

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Civil Rights Journal

MAYNARD JACKSON:
VICTORY IN ATLANTA

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Maynard Jackson's recent victory to be the next Mayor of the city of Atlanta, Georgia is a testimony to the strength of African American political development in the South. Jackson's re-election with nearly 80% of the vote in his favor exemplifies the importance of electoral politics at the municipal level for all communities that have historically been marginalized from full participation in the electoral process. Jackson's tremendous re-election comes at a time when the rest of the nation still views the South with much speculation as to the ongoing empowerment of the African American and other racial and ethnic communities. Outgoing Mayor Andrew Young has enjoyed distinguished terms of service as Mayor of Atlanta during a period of unprecedented economic growth and development. Given Jackson's already-proven record of expertise in the economic development arena, we are expecting to see Atlanta continue to evolve as a model American city.

This is not to suggest, however, that there are not serious problems in Atlanta concerning homelessness, drugs, and a reticent degree of abject poverty for many Atlanta residents. These problems unfortunately are common to most urban metropolises in the United States. It is our belief though that the political leadership of Atlanta under Maynard Jackson's direction should begin to make considerable use of the expansion of Atlanta's economy to help provide resources to solve some of the very real social and economic ills of the poor and downtrodden in this city.

Jackson, at the age of 51, has the energy and the experience to provide the

kind of leadership that will be demanded of Atlanta as the 21st century approaches. Mayor-elect Jackson stated, "I see my election as a mandate from the people to

continue to move Atlanta forward." We recall that back in 1973 at the age of 35, Jackson was first elected Mayor of Atlanta and although there were racial overtones in the mayoral race, Jackson was successful in pulling Atlanta together.

We are sure that the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., particularly in the city of Atlanta, Georgia, is well served by the contributions of persons like Andrew Young and Jackson as being representative of the "Black Elite" of Atlanta. This may be true, but what is of more importance is how they and others from the African American middle class can utilize their status to help all of those who are caught in the increasing ranks of the underclass. The reality of class differences in the African American community should not be used to justify class contradictions. In other words, we all should work to eliminate all forms of social and economic discrimination and disempowerment. Many African American communities as well as other racial and ethnic communities throughout the United States can draw from the hard lessons learned in Atlanta.

It is only when persons of different and diverse backgrounds can find in their mutual life experiences the common goal of justice and freedom for everyone is when the possibility of social and racial equality is realized. We salute Maynard Jackson on his victory and may this be a victory for all of the people of Atlanta.

The African-American Defense Legal Defense Fund: Judge Hastings

Time is of the Essence!!!

Judge Alcee Hastings, the first African American Federal Judge, in South Florida is currently facing impeachment proceedings in the U.S. Senate. There has been fourteen other judges that have gone through the impeachment process seven were impeached and seven were not. However, they were all previously found guilty of criminal charges. Within the next 30 days the U.S. Senate will vote on whether or not Judge Hastings will be impeached, even though he was found innocent of all charges in a trial by a jury of his peers in 1983. It is worth noting that from 1981 to 1989 the U.S. government has spent over twenty-five million dollars of tax payers money to conduct this foolish inquiry.

In a recent article by James J. Kilpatrick entitled, "DON'T REMOVE JUDGE HASTINGS" Kilpatrick wrote:

"When the clerk called the roll in the House on August 3, the vote was 413 to 3 to impeach Judge Alcee Hastings. If I had been present and voting, the count would have been 413 to 4. The House has done a most regrettable thing. The Senate will have to turn its back upon a principle embedded in the Bill of Rights. No person, says the Constitution, 'shall . . . be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb . . .'"

The African American Legal Defense (AALDF) was established to assist Judge Hastings in his plight of impeachment. George Pope the Executive Director of the AALDF stated that we need to raise approximately \$600,000 before October 28th in order to get the story out about the circumstantial evidence involved, the historical aspects of Judge Hastings case, and how it relates to the increase in racism and racial incidents that are occurring around the United States.

The AALDF is intensifying its lobbying efforts by requesting that leaders in their respective communities and elective/appointed public officials around the country to write a statement or resolution in support of Judge Hastings, and to call your Senator NOW . . . not TOMORROW, because tomorrow may be to late! Please send your response directly to the AALDF to the Attention of George Pope, located at 141 Kennedy Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011.

The process of vindication is continuing to push forward and Judge Hastings has reason to be optimistic about the outcome of his impeachment proceedings. Last week an invigorating and inspirational "Rally for Justice" took place on the University of the District of Columbia campus, where student leaders discussed the recent racial incident that occurred in Virginia Beach. Student leader Parris proclaimed, "We are holding court here tonight involving the case of the United States of America vs. 33 million African-Americans, on the charges of . . . discrimination, racism, and sexism." Mr. Parris asked the house-packed audience "how do you plea", they responded in a loud roar . . . guilty . . . guilty . . . guilty!!! Also, at Howard University's Blackburn Center in Washington, D.C., a reception convened in Judge Hastings honor. These events were a clear indication of solidarity that this grassroots movement in Judge Hastings' defense is paramount and gaining momentum.

Each day lobbying efforts continue. Thus far, the AALDF has reached and conferred with over eighty senators' offices on Capitol Hill. On September 26, 1989, a goal was set to secure 2 million signatures on petitions in defense of Judge Hastings. However, according to Mr. Pope this process is not moving fast enough to date the AALDF have approximately 10,000 signatures. The signature drive received a shot in the arm at the HOUSING NOW MARCH ON WASHINGTON. Coordinators from several states took copies of our petitions back home with them and pledged to work vigorously to meet the October 25th deadline for the two million signatures.

George Pope also indicated that there are some discrepancies how the Senate is logging mail and phone calls concerning Judge Hastings Defense. George Pope believes that an independent non-governmental investigation should be conducted.

Vantage Point



by Ron Daniels

ECHOES FROM VIRGINIA BEACH: A YOUNG GENERATION WAKES UP!

"It all started on a beach called Croatan. And now its known all over the land. They came from near and far just to have a little fun, enjoying themselves under the September sun. But as the years went by many problems arose, and the people of Croatan began to turn up their nose. So they got with the city to devise a plan of how to keep our black feet off their snow white sand..."

Virginia Beach, Labor Day weekend, 1989. These are the words to a spontaneous rap/poem created by shocked and dismayed African-American students as they were repulsed by a city that had made up its mind that they were unwelcome. The rap goes on "...I've never seen so many cops just hanging around, when my house was being robbed, they just couldn't be found. Harassing the masses for no reason at all, with their crooked grins...oh they were having a ball..." Racial antagonism was clearly in the air, and it would soon be made manifest when the national guard was called in to keep the unwanted visitors under control. Outraged, the students erupted.

By some estimates there were 100,000 African-American students at Virginia Beach. For many of them this was a rude awakening, a live on site baptism in the new tide of racism and racial oppression which is surging across America. Here were the sons and daughters of upper working class, middle class and upper class African-Americans, aspiring young doctors, lawyers, engineers, computer analysts, account executives, entrepreneurs, the "talented tenth" being treated like second-class citizens in America in 1989.

At a memorable conference on independent black politics at Sacramento State University in 1980, veteran scholar activist Bill Strickland observed that this was the first generation of young African-Americans who had not experienced overt racism-no white only signs, seats at the back of the bus or segregated lunch counters. It was therefore more difficult, Strickland reasoned, for young African-Americans to see and experience racism. Hence a kind of lull or apathy had gripped the movement, despite the obvious need for continued struggle.

Besides, the "successes" and "gains" of the sixties were such that parents of students were admonishing them not to go to college and mess with that "Black stuff." How times have changed during this decade. The Black middle class and its progeny have been forced to WAKE UP in the face of the mounting instances of fascist violence in the society at large and on college campuses in particular. None of the pending degrees, the pockets full of plastic, or the new found wealth to have fun in the sun made any difference at Virginia Beach. As the rap/poem put it... "They called us vandals, out on the take, but where were their kids 'funning' on their spring break? Tell me the difference as you check this situation. Its not the location, it the pigmentation."

The sound of this message raced across the nation as the thousands of students returned to their respective homes and campuses. The rude awakening at Virginia Beach was very much on the minds of young African-Americans. The experience at Virginia Beach was shared with other students and the community at forums and workshops. At Akron University in Ohio, I had the pleasure of participating in a forum sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. The topic was "A Resurgence of Racism: The Virginia Beach Story". At the Congressional Black Caucus Weekend, where hundreds of African-American youth gathered for a Youth Summit, Virginia Beach was the word that reverberated throughout the corridors. The echoes from Virginia Beach spread throughout the land. When the sons and daughters of the middle class move, change is not far behind. Youthful intellectuals, activists, and scholars more often than not spark significant movements for change in the condition of their people. The masses intervene and are ultimately decisive, but it is the young who generally provide the spark which ignites a people to move. From the student revolts at Howard University and the City University system in New York to the outrage at Virginia Beach, a new generation of leadership is being born. A new found consciousness of our history, of self and kind, and a sense of mission is fueling a determination to engage in the vital struggle to rescue and restore our people.

As the rap/poem created at Virginia Beach concludes, "Its my skin, friends-don't let them tell you its not. they're just trying to take away the dignity I got. This ain't no (Birmingham) of 1963, and ain't no brothers and sisters going to hang from no tree. We've got to stop this none-sense. At the drop of a dime, because its the time...in '89...the bottom line...you know the time...Its a BLACK THING. Thank God, a new generation is waking up!

This Way for Black Empowerment

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

Congratulations To CALM

Last Thursday evening Mobutu Sese Seko, the brutal dictator of Zaire, was the featured (and only) speaker at a forum sponsored by Harvard University's prestigious Kennedy School of Government. The title of the forum was "Peace and Progress in Southern Africa." No one could be less qualified to speak on this topic than Mobutu, a murderous tyrant who years ago sold his soul to the twin devils of apartheid and American neo-colonialism.

Having grown monstrously rich over the dead bodies of our sisters and brothers in South Africa, in Angola, and in Zaire itself, Mobutu is now being marketed as an African statesman and peacemaker by his patrons in the Bush administration and by his friends -- Black as well as white, Democrat as well as Republican -- in Congress. But not everyone is buying what these conscience-less apologists for fascism are selling.

The Coalition Against Legitimizing Mobutu (CALM) brought more than 800 people to a demonstration outside the Kennedy School while Mobutu lied his way through a 45 minute address. Chanting "MO-BU-TU, MO-BU-TU, Who elected you?" to the accompaniment of African drums, the demonstrators were there to let the dictator know he is not welcome here.

The Coalition Against Legitimizing Mobutu represented a broad cross-section of the Boston community -- a multi-racial grouping of students, lesbians and gays, human rights and anti-apartheid activists and community folks who don't ordinarily "travel in the same circles" but who joined with one another to take a stand against a brutal abuser of human rights.

"It was a fantastic coming together of people who wanted to say 'No' to Mobutu's record," said Lynne Jones, a first year graduate student in Public Administration at the Kennedy School. "A number of students took issue with having legitimacy bestowed on the Mobutu government, when it doesn't seem like he has the support of his own people."

Sean Gonzales, of the Northeast Lesbian and Gay Student Union, explained that he joined the protest because "even though this didn't relate directly to our organization, it is a human rights issue. This is definitely a change from what we have been involved with, but it is a showing of solidarity."

Professor Yves Isidore, a member of the Roxbury Community College

faculty and a writer, is a Haitian political activist who works with the Committee in Solidarity with Haiti. "Trying to fight Baby Doc and the Tontons Macoutes is like trying to fight Mobutu," he explained. "I said I am willing to give my support because it's like Baby Doc coming."

The African American Society of Tufts University issued a statement which read, "We in Boston prepare our assault on the hallowed grounds of Harvard University to protest Mobutu and everything he stands for in Southern Africa. For the Zairian students who must risk their lives to fight for free speech, let us fight to let our feelings be known and tell all who will listen about the injustice and atrocities perpetrated in our name by this villain, Mobutu, who our own government supports."

Jenny Green, a Harvard Law School student who endorsed the protest, was in the audience for Mobutu's charade. "Students and activists asked some pointed questions about his pilfering of billions of dollars and the human rights abuses. At one point he referred to criticisms by Amnesty International as 'smut and propaganda.' And when he said he'd be willing to come back, the students hissed."

Afterward Greg Hunter, a Tufts student who helped to organize CALM, said that the protest showed that "Harvard and its students and people from the community are concerned about who speaks here. I understand all about free speech, but I can't understand why at a forum on peace and progress in Southern Africa someone who could only lie about it should be allowed to speak. We showed that they couldn't just slip a murderer in the door."

As Professor Isidore said, "I think Mobutu got the message." Sooner or later, he -- and his friends in high places -- will. The Mobutu Watch -- initiated earlier this year to derail the tyrant's public relations junket to Los Angeles -- is seeing to that. The job of the Mobutu Watch, begun by the Washington, D.C.-based Rainbow Lobby, the US-Congo Friendship Committee, the New Alliance Party, the International People's Law Institution, the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, and the Southern Africa Resource Center of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Los Angeles and since endorsed by dozens of other organizations -- is to dog the dictator and scream bloody murder whenever and wherever he shows his fascist face. Good work, CALM!

PERSPECTIVES



By McKinley Burt

I had intended to begin this article with an advice of a switch this week from history to education-but I know better than that. History is education. In any case let me comment on the widespread media attention being given the Chicago School System this past month. Taking place there is a test of the nation's most ambitious school reform effort, whereby 17,000 parents, community representatives and teachers have filed as candidates for positions on new, powerful education councils that will absolutely control the schools (Ten members each School: Six parents, two community reps and two teachers). These groups will approve budgets, design curricula; choose books, and hire or fire principals; the latter will lose lifetime tenure but will gain the power to hire or fire teachers (remember my 9/28 comment that urban schools reflect the leadership role furnished by the principal). This certainly, and favorably, impacts upon me since I have several African Lesson Plan designs which are in their final year of a two-year trial before adoption and contract approval. I have two nieces in the Chicago school system who serve as my representatives-one a teacher and the other an administrator. Interestingly, the most revealing book ever written concerning the development of the current crisis in urban schools is based upon this very city; **The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History** (Mary J. Herick, Sage Publications, 1971). For 25 years Ms. Herick taught at the 95% Black

DuSable High School, supervised student teachers for the University of Chicago's Graduate Department of Education, and served as research director for the American Federation of Teachers (This school is named for Baptiste Point DuSable, who founded the city of Chicago in

1779. Friendly with the Indians with whom he traded furs, this Black man used their name for the site of his cabin, **Eschicagou**). This book is a masterful recapitulation of the development of our urban systems of education, with a concomitant evolution of the related social and economic factors. The author never loses sight of the fact that the pupils are what it is all about. Sometimes, those of us who are so involved in this traumatic process, and so self-sure of our commitment, need to back up and remember that the struggle is about the children and not about our egos and our quests for power and community acclaim. Pointedly, Ms. Herick underscores the fact that **nothing ever changes but the name of the game** by including this excerpt from the 1897 doctoral dissertation of Hannah Belle Clark (The Chicago Schools: A Sociological study).

"The schools have a double problem in training children from homes of poverty and ignorance, if not of vice, to be honest, industrious and intelligent; And to adapt aliens to become active citizens in a country whose institutions, ideas and customs are in many cases radically different from those they learn from their fathers. The burden reston the schools". Well now, how can it be that a hundred years later our degree-laden and well paid educational establishment has yet to evolve an effective process for dealing with the urban poor and the new immigrants (Hispanic and Asian)? We gain a great deal of insight as this gifted educator follows

on in her 500 page book with a detailed account of over a century of developing and structuring the administration and policies of a typical large metropolitan learning machine. The revealing descriptions of power struggles between administrators, board's of education, parents and community could have been written yesterday. And we see that nothing has

changed in respect to the racism of the urban power structure and its ugly immersion into the greed and politics of manipulating a city's land values through the vehicle of the urban education process (and funds). Her book, with its invaluable appendixes, begins with the founding of Chicago's school system and early difficulties in financing public education, a problem that 200 years later remains far from being solved. It seems so strange to many young teachers that I, like Herrick, learned in high school that with the establishment of the Northwest Territories as part of the public domain of the United States, Congress stipulated in the ordinance of 1785 that in each of the six-mile Square "Congressional Townships" the surveyors must mark off one square mile to be set aside for a school. Of the billions of acres of the federal lands in these 29 states (taken from the Indians), hundreds of millions of acres were donated to the states for educational support (timber harvest, of which much was stolen--today the spotted owl).

The book also presents an excellent history and examination of the teacher training process, including a discussion of early teacher colleges or Normal Schools. My mother and aunt received their teacher training at one of these institutions (Stow's Teachers College, St.Louis, Mo.). This phase of education will be continued next week--be sure to save this article.

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