amazing that an administration that loves to use tax policy for all sorts of economic reasons — that will allow, for instance, corporations to sell their tax credits — does not think it proper to use this same tax policy to serve the cause of justice."

There are numerous schools and colleges across our country which discriminate — no one knows exactly how many. We do know, however, that since 1970 roughly 100 such institutions have lost their tax exempt status.

There is no question in anyone's mind as to the reason for the existence of these schools. When the public school system began to be integrated in earnest during the early 1970's, these alternative schools sprang into being. Usually organized under the veneer of religious principles, the schools became the reserves of those who were fleeing the public system solely for racial reasons.

The advantage of the tax exempt status is that it allows donors to deduct contributions made to these institutions from their Federal taxes. This makes it much more attractive for a potential donor to give to such institutions. The exempt

status also frees the institutions from paying unemployment taxes, Social Security taxes and taxes on net income. The reduced tax burden of the school thus adds to its sound financial health.

The policy of penalizing private schools which discriminate was instituted in the early days of the Nixon Administration. The policy was approved by the congress and has been supported by Congressional action and all subsequent Presidents. Indeed, the policy has never been questioned until President Reagan's recent waffling on this issue.

Under the original policy, no private school or college would be eligible for the tax exempt status unless it submitted to the IRS a statement that the school did not discriminate on the basis of race. Though the Administration has publicly waffled on this issue, it has not rescinded

its request that the Supreme Court throw out two suits against schools which the government has previously described as "blatantly discriminatory." The effect of dropping these two suits would mean that the tax exempt status would be returned to one of the schools and granted to the other.

The Administration's hollow announcement that it will introduce legislation in Congress to prohibit tax exemptions for discriminatory schools does not hide or smooth over the Administration's original intent to reward and subsidize with public funds discriminatory institutions.

I, for one, believe that if the administration cannot commit itself to work to abolishing discrimination it should not intervene to the side of bigotry.

Therefore, I ask you to join me in letting the Administration and Congress know that schools which discriminate SHOULD NOT enjoy the financial advantage of exempt status.

Business In The Black
Benefit Behind
Change
Tax Act For Everyone
By Charles E. Belle

Hang on, America! That's still the cry of one of Wall Street's finest investment banking houses. If you are working, well — you're hanging on.

In time, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 will impact directly on you. Passed by Congress August 4, improves and enhances considerably the Individual Retirement Accounts, referred to as IRAs.

Starting January 1, 1982, everyone under age 70½, whether covered under a plan or not, may make tax deductible contributions to an IRA.

The new contribution formula is a 100% of earnings up to the ceiling amount of \$2000, make it \$2250 if you have a non-working spouse. The new law, by the way, does not require that the maximum \$2250 contribution be split equally between the husband and wife. Well, don't look funny like that, you might have estate tax purposes for not wanting

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