

# Global consciousness of Black America grows

by Askia Muhammad

(Editor's Note: Perhaps the most important spinoff of the Andrew Young resignation from the UN has been the sudden emergence of a solidified Black lobby in foreign policy. But the seeds of Black consciousness of international affairs, especially relating to Africa and the Middle East, have been growing for many years and in many ways.)

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PNS)—Not since the Reverend Martin Luther King got the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in hot water by opposing the Vietnam War has the Black civil rights movement been as far in the forefront of U.S. foreign policy as it is today.

UN Ambassador Andrew Young's forced resignation from the center stage of the international diplomatic theater has served to broaden and solidify a new and unprecedented global consciousness among Blacks. In time, and with direction from a rumber of Black leaders who view social issues in international terms, this consciousness could coalesce into a foreign lobby to equal the influence of the powerful Jewish lobby.

This Black sense of an America enmeshed in the world has evolved directly from the Black community's African consciousness movement of 20 years ago.

But it was not until 1967 that Stokely Carmichael's call for "Black power" really persuaded the civil rights movement to look toward Africa as the Black homeland and as a source of advancement for American Blacks.

Today, Black business and political leaders travel from New York to Lagos almost as routinely as Martin Luther King traveled from Atlanta to Chicago. And instead of bringing back just African artifacts and a sprinkling of Swahili, they now take to Africa valuable technical expertise and often return with lucrative trade deals.

As an example of how far things have progressed, consider the lawyer who represented OPEC at its latest price-setting meeting. His name is Khalid Abdullah Tariq al-Mansur, but he is not an Arab oil sheik. He is a Black San Franciscan who organized Black ghettos in California with Ron Karenga back in 1966. Today, his First African-Arabian Corporation has three Saudi princes on its board of directors, and it represents Arab interest, not American clients.

The Concerned Black Americans In Support of Africa and the Middle East, which he heads, has filed an amicus brief on behalf of OPEC in the current court case in which OPEC is being sued by a U.S. trade union.

Similarly, the election last year of Marion Berry as mayor of Washington, D.C. has thrust that basically Afro-American city onto the world stage as something more than just the seat of the U.S. government.

When Berry paid an official visit to Tanzania in July, for example, his



ANDREW YOUNG  
(Photo: DC)

greeting was described as "fit for a head of state," by the *Washington Post*.

Barry visited five African capitals and met with the heads of government in each, as well as others at the Organization of African Unity conference.

"The gap between those of us living in the U.S. and those on the mainland of Africa is closing rapidly," he said.

As mayor of the city that houses the World Bank, the IMF, and the U.S. federal government, Barry plans to make Washington the "premier city for international business and tourism."

Two weeks after his African visit, Barry played host to Guinea's Sekou Toure at a Washington luncheon attended by Army Secretary Clifford Alexander, several members of the congressional Black Caucus and a few African ambassadors.

"If majority rule can work in the federal capital," Toure told Barry, "where the white people are not denied their privileges, the same principle can be applied to South Africa."

Prominent among Toure's other stops during his American tour were visits to Howard University and a trip to "see my people" in Harlem.

This budding international consciousness among American Blacks has been developing gradually through many channels, says Randall Robinson, director of Trans Africa, a Washington-based African lobby group.

"Without a doubt, the role of African Americans is increasing in African affairs," he says. "You have my organization working on a full time basis to win for Africa a more progressive foreign policy. You have other organizations such as Africare, which for eight years has been doing tremendous work delivering re-

sources and goods to Africa. And you have virtually the entire national Black leadership involved to some degree in Africa questions now.

"All who understand the interdependence of countries in the modern world understand the degree to which the U.S. is growing progressively dependent on Africa for raw materials.

"The extent to which Africa is strong," he said, "is the same extent to which African Americans work to cultivate that strength."

The base of Black international involvement has broadened to include mainstream civil rights activists, especially since Young's resignation. "It's a whole body of people who are protesting Andy's forced resignation," says Operation Push president Jesse Jackson. "They have concluded that Blacks must now enter global politics as a part of our responsibility as human beings. No longer is there any place in the world where America has an interest that is off limits to Blacks, whether in South Africa, the Middle East or south Georgia."

Jackson proved that himself when he accepted a South African government-approved invitation from that country's Council of Churches to visit and speak there. He spent 17 days in South Africa saying things in public that would have landed any South African Black in jail.

Jackson believes Black Americans are now beginning to cultivate seeds of African consciousness planted by Black leaders from Marcus Garvey to Martin Luther King. "I think we're not looking at the buds on the trees of African consciousness, within the black community," he said, "and it's going to intensify." Some African support groups, meanwhile, are concerned about keeping the focus of Black pressure on this side of the Atlantic. Sylvia Hill, director of the Southern Africa Support Project, says "there is a growing number of people who are beginning to understand that it is this nation which must be radically altered in order to fully support the struggle of southern Africa."

Hill's group organizes community support in Washington and solicits school and medical supplies which it sends to refugee camps in frontline countries bordering Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

"Let us understand that Africa is not a retreat for us," she says. "Africa has very serious problems. It can certainly use the skills we have, but it is not our little escape."

But Jesse Jackson says the increased consciousness of Africa has already helped Blacks escape in one way—mentally. "Tarzan and Jane and Boy are dead," he says. "We used to pull for Tarzan and Jane, we're now pulling for the Africans in those movies. Our mind has changed."

"That's the most significant thing that has happened in the entire scheme of things. Our mind has changed. Our economic status has not changed that radically, but our mind has changed, and there is nothing more powerful in the entire world than a changed mind."

(Askia Muhammad's a PNS contributing editor who regularly writes for the *Chicago Defender*, *The Nation* and other publications, and reports for *Pacifica* radio.)

# Women's Night Watch plans parade, rally

The Women's Night Watch is holding the Third Annual Flashlight March, Friday, August 31st. Each year, women and children of all ages, races and backgrounds gather together to protest the increase in rape, wife abuse, child abuse and other violence against women and children.

Marchers will gather at 8:00 p.m. at S.W. Park and Clay. The march will begin at 8:30 p.m. and follow a route through downtown to O'Bryant Plaza where there will be a rally at 10:00 p.m. Childcare, Spanish translation and signing will be provided.

The march is for women and children only to dramatize the right of women and children to walk alone without fear. Men are welcome to show their support by attending the rally.

The rally program will include music, poetry and a speech by State Representative Gretchen Kafoury. In conjunction with the march and rally we will also present a list of specific changes we want to see made by city government and other agencies.

Women's Night Watch has presented a list of demands to the City Council that would require the provision of lights, guards and alarm boxes in parks and on streets, and provide women-only sections; provide self-defense classes; find additional shelters for women who are

the victims of violence.

The organization demands better protection of domestic violence cases and teaching about rape and incest in

the public schools. They ask that escort services for night workers and synchronized shifts so all workers would leave at the same time.

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The best time to call us, or any attorney, is before you are embroiled in a legal problem. This is called preventative law and it makes a lot of sense.

Regardless, when you call us we will arrange for an initial consultation at your convenience. Cost: \$20. We probably can't solve anything in this meeting, but it is a chance for you to explain your particular problem and for us to give you some idea of what it'll take to reach a solution. If you want us to proceed, we'll give you an estimate of the fees you should plan on. In writing.

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