

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Recovering the NAACP

This Saturday the NAACP national board took the first step to return that organization to the people with the vindication of Benjamin Hooks and the reduction of the powers of board chairman, Margaret Bush Wilson.

The often-publicized power struggle between the executive director and the board chairman is more than a struggle for personal influence. It is a struggle over the direction and philosophy of the association.

Ms. Wilson was able to turn the traditionally weak chairmanship into a position of power. Filling a vacuum created by the aging Roy Wilkins, Ms. Wilson became the association's leader. When Hooks came on board in 1977 she refused to give up authority to the executive director and the association became a two-headed monster.

Ms. Wilson launched the NAACP in a new direction. A member of the Monsanto Chemicals' board of directors and close to the corporate world, she put the NAACP in bed with the very powers that have perpetuated racism and oppression of black people. Rather than rely on financial and political support from the NAACP's traditional supporters — the black community, progressive whites and some segments of labor — she encouraged corporate donations and corporate memberships.

Wilson led the national board to adopt the "trickle down" theory — that corporate profits will trickle down to the unemployed poor. This is best revealed in the board's 1977 statement on

energy (written by power company executives). Ms. Wilson and the board refused to allow floor discussion at the National Convention that year in spite of angry opposition of many of the elected delegates. The statement included an endorsement of nuclear power and, unbelievably, endorsement of natural gas deregulation — an action that will put the price of home heating beyond the reach of millions of black people living in the cities of the east. The NAACP board simultaneously endorsed truck deregulation, a move that will consolidate the profits of the large trucking companies and put many small truckers out of business.

Ms. Wilson's leadership of the NAACP was clearly for the interest of corporate profit, not for the millions of black people suffering from unemployment, poor housing, lack of medical care, deficient education and all the ills that befall a group of people that are set aside for use as cheap labor or cannon fodder.

Hooks never publically denounced this policy, or openly challenged Ms. Wilson, but we must believe that much of the so-called "power struggle" was based on his desire to return the NAACP to the people. His suspension, reinstatement, and the overwhelming support of the national board and the membership give Hooks the authority to take the NAACP back where it belongs — fighting for the basic civil and human rights of black people and all Americans. When the NAACP finds itself in opposition to the corporate structure — as it will — it must remember whom it represents and why.

No recovery in sight

While the Reagan administration is praising itself over the so-called economic recovery and various economists are arguing about whether the recovery will be long or short, strong or weak, the nation's workers do not see much to indicate "recovery."

While the nation's unemployment rate dropped only one-tenth of a percentage point (seasonably adjusted), Oregon's rate dropped .6 of a percentage point in April to an unemployment rate of 10.4 percent.

Much of the small improvement was in lumber and wood products and in construction, while other sectors of the economy remain stagnant.

Letters to the Editor

Racial commissions funded

To the Editor:

In your editorial of March 23 you suggested that racism was my motivation for referring the Hispanic and Black Commission bills (HB 2355 and HB 2356) to Ways and Means instead of Human Services and Aging. You said that sending the bills to Ways and Means, when there was no appropriation attached to them, would guarantee that they die in committee. These bills establish the Black Commission and the Hispanic Commission. But both of these commissions also wanted state money to spend, not just to be established.

Williamsburg

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A point of conflict during the 1982 conference and after was the U.S. effort to ban its Western allies from trading with the Soviet Union. The Williamsburg document says, "East-West economic relations should be compatible with our security interests."

The Williamsburg conference did little to solve the world economic crisis. For Reagan, it offered an opportunity to demonstrate leader-

It seems your fears were unwarranted after all. The Black and Hispanic Commission bills passed out of Ways and Means on May 16 and passed the Senate on May 18. The bills which would appropriate the state tax dollar funding for the Commissions, HB 5058 and HB 5059, passed the House on May 19. After being assigned to Ways and Means, these bills both passed the Senate on May 27.

The fact that all of these bills passed the Senate tells me that my referrals were very helpful toward getting these commissions established and funded. I served on the Ways and Means Committee for

ship away from the eyes of the press and to get through the conference with no overt conflict. A repeat of his gross behavior during and after the 1982 conference was avoided.

Nothing occurred that will aid the people of the U.S. or the other nations represented. More than 22 million people are unemployed in these nations and the leaders of Western Europe are aware that it will require substantial restructuring of their industrial bases to put their people back to work.

There are still 148,700 persons officially unemployed in Oregon (drawing unemployment compensation or registered with the State Employment Office). In some counties, where there have been mass lay-offs or plant closures, official unemployment is still at 14 to 20 percent.

The wage and salary index has gradually declined since 1979, now indicating that wages are just slightly above the 1977 level.

Millions of unemployed workers, without income or health insurance, ineligible for unemployment compensation or welfare, losing the homes and possessions they have worked for years to purchase — many of them with no mills or shops to return to — do not believe recovery is here.

many years. I speak from experience when I say that members of the Committee do not react well to people saying a bill doesn't cost any state funds on one hand and asking for money to make the bill work on the other.

Edward N. Fadeley
Senate President

NAACP

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Board members and members have contended that political infighting and bickering has hurt the organization, causing confusion over policy and direction. They add that the association has antiquated procedures, inadequate staff and declining membership. Ms. Wilson sent Hooks a letter suspending him because he refused to turn over internal records that she said she could use to support her charge of incompetent management.

Following the Saturday meeting, Hooks said "I am happy, of course, to have been vindicated. . . . I intend to go forward. The association must go forward." Ms. Wilson, on a speaking engagement in Chicago, indicated she will not resign.

Legal terrorism

by Dr. Manning Marable
"From the Grassroots"

As thousands of Americans are beginning to mobilize for the Twentieth Anniversary March on Washington, D.C., which will be held on August 27, it is imperative that we understand what the Freedom Movement represented in the 1980's, and where we stand today.

Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for racial equality for Black Americans, and his "I Have A Dream" speech which was delivered at the 1963 March has inspired millions across the world. Martin also stood for economic justice for the poor of all races, and prepared a Poor Peoples' March on Washington in early 1968. Martin had the courage to follow in the steps of Dr. W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson, to call for world peace and an end to U.S. militarism. The FBI countered Martin by harassing his family, illegally wire-tapping his conversations, blackmailing him, and disrupting his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the end, he was assassinated. Other civil rights and Black Power activists suffered his fate: Fred Hampton, Ralph Featherstone, Mark Clark, Medgar Evers, and dozens more. The FBI and local government agencies were responsible for the arrest of 749 Black Panther Party members in 1968-69, and for the killing of 27 more.

This pattern of "legal terrorism" was checked slightly by Attorney General Edward H. Levi's "Guidelines on Domestic Security Investigations" issued in April, 1976. But with the economic and political turmoil of Reaganism, the U.S. government has reversed itself to keep the lid on the impending social crisis. On August 9, 1982, new and dangerous CIA Guidelines for covert operations inside the U.S. were approved by Attorney General William French Smith. Last December, Reagan issued Executive Order 12333, which calls for sweeping

"police state-type" authority for the FBI. Three months ago, Smith announced a plan to implement Executive Order 12333 which would target all groups advocating "political or social change through the use of violence."

Reagan's and Smith's idea of a "dangerous, violent person" comes close to being anyone who opposes the Reagan budget, who favors peace over nuclear war, or who is opposed to racism. As journalist Nat Hentoff observes, the FBI "will now be able to investigate persons or groups advocating 'criminal activity,'" as well as those who are actually conspiring to carry out specific acts. The FBI will "clip and file articles, letters to the editor and ads" of anyone they consider suspicious. Undercover agents can infiltrate any group, from a Black neighborhood group concerned about police brutality to a coalition opposing the nuclear arms race. The FBI's budget for next year is over one billion dollars. And some members of Congress are too frightened of the agency to halt the drive toward legal terrorism. As California Congressman Donald Edwards states, "The FBI is more powerful than we are when there's something it wants."

Some Americans still remain unconvinced that their police or the FBI would go so far as to assassinate political activists. Yet in Greensboro, North Carolina, five activists were publicly executed by gangs of Klansmen and Nazis in 1979, with the cooperation and certainly advance knowledge of local and federal agents. In the middle of the recent Greensboro grand jury hearings to investigate the murders, a black man, Henry C. Byrd, submitted a signed document on April 13, 1983, stating that Greensboro police officers asked him to "shoot" black activist Nelson Johnson. Byrd states: "While sitting in this un-

marked car, Officer Bell pointed out to me Nelson Johnson as he walked into the bookstore. Officer Bell gave me a .38 caliber pistol, bullets and three addresses where Mr. Johnson was likely to be found."

Why would officers sworn to uphold the law conspire to pay someone to execute Nelson Johnson? Because Johnson has been under some form of FBI, army and/or police surveillance since 1967. Johnson was a leader of the Black Power movement in North Carolina, and more recently, was a member of the Communist Workers Party. The FBI fought back by promoting slanders about his involvement in drugs and schemes to initiate violence. Now there is clear evidence that some law enforcement officers may want to silence him permanently.

The recent FBI guidelines, and the evidence from the Greensboro grand jury, converge to form a clear pattern of legal terrorism. When we go to Washington, D.C., therefore, we must demand: *Who* killed Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X? *Who* killed Fred Hampton and Ralph Featherstone? *Who* is planning the murder of Nelson Johnson and perhaps hundreds of other Black, Latino and white political activists? *Who* is slandering Black politicians such as Congressman Ronald V. Dellums and imprisoning black elected officials like Tchula, Mississippi Mayor Eddie Carthan? The March on Washington, D.C. must not simply honor the memory of Martin, but it must have at its core, an activist, progressive vision of a democracy without legal terrorism, FBI surveillance, and official murder. We must demand the revocation of Executive Order 12333, and the end to all legal lynchings.

Dr. Manning Marable is Director of the Race Relations Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, TN.

Quorum of One

by Greg Wasson

Salem — Friday, Gov. Vic Atiyeh appeared before the Senate Revenue Committee to repeat his call for immediate, substantial property tax relief. The governor warned the committee that unless the legislature adopts a program of meaningful relief, a Ballot Measure 3 will be enacted into law by the people.

"I intend to do everything in my power to see to it that a reasonable and fairly drawn property tax plan emerges from this legislative assembly. . . (and) I will call this legislature into Special Session if such a plan has not emerged when the final gavel has sounded."

Tough talk on the governor's part. But it could legitimately be labeled too little, too late. For Atiyeh to chide the legislature for inaction on tax relief is a classic example of the pot maligning the kettle for its shading.

The legislature came to Salem seemingly dedicated to altering the situation that spawned the nearly successful tax revolt. Atiyeh greeted it with a budget that could be balanced only with tax increases totaling over \$600 million, a clear reversal of his repeated campaign pledge not to increase taxes and a program that no one in the legislature supported.

When the House Revenue Committee shelved Atiyeh's plan after a week of perfunctory hearings, the governor dismissed it as a Democratic legislature tweaking the nose of a Republican governor. Challenging the lawmakers to draft a better plan if they could, Atiyeh contented himself with taking pot shots at the legislature for its inaction and traveling to Japan to promote economic development.

That's unacceptable, governor. First, the decision needs to be made whether property tax relief is to be provided or not. The Big-3 in the legislative process — Atiyeh, Senate President Ed Fadeley and House Speaker Grattan Kerans — all seem to agree that it should.

With that goal established, tax-planners must face the reality that money to fund property tax relief can come only from a new, or increased, tax. In his budget, the governor announced that income tax increases were the preferred route.

Then why hasn't Atiyeh helped lay the terminally-revivable sales tax to rest? Continued discussion of that revenue albatross muddies the water and prevents formation of the meaningful program Atiyeh says he wants.

Actually, it appeared early in the session like Atiyeh planned to throw his weight around the statehouse more than he had in the past. In February's battle over a fairly innocuous bill, HB 2373, the governor showed surprising spunk.

The proposal contained a plan to use unemployment funds to support displaced workers as they attended retraining classes. Under the existing regulations, anyone in school was ineligible for unemployment payments. The AFL-CIO and others wanted to carve out an exception for retraining programs.

As originally introduced, the bill called for establishment of a wide-open system. Business opposed that idea, one lobbyist complaining that the bill was really a full-enrollment bill for community colleges with the tab to be picked up by the business community.

The historic connection between the Democratic Party and organized labor is well established, as is the one between the Republicans and management. Given that backdrop, the battle over the bill became part of a familiar war. The House Democrats and Speaker Grattan Kerans won the first volley.

When the unemployment bill came before the full House, a Republican motion to send it back to committee was defeated almost straight down party lines. Reps. Max Simpson of Baker and Bernie

Argons of Klamath Falls were the only Democratic delinquents. With the procedural question decided, the lower body then approved the bill 56 to 3.

Over on the Senate side, the unemployment issue provided a different view of the power struggle. It was still Republicans fighting Democrats, but this time with added firepower — Gov. Atiyeh.

Through Republican L. B. Day of Salem, the governor offered amendments to the bill seriously reducing access to the training money. At a weekly press conference, Atiyeh declared that he would "probably" veto the bill if his amendments weren't accepted. The head of the Senate Labor Committee, Sen. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene, heeded Atiyeh's threats and accommodated the governor's concerns.

When asked about the new-found aggressiveness, Atiyeh acknowledged that he planned on playing rougher with the legislature than he had his first term.

"The old way," said Atiyeh, "wasn't too successful."

From this perspective, though, it doesn't appear that the governor followed through on his new role. Simply proposing an unrealistic budget is not a sign of action. By neglecting to do what needed to be done, Atiyeh may have dealt himself out of the tax reform game and blown a unique chance to exert some real influence on the decisions made during this crucial session.

You stood by while the focus shifted to others in the process, governor. If you want to recapture it, it will take more than "tough-guy" talk from the sidelines.

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