

National Roundup

By Larry Still and Art Carter

The general public is finally beginning to realize how important it is to save the 1965 Voting Rights Act as major black organizations mobilize forces to seek extension of the law. Despite the current attack on black leadership, the recent show of unity by the NAACP's Benjamin Hooks, the National Urban League's Vernon Jordan, Coretta Scott King of the Martin Luther King Foundation, Rev. Jesse Jackson of People United To Save Humanity, and others at the NAACP convention in Denver and the NUL meeting in Washington was impressive enough to send a message to the White House and the Congress dominated by President Reagan. The chief executive's appearance before the major civil rights organization members was well orchestrated but even members were surprised when NAACP Board Chairman Margaret Bush Wilson departed from the script to chastise the President after she and Hooks had met with Reagan in the White House to plan the Republican appearance.

Meanwhile, new, young black citizens assuming positions of leadership are beginning to realize that their enemies are not themselves, maybe, but the traditional coalition of Conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats who have attempted to block every act of progressive legislation in this country since the Civil War. And our past nemisis, Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, has risen again with old line "Dixiecrats" from Mississippi and Georgia despite the "politics of reconciliation" eschewed by the black Establishment. We are still preaching ballots instead of bullets as black survival is at stake.

The NAACP's Hooks says "the Voting Rights Act is the single most effective piece of legislation drafted in the last two decades . . . " Approximately 60 percent of the almost 5,000 black officials elected since 1964 are in the states covered by the act.

As the "second reconstruction" appears to be coming to an end under the Reagan Administration, NAACP units in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Texas and Virginia

struction, blacks always appear to be saying . . . "Those who ignore the past are condemned to repeat it."

The NAACP's resurgence in the civil rights struggle in the face of inflation, budget cuts and staff transitions, may be traced in part to increased media attention by public supporters and critics and the association's increasingly effective communications staff which targets its messages to the black press and community organizations — unlike many other less effective organizations leaders who appear to think all of their members read only the New York Times and listen to network news. Most of the nation's groups should take a cue from the NAACP and NUL and organize an effective public relations and communications program to get their message across — to the communities they are trying to serve.

The Congressional Black Caucus is reorganizing the interracial, intergroup coalition working to save the V.R.A. on Capitol Hill under the capable leadership of Joyce Clements and Radamase Cabrera of the CBC legislative staff. In addition to the NAACP and NUL, groups identified in opposing the revived Repubucrats Coalition, are the Joint Center for Political Studies; the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, National Legal Aid and Detender's Association; the American Civil Liberties Union and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. The newly organized Hispanic Congressional Caucus is also following the CBC leadership.

Over 40 applicants sought for the position of new executive director the Congressional Black Caucus with the University of District of Columbia public relations director John Brittion among the leading candidates. The CBC has listed the Chase Manhattan Bank; the Ford Motor Co. (South Africa); Boeing Aircraft Weapons Division; National City Bank; Mobil Oil; Gulf and Western; Union Carbide and General

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reported that despite the legal protection provided by the law, problems are being encountered again as voters attempt to participate in the election process, Hooks reported to Congress, the President and his membership

The most frequently reported barriers in rural and urban communities include:

Failure of some jurisdictions to preclear election changes or procedures; change of single member districts to multi-member districts; permissiveness in the location of rotating books; limited use of deputy registrars; lack of availability of registrars outside the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. working day; insufficient voting hours and facilities; inadequate publication of procedural rules for voting;

Subtle intimidation of black voters at the polls; certification of absentee ballots of non-residents; use of a voter re-identification procedure to purge voter rolls necessitating re-registration; annexation of white suburbs or subdivisions to previously majority black districts; majority vote runoff requirements in areas where there is no districting; lack of adequate notice re-change in polling place; physical location of registrar's office in places not conducive to minority participation (in segregated clubs, close proximity to sheriff's office etc.); lack of black deputy registrars; racial gerrymandering of district lines; "open primaries" which require a majority vote to win office; racial bloc voting; prohibition of "single shot" voting; increased filing fee; numbered post requirements with staggered terms;

Hooks and the Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, congressional delegate from the District of Columbia and chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, say the administration is seeking to "dilute" the effectiveness of the proposed Voting Rights Act of 1981 by "extending" it to all 50 states instead of only concentrating on the heavily black and minority populated states where the abuses are taking place.

If the law is extended across the board as Reagan appears to favor, Fauntroy argues that the Justice Department will be even more ineffective than it has been because it would not have the budget or staff to enforce the law — as Republicans withdrew from enforcing the first reconstruction in the 1860s Remember the Alamo — Never, Never, Forget the Holocaust — but don't think about slavery and recon-

Motors (South Africa) among the major corporation opposing progress for black people throughout the world But General Motor's able Abe Venable arranged for the NAACP to present GM's Donald Murphy with a top award at the Denver convention after the GM chief executive ordered millions of dollars placed in black owned banks, automobile tranchises and purchasing contracts.

The Caucus is also pushing for stronger affirmative action activity from the Attorney General and the Justice Department . . . CBC members have scheduled hearings on unemployment and equal opportunity on the eve of the organization's 11th annual awards dinner and three day legislative weekend in Washington September 25-27 tollowing a quiet retreat to study implementation of their plans for the 97th Congress.

Nine of the 18 members of the House of Representatives were cited for voting 80 percent or better on United Nations Related issues presented before the current Congress . . . The black members voted appreciably better on 'world order' issues than the Congress as a whole, according to the Association for UN Reform . . . Both Rep. Cardiss Collins (D-Ill.), past CBC chairman and Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) received plaques for their 100 percent voting record. Other solons honored included Democratic Reps. Louis Stokes (Ohio), Julian Dixon (Calif.), Parren Mitchell (Maryland), Mickey Leland (Texas) William Gray (Pa.), Augustus Hawkins, (Calif.) and Charles Rangel (N.Y.).

However, CBC members, Reps. William Clay (St. Louis), Harold Washington or Augustus Savage (Chicago) and Rangel may be lost to the organization if their districts are reapportioned out of Congress by conservative Republican legislatures in their states . . . The march goes on — backwards sometimes!

New York based TV reporter Carl Stokes (former Cleveland mayor) and commentator Tony Brown after both television newsmen have benefitted so greatly from CR organization's efforts to move blacks into the media mainstream . . . Brown emphasizes that he is concerned about providing a voice for new black leadership instead of the "old establishment," but he appears to be using his slick, effective Tony

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