

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
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Rustin Column

THE BUDGET--A RETURN TO STATES' RIGHTS

The budget proposed by the Nixon Administration carries implications well beyond the reductions and dismantling of what remains of the Great Society agenda. Should President Nixon succeed in his primary goals, we would in fact be confronted with a federal government which no longer believes in equality as an ideal for society.

Considered by itself, the budget is a matter of serious enough concern. For it is precisely those areas where blacks suffer most severely from an unequal society that cut backs will be most drastic.

The moratorium on federal housing projects signifies an abandonment of any effort to save the cities. Without federal assistance new housing for the urban poor cannot be built. Cities will increasingly evolve into islands of high rise affluence surrounded by the ghetto. There will be less construction jobs open to anyone--black or white.

The chronic unemployment of the ghetto will continue unchecked. Nixon has proposed the termination of a program of public service employment which provided jobs for several hundred thousand workers. He is also proposing to reduce the scope of manpower training programs, many of which were conceived as a means of assisting blacks whose lack of education left them without the skills to earn a decent living in a technological society. A number of successful educational programs will be cut back or abolished. The Office of Economic Opportunity may be abolished altogether.

Aside from the abolition of important programs, authority over a number of other programs is being shifted from the federal government to states and local governments. The President calls this decentralization and a redistribution of the powers of government. What he really means is a dismantling of the Great Society and a reduction of government responsibility.

The civil rights and civil liberties of black people have never thrived under decentralization, or, as it was formerly known, states' rights.

The federal government has always been the most responsive agent for change. It took the Supreme Court, a liberal Congress and a President committed to equality to wipe out the legal sanctions of segregation. More relevant to today's situation, it took federal action to bring about the economic reforms we now take for granted: minimum wage legislation, Social Security, unemployment compensation, housing and education programs. Many southern workers are today receiving wages that are near the poverty level because the laws guaranteeing the right to organize into a union have been left to the states.

I am not inferring that revenue sharing, which is the Nixon approach to decentralization, threatens such basic programs as minimum wage and Social Security. What it represents, rather, is the beginning of a move, a turning away from the previous trend of government as the instrument of progressive social reform.

Ironically, the one program aimed essentially at blacks which Nixon plans to expand is aid to minority businesses--black capitalism. Black capitalism has not only been an acknowledged disappointment, but, even if it were to achieve the results of its proponents, would mean nothing in the way of economic advancement for the overwhelming proportion of blacks.

The Administration justifies what it is doing by citing the failures among liberal social programs. Certainly there were efforts that were poorly conceived, which failed to substantively benefit the poor and which alienated some people from the war against poverty.

No one is, of course, suggesting that government should continue to spend money for programs that do not succeed. What we insist is that programs that have reduced unemployment, built new, affordable housing, and made schools more effective should be continued and expanded.

Our task is both immediate and long range. We must mobilize right now to fight the proposed budget reductions so that the Administration's conservative policies do not gather momentum. At the same time we must guard against the efforts to reduce the authority of the federal government

For if we fail here, we face not simply the abolition of a few programs, but a shift to the type of government that would make the struggle for equality much more difficult and complex than it already is.

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Rustin Column

THE MYTH OF THE RACIST VOTER

George McGovern, in an interview following the election, analyzed his defeat this way: "He (Nixon) really tapped the seeds of racism, the fear of change, of the young, of the black. I came to represent all those things...you have to remember that in various times in history the forces of irrationalism and fear have temporarily triumphed."

What Senator McGovern has given us is an unwitting commentary on the condition of liberalism, rather than an insight into the motivations of the voters. Liberals are often accused of being out of touch with the people. And to the extent that liberals explain the presidential election in terms of race, such criticism is valid.

Certainly racial fears and prejudices played a role in the election, just as they have influenced every election since the Dixiecrats abandoned the Democratic Party in 1948. But racism was not the pervasive force that many liberals and black political figures have suggested. Nor were racial issues as important as in 1968, when Hubert Humphrey campaigned in the wake of a summer of riot and disorder. Fusing and quotas--the issues which plagued McGovern, pale by comparison.

The liberal tradition of support for equal rights was in fact reaffirmed in the congressional elections. In the Senate, the Democrats increased their majority by two seats as those who stood firm in the face of the anti-busing hysteria were easily re-elected. And of the 64 congressmen with perfect civil rights records only one met defeat, and his loss was largely attributed to redistricting.

A further point is that while many liberals saw the election as what Julian Bond referred to as a "referendum on what's going to be done to black people," black voters themselves were disillusioned with both candidates. Despite the passage of the Voting Rights Act, despite the concerted and highly successful registration campaigns and despite the current emphasis on political action black voter turnout was the lowest since 1960. In cities with substantial black communities, only 53 per cent of registered blacks voted, compared with 87 per cent four years earlier. And in Washington, D. C. only about one of every four people bothered to vote.

I do not, let me emphasize, evaluate this as an expression of disaffection with the political process. Black voters were rather registering their disapproval with candidates who did not seem to be addressing their interests and problems. And while nationally the turnout of Negroes was disappointing, there were many encouraging signs, such as the elections of Andrew Young, Barbara Jordan and over 600 local black officials in the South.

This is not in any way an effort to exonerate the campaign tactics of Nixon. The Republican strategy was one designed to exploit the baser instincts of man and to raise to the surface latent racial hostilities. But the consequences of this approach have been overemphasized: busing, quotas and welfare do not add up to 62 per cent. Nor does the theory of election as racial confrontation make sense in the light of public opinion polls which indicate that racial attitudes are steadily improving; that whites are more willing to acknowledge the existence of discrimination and blacks more ready to concede that discrimination has lessened.

The question still remains, then, as how we--liberals, minority spokesman, intellectuals--respond to the past election. Do we emulate Senator McGovern, and suggest that the American voter capitulated to "irrationalism and fear," thus condemning them as moral incompetents? Or do we take the position that Nixon manipulated their votes, thus raising questions of their intelligence?

Either response, I propose, is unthinkable for those who expect to assume leadership in the rebuilding of liberalism. Our ability to formulate new strategies and programs in great part depends on our avoiding the mistaken assumptions of the past-- the notion, for instance, of an inherent kinship between those who supported McGovern and those who voted for Wallace. A failure to look beyond the superficial will lead us only to the same erroneous assumptions and, ultimately, to the same disastrous consequences. To whatever extent racism figured in the past election, we must look, not to the voters or Nixon, but to ourselves.

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Rustin Column

WHAT ABOUT THE GREAT SOCIETY

Did the Great Society succeed in making our society more equal--in providing the poor with better housing, quality schooling, improved medical care and other services? Or was the Great Society a highly touted, well meaning, but expensive failure?

The Nixon Administration is currently engaged in a high pressure campaign to persuade Americans that the liberal social legislation of the Johnson Administration accomplished little beyond wasting the taxpayers' money. For instance, the President said in one recent speech: "America is still recovering from years of extravagant, hastily passed measures, designed by central planners and costing billions of dollars--but producing few results." Nixon concluded that "the high-cost, no result boondoggling by the federal government must end."

Criticism of the Great Society is not limited to conservatives; some liberals question whether Johnson's social programs accomplished anything more than raising the expectations of the poor, without fulfilling their needs.

But it is Nixon who is most bent on discrediting the programs of liberalism. He devoted each recent speech to an attack on this or that program which, he asserts, turned "the federal government into a nationwide slumlord" and gave the poor "little but broken promises."

Whatever its shortcomings, the Great Society was not a failure. It disappointed the expectations of many; some of its programs were poorly conceived; others were never adequately funded.

But the successes of the Great Society were notable. The federal housing program did not make the government a "slumlord," it rather provided the only decent alternative for thousands of low income families who are unable to afford anything else but the most deplorable slums. Federal education programs have played a significant role in reducing the previously wide gap between the schooling of whites and blacks. In great part because of the Great Society, black high school graduates now attend college in about the same proportion as their white classmates.

The weakness of the Great Society was not that it tried to do too much, but that in too many cases it did not go far enough.

Federal efforts to build housing, and to stimulate the building industry, for instance, produced a housing supply averaging one-twentieth of the annual need, a situation which creates nearly as many problems as it solves.

Some of the programs were misdirected. There was too much emphasis on reforming marginal institutions in an effort to correct a "culture of poverty," a concept for which we still lack adequate definition. We would have been better off to provide the poor with, first, an adequate standard of living in the form of a guaranteed annual income, and, second, the services which bear most directly on day-to-day life--jobs, medical care, housing, and the like.

Another problem was that some programs were formulated to give the poor a sense of psychological comfort rather than to advance their economic status. The anti-poverty program particularly suffered because of the unwillingness to attack, head-on, the basic causes of impoverishment.

President Nixon has not bothered to criticize these aspects of the Great Society. He has, rather, tried to depict the Great Society as dominated by a distant bureaucracy, dictating its wishes to local communities, with little interest in, or understanding of, local needs.

The truth is that the Great Society took a compassionate and profoundly humane view of social problems. And, more important, it proved significantly more effective at resolving these problems than local governments could ever hope to be.

President Nixon may assert that the poor received "little more than broken promises." The poor, however, have a different view. When Lyndon Johnson died, the black community responded in a practically unanimous voice: Johnson had been, they said, the most deeply concerned and strongly committed president of this century. They did not say this simply because he once said "we shall overcome," in a nationwide address; although Johnson's moral leadership in the area of civil rights was important. Lyndon Johnson evoked the praise of black people because he, above all others, accomplished something during the five years of his presidency. No matter how hard he may try, this is a fact that Richard Nixon cannot change.

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Rustin Column

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A. PHILIP RANDOLPH

(Editor's Note: The following is a review of "A. Philip Randolph--A Biographical Portrait", written by Jervis Anderson. The original, hardcover edition of the book, which sells at bookstores for \$12.50, can be purchased from the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, 260 Park Avenue South, New York, N. Y. 10010, at the special price of \$10.00.)

It is ironic that the black struggle, despite its transforming influence on society, has produced such a scarcity of worthwhile literature. Most that has been written about the civil rights movement, or about the figures who shaped that movement, is exploitative and sensationalistic--the more angry and anti-white, the higher the profits.

The publication of "A. Philip Randolph--A Biographical Portrait" stands in marked contrast to the intellectual wasteland that passes for race relations literature. Its author, Jervis Anderson, has written both an important account of social and racial struggle, and a perceptive portrait of the man I consider the most important figure in the past 50 years of black struggle.

This is not an authorized biography, but rather an objective, honest recounting of Randolph's life. But the author's objectivity, combined with his thoroughness and craftsmanship, gives the work strength.

I have known, worked with and admired A. Philip Randolph for 36 years. Many of my beliefs were first imparted to me by Mr. Randolph--the use of non-violent civil disobedience, the importance of the labor movement as an instrument for racial equality, the necessity to seek change that will directly benefit working people, and the importance of mass actions--demonstrations, marches, strikes--as a tactic of protest.

There are many lessons to be learned from Mr. Randolph's life, but perhaps none more important than the lesson of what it was like to be a Negro, in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's, and to be engaged in protest.

The description of the campaign to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters is to me one of the most moving chapters in the whole panorama of the campaign for equality. The Brotherhood's lonely fight for recognition was not aided by nationwide boycotts of Pullman cars. Even the black community was, at least initially, unmoved by the Brotherhood's cause. With the exception of two black newspapers and a handful of churches, there was little support forthcoming from Negro institutions of the period. There was only Randolph, and a few porters, or, as often was the case, ex-porters who had been fired for their union activities. Those who, having just entered the struggle for reform, grow despondent after a few failures, should keep in mind that it took the Brotherhood 12 years to gain recognition, years in which it often seemed as if there was no money, support, or hope.

Because Randolph believed that social movements must be of and for workingmen, he came to break from the views of three of the most influential figures in black thought--Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey.

Washington advised Negroes to accept social segregation and hope that the largesse of white society would one day bring economic emancipation; DuBois said progress would come from the development of a "Talented Tenth"--an enlightened and educated elite; Garvey preached a crude form of black capitalism and a cruder form of race consciousness.

None of the three, however, had a program to deal with the chronic poverty, unemployment, and economic discrimination which were the daily experiences of the vast majority of black Americans. Nor did Washington, DuBois (whom Randolph respected in many ways) or Garvey challenge the basic institutions that discriminated against working people and the poor.

To give even a partial list of Randolph's accomplishments in a paragraph would be to evoke disbelief from most people. He founded the Messenger, one of the most important black journals of the 1920's; he founded the Brotherhood; he was the first head of the National Negro Congress; he prodded President Roosevelt to sign the order banning discrimination in defense industries; he fought, and won, a fight for the abolition of Jim Crow in the military; he was instrumental in transforming the labor movement to an institution that has welcomed the participation and championed the rights of minorities.

The culmination of his career as activist was, of course, the 1963 March on Washington, the largest, most effective mass peaceful demonstration in American history. It is altogether ^{that} fitting/ the publication of this biography comes during the tenth anniversary of the March.

Mr. Randolph, at 84, is now in retirement. But he can look back on his career and feel that the principles he refused to betray have been vindicated and that many of the goals for which he sacrificed have been ^{achieved.} Today we are in a time of stalemate, when progress is measured in inches, or, sometimes, as simply having held the dike firm against the torrents of reaction. At a time such as this, when many are tempted to give it up, embracing outmoded formulas of black nationalism, or retreating behind a shell of race consciousness, nothing could be more soul reviving than to read, and reflect on--for a long time--the life of A. Philip Randolph.

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260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
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Rustin Column

THE MYTHS OF BLACK EDUCATION

Of the institutions that have experienced transforming effects of black advancement, none have felt the impulse for change more noticeably than education. Some might argue whether black demands have resulted in substantive improvement in learning; none, however, would deny that the civil rights movement and all that came with it has forever altered our way of looking at educational policy.

And while we have profited from most of what has happened (black high school graduates, for instance, are now as likely as their white classmates to enroll in college), there have also been serious mistakes made in the name of black educational progress.

Thomas Sowell, a black professor of economics, tells of many of these failures in a recent book, "Black Education: Myths and Tragedies." The myths of which he writes are the myths of what constitute "relevant" education. The tragedies occur when the myths become public policy.

Perhaps the most damaging myth is that of the middle class black. College officials, Sowell points out, no longer define the "middle class" black by the usual measurements of income and standard of living.

Instead, Sowell says, a black student "may be defined as middle class without any real knowledge of his circumstances, which may be as bad as (or worse than) those of his less able neighbor in the ghetto. He may be labeled as middle class simply because he had such 'old fashioned' traits as perseverance, hard work, responsibility, and a desire to be judged as an individual."

That attitudes, rather than income, determine a student's class label has profound effects on educational policy, since admissions policies and the awarding of scholarships and other grants very often revolve on a student's background.

Thus, using the new formula for judging the middle class, a student whose parents work as domestics or laborers might be labeled "middle class" by a college even though the family income was near the poverty level.

Instead of seeking students with strong academic records, or promising potential, Sowell contends that many colleges seek out "authentic ghetto types." In determining who is and who isn't an "authentic ghetto type," such factors as political outlook, alienation and attitude are considered more important than the student's grades or test scores.

Ultimately, black students, both the qualified and unqualified, suffer the consequences.

Black students with outstanding high school records are often denied admission or financial aid (and, in effect, admission) by good colleges. The psychological impact is often no less severe than if they were the victims of outright discrimination.

On the other hand, black students with poor or average high school achievement, but whose appearance, attitudes and politics are in vogue, are caught in an atmosphere which is alien to them. Sowell says that "few students go through such anguish for so little education." The anguish and isolation which afflict these students has led them to reject the mainstream of campus life, and to seek separatist dormitories, organizations and eating halls.

The policy of rejecting those uniquely defined as middle class black students has had another effect--that of reinforcing the stereotype that blacks are less intelligent than whites. Colleges, students, and the public see experiments to increase the black enrollment funder, and basically irrelevant courses created for black students, and conclude that blacks do not learn as easily as the rest of society.

The tragedy is that this pattern is so unnecessary: according to Sowell, who has done extensive work in recruiting black students, there are literally thousands ^{of} /gifted black students who are passed over because of their "middle class" outlook.

The issues raised by Thomas Sowell are terribly important today. Black people have retained, since slavery, a basic faith that progress comes through education. But changing education so that it serves a people who have known centuries of discrimination cannot be accomplished, in Sowell's words, by efforts to "atone, experiment, express noblesse oblige, seek emotional experiences, lash out at enemies, or to bask in the spotlight of attention.

"More than anything else, it requires that those who are to be educated must be seen as important in and of themselves--not as clay to be molded, not as exhibits of one's own goodness, or the world's badness, or cannon fodder for various movements and causes. If the future is to be different from the past, it will have to be recognized that worthwhile education is a full-time commitment and an overriding priority."

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260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
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Rustin Column

NIXON CUT-BACKS AND DEMOCRATIC DEFAULT

Two recent polls demonstrate the shallowness of President Nixon's contention that he speaks for a "New American Majority". The first poll, by Gallup, points out that Democratic Party registration is as strong today as it was before the election; there is, in other words, no national shift to the conservatism embodied in the Republican Party. The second poll shows a convincing majority of Americans rejecting the President's domestic policies and his handling of the economy; people just aren't buying cutbacks in social programs or ineffective and unfair economic controls.

The message that comes across--that Nixon's re-election was not accompanied by a mandate for conservatism--comes as no surprise; the surprising, and disturbing thing is that this message has apparently escaped the eyes of the Democratic Party.

The Democrats have in fact seemingly surrendered their responsibility to serve as the representative of blacks, the poor, and working people in the face of Nixon's program of retrenchment. Only the Watergate case has prompted any kind of militancy from the party leadership. One might consider the preoccupation with Watergate a proper response to a moral issue. But moral leadership, we should not forget, entails more than honesty in government; it is inextricably tied to the responsibility of liberalism to defend the rights and living conditions of common people, particularly when those rights and conditions are endangered, as they are now.

One does not have to expect the passage of the kind of legislation that marked the 1960s. to ask for a more effective response from the Democrats. Black people cannot afford the defeatism that seems to pervade Congress, personified in Senate Majority Leader Mansfield's statement that "the President is in the driver's seat, at least for now."

If anything, the past election was a mandate for liberals. On one hand, liberalism was asked to offer candidates and programs that working people could relate to. On the other, liberals were given a mandate, in the congressional elections, to resist the conservative economic policies of the Nixon administration. For if the voters wanted a turn to the Right, they would have given Nixon the majority in the Senate and House that he asked for.

Blacks have an important, quite personal stake in what's going on in Washington. Economic controls which permit outrageous food prices hurt poor and working people, and thus blacks, much more severely than they do the more affluent. That is why the decision of the House to permit the President to carry out the same inequitable controls program is so discouraging.

Liberals have also failed to come up with an alternative to revenue sharing, even though the principle on which revenue sharing is based--local autonomy--is philosophically the opposite of the traditional ideals of the Left. This is a program that is, once again, of particular concern to blacks, for it is less likely that the cities and states, which under revenue sharing will determine where funds are to be spent, will be as responsive to minority needs as was the federal government. Once again, there is no popular demand for the revenue sharing concept, but the President will likely succeed because of the confusion of the Democratic opposition.

Blacks will also be inordinately affected by the proposed budget cutbacks. The Emergency Employment Act, which the President is determined to curtail, provided decent paying jobs for 100,000 previously unemployed minority workers. Housing, education and day care programs were also important to black families and black children.

The most basic failing of the Democrats, however, is that they do not have a program. During the 1960s the Democratic Party did have a program, flawed in some respects and not comprehensive enough, but a program which benefited working people and around which working people could rally. The Republicans were then referred to as a "me-too" party because they would go along with the Democratic program. Today the Democrats find themselves struggling against the "me-too" image. If they are to avoid this, however, they must have a broad program, and a strategy to deal with the immediate agenda of salvaging as much as possible from the Nixon cutbacks. If Richard Nixon does not indeed represent a new majority, there is no reason why his program of conservatism and social hardness should be instituted by default.

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260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
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Rustin Column

SUPPORT THE ONEITA STRIKE

The strike against Oneita Knitting Mills of South Carolina deserves the strongest support of the black community.

The issues are basic and uncomplicated. A year-and-a-half ago, workers at the company's two plants chose the Textile Workers Union to represent them. Since then, Oneita has refused to participate in serious negotiations. The owners insist that they and only they can determine what's good for its workers.

What's good for the workers, according to the Oneita definition, is unconscionably low wages, intolerable working conditions, and the right to hire and fire on a whim. The right, in other words, to discriminate against its employees, the majority of whom are black women.

In one of the Oneita plants, the average hourly earnings is \$1.65. The base rate is about twenty cents higher in the second plant. The workers, in other words, must raise families on salaries well under \$4,000, an intolerable and inhumane wage for full-time work.

These women do not have a background of trade union militance, but they know what discrimination and poverty is. Williamsburg County, where they live and work, is one of the nation's most poverty-stricken areas. Low wages are coupled with deplorable housing: unpainted, frame shacks, pot-bellied stoves for heat and plastic sheets instead of window panes.

They live very much in the Old South of semi-slave wages and unyielding anti-unionism. Keeping the union out has always been an important cause for the South, as important as keeping black children out of all-white schools. To the legitimate demands for collective bargaining, the South has responded with a chorus of "Never.!" and it mattered little if the demands came from black or white workers.

"Never", however, is a term that black workers increasingly do not understand. In 1968, few can forget the Memphis sanitation workers, undaunted men who fought and won a struggle for basic human rights after the assassination of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Now we have these black women, beautiful in their commitment and militance, determined to win despite the odds.

The importance of this strike extends beyond the tattered environs of Williamsburg County. Thousands of southern workers--black and white--suffer the same poverty and exploitation as do the Oneita workers. The Textile Workers Union, under the leadership of its president, Sol Stetin, is engaged in a vigorous organizing effort throughout the South. A victory at Oneita would mean a reawakening of hope in the mills and factories.

There is little that people not directly involved in the strike can do to help the Oneita workers. But black people can, and should do something.

First, boycott Oneita products. Oneita manufacturessmen's and boy's underwear. They are not sold under the Oneita label, but under the brand name of the store in which they are sold. Most Oneita garments are sold in large chain stores: Kresge, Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward and J. C. Penney. To honor the boycott simply do not buy underwear from any of these four stores.

Second, march in informational picket lines that may be established in front of these stores in your community.

Third, write these department stores and tell them of your outrage that they are helping to subsidize what comes close to being slave labor, and of your support for the boycott. Tell them it is a disgrace that they are profiting from subhuman wage made goods.

The Oneita strike is one of the most important social struggles today. The phenomenon known as the New South has come about largely because of the readiness of black working people to free themselves of centuries-old discrimination. Discrimination, of course, take many forms, and what is going on in the mills of South Carolina is one of its most virulent forms. A victory for the Textile Workers Union and the black women it represents would mark an important chapter in the continued remaking of the South.

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A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

Immediately
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For further information, contact:

Rustin Column

REMEMBERING MEDGAR EVERS

Medgar Evers was a quiet, unassuming man who avoided the glare of publicity. Yet his character was unforgettable. Fearless without bravado, he was devoted to organizing blacks in a forbidding hate-impelled state that systematically snuffed out any potential of black leadership. When he died by an assassin's bullet ten years ago this June 12, Evers and a handful of home-grown activists had already set in motion a movement that was to have a transforming influence on the political landscape of the South and particularly, Mississippi.

Evers succeeded because his faith was firmly rooted in principle. Although having experienced from birth the ugliness of race hatred and having witnessed mindless, officially-sanctioned brutality, Evers pressed ahead, nourished by a belief in integration, civil rights, the ultimate importance of the vote, and the moral as well as the strategic necessity of non-violence.

As Mississippi Field Secretary for the NAACP, Evers was coordinating a voter registration drive when he was shot down in front of his home in Jackson. Voter registration campaigns had already cost the lives of at least three Mississippi Negroes--the Rev. George W. Lee, Lamar Smith and Herbert Lee--and would result in other deaths.

It is tragic that martyrdom was required to spur an embarrassed government into writing an end to the legal foundations of segregation. But the 1964 Omnibus Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and other landmark civil rights bills were not simply the consequences of national chagrin; they stand as a tribute to the common struggle of black people, to the ideals which motivated men like Medgar Evers.

In the early 1960s less than five per cent of black Mississippians were registered; today two out of three are registered. And instead of the scattered handful of a decade ago, nearly 150 blacks

If this progress suggests a fitting memorial to Medgar Evers, there are other, less encouraging developments that remind us of a continuing agenda which, unless completed, leaves Evers's vision unfulfilled.

Blacks still find the way to the polling place impeded, not, as some would have it, by apathy and alienation, but by baffling administrative procedures, uncooperative officials, and discriminatory laws. Capable, qualified blacks are kept from public office by gerrymandering. Those who in an earlier era said "Never!" now resort to more subtle tactics to thwart black political participation.

A disturbing aspect of all this is the attitude of the federal government. One of the Nixon Administration's first acts was a transparent effort to weaken the Voting Rights Act; when the Senate refused to accede, the Justice Department simply adopted a policy of looking the other way as southern states built, piece by piece, a mosaic of obstruction.

In the last decade, when Medgar Evers was organizing a strong NAACP in a state too fearful to support any Negro institutions, oppressed blacks had no other recourse save the boycott, sit-in, or other tactics of protest.

Now the picket line has been replaced by the ballot box, and the uncompleted agenda can only be resolved through political action. The Senate right now is considering a bill that would establish a simplified national voter registration system, putting an end to the outright bias that flourishes in the South while reforming the archaic procedures that inhibit voting in the non-South. This measure, introduced by Sen. Gale McGee, has won widespread support because, like so many issues initially raised by the civil rights movement, it is all-embracing, cutting across racial boundaries to enhance the freedom of all people. And, again like many of the original civil rights issues, it is opposed by a determined minority -- those who fear the increasing political power of black people and those who, while disclaiming prejudice, believe voting to be a privilege rather than a right.

Today, on the anniversary of Medgar Evers death, there is no need for sentimentality; more positive action would be appropriate. The adoption of the McGee bill, for example, would clearly demonstrate America's faith in the principle of equal political participation while it would also serve as a profound tribute to

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A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
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Rustin column

THE MEANING OF THE BRADLEY ELECTION

Of the many undeserved setbacks aspiring blacks have endured, few have been as painful and disillusioning as the one suffered by Thomas Bradley in 1969. The campaign of demagoguery and radical-baiting that deprived him of the mayoralty election in Los Angeles was a discouraging blow to the political hopes of blacks; Sam Yorty's ultimate victory was enough to convince those who wanted to believe it that the passions of racism and fear were the dominant impulses of American political life.

Thus Bradley's recent victory over Yorty is a profoundly satisfying personal vindication as well as a genuine reflection of an improved racial atmosphere. That Yorty resorted to the same racist tactics, and failed, is further evidence that politics is becoming less and less a conflict between black rage and white fear.

To conclude that what happened in Los Angeles represents the final triumph of reason over intolerance would be premature, just as in 1969 it was premature to assert that America was irredeemably prejudiced. There are, however, some lessons for the future.

Just because the campuses are no longer revolutionary battlegrounds and because the Black Panthers have checked in their guns doesn't mean that there is a "new urban mood." While this may partially explain the election, it is superficial and incomplete.

Perhaps the most important lesson is that permanent political success requires the unheroic work of organization. Black Americans are often compared to other immigrant groups who have somehow--so the myth goes--"made it" on their own. Time does not permit me to dwell on the shallowness of this line of reasoning as it is generally applied to blacks. But there are important parallels between how the Irish and Italians approached politics, when they were down and out, and how blacks look at politics today. These groups had the most to gain or lose from politics--the stakes were quite personal.

Because of this, they responded by organizing. They registered voters, and mobilized voters and made certain that if they did lose it was not because they failed to exercise their democratic freedoms to the fullest extent.

The recognition of the importance of organization was one of the reasons Thomas Bradley won this year. Four years ago he mounted no substantial voter registration effort; this year over 100,000 black voters were registered between January and May. This massive effort to maximize the black political voice may in fact have been the crucial element in the election since Bradley ultimately won by slightly less than 100,000 votes.

Bradley was also successful at piecing together the mosaic of a broad, majority political coalition that cut across racial lines. He was supported by nearly half the white electorate; in 1969 the white vote had gone decidedly for Yorty. Mexican-Americans, who, although sharing a common poverty, had often looked on blacks as rivals, voted for Bradley. They, too, had succumbed to Yorty's tactics four years earlier. Large segments of the white working class vote, which Yorty had hoped to monopolize, rejected the incumbent's hysteria.

There are those who insist that the coalition of minorities, labor and liberals that has dominated urban politics since the New Deal is a relic of the political past. Conservatives tell us that as blacks take on more leadership of urban political organizations, whites will increasingly look to the Right. Certainly President Nixon's anti-busing campaign--a major part of the attempt to move the Southern Strategy to the North--is rooted in this assumption. From the other extreme, some ill-advised liberals insist that white workers are too prejudiced to join with blacks; they urge us to look elsewhere for allies.

I do not think that the election of Thomas Bradley will automatically signal the end of racial competition and political division. But it does suggest that polarization is decreasing. Moreover, it is a clear rebuff to those whose political strategies are rooted in the hope of perpetual strife between the races.

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A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

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Rustin column

THE IMPLICATIONS OF WATERGATE

Black Americans view the expanding Watergate scandal with a certain amount of irony. Like most Americans, they are thoroughly disillusioned by the deceit of the Nixon Administration and find everything surrounding the Watergate incident totally reprehensible.

But blacks do not find it surprising that this administration would resort to bugging, spying and fabrication--and then lie to the American people about it. They do not feel--like Senator Goldwater--that the trust placed in Mr. Nixon has been betrayed. Nor would blacks agree with those liberals who proclaim that the fault is not so much with Mr. Nixon as it is with an all-too-powerful office of the Presidency.

The truth is that blacks have heard a stream of lies and misrepresentations during the four-and-a-half years that this administration has been in office. While the President was assuring the nation that all was well with the economy, the number of unemployed blacks rose from 600,000 to nearly one million. As the President was boasting of having spent more money for human needs than ever spent before, the number of blacks living in poverty increased for the first time in a dozen years. The President has preached of the "work ethic" in one breath and sought the curtailment of job programs in the next; distorted the busing issue and unilaterally declared that the urban crisis is over as an absurd justification for the dismantlement of essential housing programs.

Thus it should amaze no one that blacks do not feel that their trust was betrayed; they had no reason to trust the President in the first place.

Blacks also find it ironic that many people--particularly the President's supporters--say that the blame rests with Nixon's having isolated himself from the country. For the President has gone beyond the point of merely isolating himself from blacks; he sees minorities as faceless entities to be manipulated and set apart from the rest of society for political gain.

Blacks do have a special and personal concern, however, with the grand design of the President's political staff to sabotage the election campaigns of his opponents. It is not mere coincidence that the Democrats who were the victims of this strategy were those candidates with broad support among minority groups.

For when public officials consider themselves above the law--when fraud and coercion are introduced into politics--it is always the most powerless who suffer. The poor have certainly never benefited from the favors the administration has granted ITT, the milk industry and other corporate interests.

Thus we have a profound stake in whatever good comes out of Watergate. We should be pressing for a broad reform of campaign spending laws, so that never again will the forces of privilege exert the seemingly limitless influence as they did in 1972.

We must also fully recognize the relationship between how the administration deals with minorities, the poor, and working people when it determines social priorities, and how it deals with common ordinary people in the political arena. For if the administration lacks a basic faith in the people's ability to make a democratic choice free from manipulation it can scarcely be expected to formulate social policy with any commitment to the democratic needs of the majority.

And because our needs are so deep and immediate, we should view Watergate as a means of gaining momentum over the course of social policy, rather than worrying about which former Nixon official is pointing a finger at his colleagues.

Rather than wallowing in the details of the scandal, or engaging in excessive moralizing, or initiating premature efforts at impeachment, we should be mobilizing all progressive forces against the budget cuts and domestic retrenchment the President so confidently proposed just a few months ago. What I am suggesting is not just exploiting the weakness of the President; it is rather that we should begin to take the initiative from an administration that can no more be believed about inflation, unemployment, busing and welfare than it can be believed about its conduct in the political arena.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

Immediately
June 28, 1973

For further information, contact:

Rustin column

About CORE

The Congress of Racial Equality was once part of the vanguard of the civil rights movement. It was founded in 1942 on the principles of integration, non-violence and democracy and quickly established itself as one of the leading activist organizations engaged in Negro struggle.

CORE was always considered a "militant" group; to utter its name was to provoke instantaneous anger in southern white bigots. Where black people were marching in protest, CORE could be found; where progressive forces were challenging the basic institutions of discrimination, CORE was in the front ranks. It acquired its notoriety largely because its youthful activists pioneered the tactics of direct, non-violent action as a means of protesting unremitting discrimination. CORE members were among the first to engage in the lunch counter sit-ins, freedom rides, and picket lines that brought the civil rights movement some of its most important victories and which had a great deal to do with arousing national indignation over the oppressive conditions of black Americans.

Since 1968, however, CORE has abandoned two of its original values: it no longer believes in integration and it excludes whites as members.

Those who were once a part of CORE--I served as its first field secretary-- see an irony and a great deal of the tragic in the contrasts between what was once a powerful Congress of Racial Equality and the futility of today's vehicle of separatism.

Whereas CORE once inspired fear and hatred among the racist south, now its National Director, Roy Innis, confers with arch-segregationists, like former Georgia Governor Lester Maddox, to formulate schemes to resegregate southern schools.

Where it once mobilized massive campaigns against institutional bias, today CORE promotes narrow, limited schemes of black capitalism.

And where CORE once employed protest tactics to transform a racially divided society, today it uses the courts in an effort to reintroduce those divisions.

Recently, CORE filed a friend of the court brief opposing a plan to desegregate the school system in Richmond, Virginia. The plan, which was struck down by the Supreme Court, called for the merger of the Richmond city school district with two suburban districts.

In a press release issued following the Supreme Court's decision, CORE described the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, which had drawn up the merger formula, as "racist". The statement further accused the Fund of having "for years been trying to ram its bankrupt integrationist policies down the throats of black people."

The Legal Defense Fund does not need my support; its achievements outweigh anything I could say on its behalf. It should be pointed out, however, that were it not for the work of the Fund, CORE would not have the opportunity to concern itself with a misdirected struggle to secure black control of urban schools. Schools, along with most other basic institutions would meet at least some of the requirements of the separatist dogma; that is, they would be segregated. But blacks would not control anything worth controlling; southern society would be run by the same white oligarchy that held power during Jim Crow.

And while CORE asserts it does not condone racism, Roy Innis has recently praised as the most courageous black man of the century Uganda's chief of state, Idi Amin, who drove an entire ethnic group from his country and once remarked that, to paraphrase his words: "Hitler didn't go far enough" in his extermination of the Jews.

The black masses have never embraced separatism. They have demonstrated their support for integration by voting for political candidates that come from the integrationist tradition of the civil rights movement, once maintained by CORE. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of CORE is that where just a decade ago it represented an influential force for major change, it is today essentially irrelevant to what's going on in the black community.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
July 12, 1973

Rustin Column

THE WHITE HOUSE AND ITS ENEMIES

(Editor's Note: Bayard Rustin was included on the list of White House enemies made public during the Senate Watergate hearings. The following is Mr. Rustin's reaction.)

Since he took office in 1969 I have persistently criticized President Nixon because, among other things, his policies were disastrous for black people. These policies have doubled black unemployment, increased the number of blacks living in poverty, and accelerated the deterioration of our cities.

But the conduct of this Administration as revealed in the Watergate hearings raises other issues that are important to black Americans.

We find, for example, that those who were active in planning illegal acts, obstructing justice, destroying evidence, bugging, and wiretapping and break-ins are the very same people who have helped formulate the domestic programs of the Administration. John Ehrlichman, strongly implicated in the sordid affair, was also the President's chief domestic adviser. One wonders whether Mr. Ehrlichman helped devise the Administration's anti-busing strategy, or proposed the dismantling of the OEO, the retrenchment in housing programs or any of the other hard, callous policies the Administration attempted to implement.

One also wonders how far this Administration might have gone to subvert the democratic process. John Mitchell, once the nation's chief law enforcement official, has already said publicly that the re-election of Richard Nixon was more important than making a clean breast of criminal acts. How far would the Administration have gone if, instead of enjoying a commanding lead over its opponent, it faced a close race last fall?

What becomes evident is that the Administration abandoned the concept of democratic competition. Political opponents were looked on as enemies rather than as a loyal opposition.

Any means, legal or otherwise, was justified in their minds to ensure victory.

And while there has been no proof of President Nixon's direct involvement, his responsibility is clear.

Throughout his political career Richard Nixon has employed the tactics which have set the pattern for Watergate. He used the Communist issue against Jerry Voorhis in his first congressional campaign despite the fact that Voorhis was anti-Communist. The same tactics were used against Helen Gahagan Douglas, in Nixon's Senate campaign.

Even had he nothing to do with Watergate, Nixon already set an example which his subordinates have tried, and apparently succeeded, in living up to.

Thus I do not believe that Watergate is merely an example of the same sort of tactic other Administrations have employed--as conservatives assert. Nor do I agree with those liberals who see Watergate as the result of an all-too powerful office of the President.

Some have characterized the mentality of this Administration as paranoid. I disagree. Paranoia implies unreason, and I think that those who formulated plans for surveillance, harassment of Democratic politicians, and income tax audits of opponents knew precisely what they were doing, however inept they may have been in carrying out their plans.

This was, rather, an Administration whose mentality bordered on the totalitarian. This is a strong term; I do not apply it loosely. In the Soviet Union dissenters are not tolerated; they are consigned to mental institutions or imprisoned. The Nixon Administration, like the Soviets, did not tolerate dissent, or even legitimate political opposition. They used tax audits, spying, harassment and character assassination. And when discovered, they do not acknowledge the undemocratic nature of their acts, but insist that it was all "part of the game" or justify it on the grounds that "everyone else was doing it."

Let me add that I do not believe that this nation is faced with incipient fascism. The Senate hearings, the indictments, the continuing investigations are all proof of our strength. And despite the Republican efforts to manipulate last year's election, I believe it was decided on how the majority of Americans saw the issues.

When public officials take the law into their own hands, it is black people and working people who suffer. And certainly those not blessed by wealth or privilege have suffered under this Administration. The list which John Dean supplied the Ervin committee symbolically demonstrated how the Administration looks on the ordinary working people who comprise the majority.

The "enemies" include a distinguished list of those who have spent lifetimes working for racial equality or who have devoted themselves to the causes of working people. Thus I certainly do not consider my inclusion on such a list as a disgrace. On the contrary, I feel honored to stand with labor leaders like Lane Kirkland and Al Barkan, or with Patricia Harris and Frederick O'Neal, both of whom have made immeasurable contributions to the civil rights movement.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
July 26, 1973

Rustin column

BLACK PROGRESS OR REGRESS?

The controversy over how little or how much progress blacks have made has been obscured by absurdities.

President Nixon, for example, has announced the resolution of the urban crisis and presumably the racial crisis as well. This is, of course, ridiculous, and demonstrates that the President's efforts to cover up his domestic failures are equally as feeble as his Administration's attempts to conceal its complicity in the Watergate scandals.

There are some liberals, however, who rival the President for inaccuracy by proclaiming that the civil rights laws and social programs of the 1960s were meaningless, and that blacks are as bad or worse off today as ever.

Reality lies somewhere between the President's assurances that all is well and the pessimism and negativism of liberals. The social, economic and political progress of blacks during the 1960's was substantial and incontestable; furthermore much of that progress has persisted in the face of Nixon's abysmal, incoherent policies.

A recent study by Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, published in Commentary magazine, documents many of these gains. This article has provoked considerable criticism from black leaders largely because of the authors' assertion that the rate of progress has been sufficient to elevate the majority of blacks into the middle class.

The argument over whether most blacks have entered the middle class is largely irrelevant, although I feel it would be more accurate to say that most blacks are now part of what we generally consider the working class. I also feel Scammon and Wattenberg neglected two important points: the revolution of aspirations in the black community and the fact that for those blacks who were bypassed by the progress so many others enjoyed, poverty and the cruelty of ghetto life have become both materially and psychologically more intolerable.

Nevertheless I consider the Scammon-Wattenberg article of considerable importance, particularly as it points out the importance of acknowledging the racial advancements of the '60s and understanding how this progress came about. Their point is simple, and has incalculable implications for the civil rights movement. They believe that by insisting that the policies of liberalism have failed -- /that the housing programs, education programs, manpower efforts and expansionary economic policies have been unable to help those they were intended to help-- liberals risk total public repudiation. To quote the authors, it is as if liberals were saying: "We have failed; let us continue."

A recent census report reinforces the conclusion of Scammon and Wattenberg that black progress is largely the result of liberal programs. Taken together, the Scammon-Wattenberg article and census studies reveal a pattern of steady advancement during the period between 1961 and 1969--when Presidents Kennedy and Johnson were in office--and social stagnation in the years since the election of Richard Nixon.

Between 1959 and 1969 there was a substantial decrease in the racial earnings gap. Where black median income was 51 per cent of white income at the beginning of this decade, it stood at 61 per cent by the decade's conclusion. Since 1969, however, the earnings gap has actually increased to the point where the median black family income is only 59 per cent of that of whites.

In 1962 12 million blacks, 56 per cent of all Negroes, lived below the federal poverty level; by 1969 the abolition of Jim Crow, expanding social programs, and economic policies that created thousands of jobs reduced the number of black impoverished to 7.6 million or 31 per cent. Now, four years later, at least 100,000 more blacks live in poverty.

One might put forward numerous reasons for the blunting of black gains; the answer, however, follows directly from the job policies of the Nixon Administration. There is a historical correlation between black advancement and periods of high employment. The years after World War II was one such period; the 1960s was another. An unemployment figure of 12.4 per cent in 1961 was cut in half by 1969; today black joblessness hovers around 10 per cent, and the situation is more depressing for teenagers, veterans and ghetto-dwellers.

The programs of the Johnson Administration were no panacea; they did not go far enough or reach enough people to satisfy the justifiably accelerating aspirations of black Americans.

But if we are to press ahead with the struggle for a society that is equal and just, we must fully understand what enabled thousands to escape poverty. If it is true that the programs of the 1960s contained flaws, it is also true that they contributed to a reduction of black unemployment of 400,000 workers and helped lift

Liberals have made mistakes; their rhetoric often outstrips their record. But the liberal program, from Roosevelt on down to Johnson, has brought a massive change in the condition of working people--black and white. By reminding us of this, Scammon and Wattenberg have made an important contribution to the future of social struggle.

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A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

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For further information, contact: Rustin Column

WATERGATE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

All eyes are focused on the political scandals of the Nixon Administration. The testimony before the Senate Committee has revealed an Administration with little understanding of or regard for basic democratic principles; certainly the "ends justify the means" philosophy of high-ranking officials differs little from the thinking that prevails in totalitarian states.

But if the Administration has played fast and loose with the democratic process, it has also treated its citizens--particularly its 20 million black citizens, with contempt and disdain. And as the Senate investigation continues to probe into the motives and mentality of those around President Nixon, one is struck by how many of those most deeply involved in Watergate were also responsible for developing and implementing policies which have done incalculable harm to black people.

The same John Ehrlichman who justified political spying also played significant roles in devising every anti-black policy implemented by the Administration. For Ehrlichman, the issue was never one of social justice, or putting the government at the disposal of those who most desperately needed its services. The issue, as he once remarked to an HEW official, was simply that "the blacks aren't where our votes are."

One can only add that Ehrlichman's actions were consistent with his philosophy. As the President's chief domestic policy adviser, he advocated policies which broke the pattern of civil rights advancement, increased the numbers of the poor and unemployed, and divided the races.

It was Ehrlichman, for instance, who fought his own Department of Health, Education and Welfare when it tried to enforce school desegregation guidelines in the South.

When the Department of Housing and Urban Development devised a number of innovative housing programs, it was Ehrlichman who vetoed the proposals. He also helped coordinate the Administration's strategies of exploiting the school, busing controversy, the impoundment of funds appropriated for ^{housing and schools} and the wholesale cut-back of social programs.

Another official who has appeared before the committee, Robert Mardian, played an important role in the Administration's effort to weaken desegregation guidelines during his term as general counsel to HEW. He was an ardent spokesman for the "Southern Strategy", arguing constantly for a slowdown in the enforcement of desegregation orders and urging concessions to the South.

Attorney General John Mitchell, who has already been indicted, was a key figure in the Administration's efforts to compromise with discrimination. He placed the Justice Department on the side of southern segregationists who were attempting to slow the pace of school desegregation. He was at least partially responsible for Haynesworth and Carswell. And he tried, and nearly succeeded, in destroying the Voting Rights Act.

The Ehrlichmans, Mardians and Mitchells did not comprise the entire Administration. Some Cabinet members and lower-echelon officials displayed an understanding for the struggle of black people. Most of these officials, however, are gone, having either been fired or resigned in frustration.

Watergate is not an isolated incident. The political espionage, the betrayals of the democratic system--all are inextricably tied to domestic policies of scarcity and polarization. Those who were plotting campaigns of political subversion without any thought of its broader implications watched racial progress grind to a halt without remorse or compassion.

I do not believe that the central issue of the Watergate scandal is whether Nixon was aware of the break-in plans or whether he was involved in the cover-up. The responsibility is Nixon's for having set a pattern of political behavior he has adhered to from his first campaign for elective office.

The same holds true for domestic policies. It is significant that those connected with Watergate were the most zealous advocates of reaction and social hardness. Their attitudes, however, only mirrored the attitudes of their boss. President Nixon condoned and approved of what John Ehrlichman and John Mitchell were doing--he made them two of his closest advisers.

We must not forget that this Administration has from the start favored the most privileged, at the expense of those least able to help themselves. If history determines that the Nixon Presidency was infamous, it should record that the neglect of and disdain for the social and economic needs of poor and working people was as infamous as its scorn for democracy.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
August 23, 1973

Rustin Column

TEN YEARS AFTER THE MARCH

Ten years have come and gone since the March on Washington awakened America's moral consciousness to the cause of racial equality. A quarter of a million people participated in a demonstration which would be copied, but never duplicated, in later years. Other millions listened while Martin Luther King told of his dream, and found themselves no longer ambivalent about the Negro's right to be "free at last."

The March was a fulfillment of the social vision of A. Philip Randolph, a man capable, as no other civil rights leader was capable, of reconciling high idealism with pragmatic accomplishment. Twenty-two years earlier, as America lurched from depression to war-time preparation, Randolph proposed that Negroes march on Washington to demand that a nation which asked them to risk their lives guarantee their access to an expanding economy as well. The original march was ultimately called off, but not until President Roosevelt had issued the Executive Order establishing a Fair Employment Practices Commission for the defense industry, a move which effectively brought the Negro into industrial America.

By 1963 Randolph believed it was time to broaden the Negro agenda to include demands for basic social and economic rights. To the demand for freedom, he joined a specific program for economic justice. Thus the March ultimately came to be known as a march for "Jobs and Freedom."

Randolph saw the Negro as the vanguard of a movement to remake and democratize the nation's economic structure. "The sanctity of private property," he told those assembled at the Lincoln Memorial, "takes second place to the sanctity of the human personality. It falls to the Negro to

reassert this priority of values, because our ancestors were transformed from human personalities into private property. It falls on us to demand full employment and to put automation at the service of human needs, not at the service of profits."

Those who detract from the March contend that the soaring rhetoric and high hopes of the day have not been matched by racial progress. The intervening years, they say in retrospect, have left blacks little better off than in the days of Jim Crow that preceded the March.

Certainly the pace of progress has not been sufficient to satisfy a legitimately revolutionary rise in expectations. And it is important for blacks and their allies to press ahead with the struggle for economic and social equality, and not fall victim to disillusionment when progress is slow.

But we must also recognize the considerable progress blacks have made in the years since the March. The passage of three civil rights bills--the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and open housing--have destroyed the legal institutions of segregation and discrimination. Black voter registration in the South has increased by two million, and the shrill racism of Ross Barnett has been replaced by more moderate voices.

There is no more sitting in the back of the bus; the vast majority of public accommodations serve blacks and whites on an equal basis. Negroes are no longer automatically consigned to the worst jobs; they are increasingly visible as skilled tradesmen, professionals, factory operatives, and in government.

High school students are less likely to drop out; the black graduate is in fact as likely as his white classmate to enroll in college. The black worker is much more likely to belong to a union, and to enjoy the wages, benefits and security of union contracts.

The March by itself was not responsible for the passage of laws or the economic and social progress of the past decade. No single demonstration and no individual civil rights leader could have been.

But the March offered a national forum for the demands which were to shape the civil rights movement and the liberal agenda for the years ahead.

It was a program which addressed itself to all poor people, calling for a massive job training program, full employment, a decent minimum wage, and the extension of the Fair Labor Standards Act to embrace all workers.

Not all the demands of the March have been met, of course, particularly those addressed to basic economic change. There is still widespread poverty and unemployment, and we still have economic policies which permit raging inflation to eat away at the living conditions of poor and working people.

But the program enunciated at the March remains the only valid program to remake America, and the symbolic unity of blacks, labor and mainstream liberals remains the only viable political means to make this program work.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

Immediately
September 6, 1973

Rustin Column

THE AGENDA BEFORE US

The nation has recently focused its attention on the legacy of the 1963 March on Washington. With the passage of ten complex, difficult years many feel an understandable nostalgia for a time when a more nearly united civil rights movement was pushing ahead, scoring victories in the courts and in Congress, and reaching the best impulses of America's moral consciousness. Many recall the March as the ultimate expression of a cause that has expired; in the meantime they have moved to other, less formidable arenas which do not require the level of militant responsibility demanded by the struggle for racial equality.

These people fail to place the March in its proper context. While the March served to dramatize the demands of the civil rights movement, the exhortations of Martin Luther King, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins and others did not produce all the legislation that we asked. Nor did the presence of a quarter of a million people. Our program, which we insisted was basic to a just and humane social order, was enacted in the Congress, and not beneath the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial.

The program enunciated at the March has yet to be completed. While the issues may not be as precisely defined as they were ten years ago, they remain issues basic to an equal society. And their attainment, moreover, depends today on our political strength more so than at any previous time.

The continuity of the civil rights movement is in fact reflected in its growing political awareness. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, which played an important role in securing the adoption of the early, landmark civil rights bills, today functions as one of the most important advocates for liberal social legislation.

The Leadership Conference is comprised of nearly 140 organizations. These organizations represent the forces that came together at the March on Washington--there are labor groups, civil rights organizations speaking for a variety of minority groups, liberal organizations and organizations representing religious denominations.

The work of the Leadership Conference has attained even more importance since the election of Richard Nixon. The Conference's two chief lobbyists, Clarence Mitchell of the NAACP and Andrew Biemiller of the AFL-CIO have been instrumental in the struggle against anti-busing legislation, the efforts to destroy the Voting Rights Act, and the appointments of Haynesworth and Carswell.

And as Congress reconvenes they are engaged in a fight to determine the course of social legislation during the remainder of the Nixon Administration.

During the March on Washington the civil rights movement demanded "a national minimum wage bill that will give all Americans a decent standard of living." That demand is still valid, particularly with the President planning to veto a minimum wage bill that represents the most important piece of social legislation this year.

Another of the demands called for "a massive federal program to train and place all unemployed workers--Negro and white--in meaningful and dignified jobs at decent wages." Right now Congress is debating whether to continue the Emergency Employment Act. While this program falls far short of bringing about full employment, it does provide funds for 180,000 jobs, with a substantial portion going to blacks.

Congress will also consider legislation that would limit the President's authority to impound funds appropriated for social programs, a bill to fund programs for the Office of Economic Opportunity, housing and education legislation, and the McGee Bill, which would simplify voter registration procedures for federal elections.

Taken together, this legislation will have profound consequences on the shape of black economic progress in coming years. A bill which adds 60 cents to the hourly wages of the lowest paid workers would have a direct affect on the material well-being of millions of black workers. The creation of jobs

by the federal government would help reduce the persistent, scandalous rate of black unemployment.

There is nothing wrong with indulging in reflection. The March on Washington was a great event in itself, and it helped generate the most important social progress of our time. But it is more important to recognize that those who marched in 1963 are still struggling today to secure the ideal society asked by the March.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

Immediately
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For further information, contact:

Rustin column

THE MINIMUM WAGE VETO--AN OUTRAGE TO BLACKS

The President's recent veto of the minimum wage bill is an outrage to all black Americans and a tragic blow to the working poor.

It is particularly galling that the President acts against the minimum wage at a time when his own policies have made a shambles of the economy, with the poor as the main victims. Food prices alone have risen by 38% since 1968; the current minimum wage, \$1.60 an hour, forces a family of four to devote half its budget to food. For many families this means that macaroni replaces meat at dinner.

Nor is this a fact of life for just a handful of Americans, as is widely believed. There are nearly 15 million workers earning less than \$2 an hour. They are domestics, farm workers, garment workers, and even employees of government.

Ironically, the level of welfare payments in nearly half the states is higher than the federal minimum wage. Thus to increase the minimum wage to \$2.20 an hour--as is proposed--would have the effect of trimming welfare rolls, an objective sought by liberals and conservatives alike.

There is a lesson in all this for blacks. That lesson is that while the revelations of widespread scandal and deceit within the Nixon Administration may tarnish the President's image, they are not likely to influence the course of social policy.

The President is as determinedly conservative as he was before Watergate broke into the public. He may not be as zealous in pressing ahead with the dismantlement of social programs, but he is using the veto whenever possible to cut back on liberal initiatives.

I do not mean to minimize the importance of Watergate, for Watergate may lead to campaign reforms that would substantially democratize the electoral process. But we cannot depend on the nation's moral outrage over Watergate to create more jobs, raise the living standards of the poor, and bring justice to working people. Basic economic and social change will only come through political organization.

Our most immediate goal is to elect candidates committed to social change to Congress next year. The House of Representatives failed by 23 votes to override the minimum wage veto. Thus a minimum goal should be the election of 23 candidates who would have supported the minimum wage bill to replace those who opposed it.

Blacks can play a pivotal role here. Many of those who opposed the minimum wage are southerners, representing districts with sizeable numbers of black voters. If blacks register to vote, and then join with the labor movement and other progressive forces to support liberal candidates, the process of remaking southern politics could be immeasurably enhanced.

The vote on the minimum wage bill, while certainly no triumph, did suggest that the influence of the black voter has already been felt in the South. Many southern congressmen voted to override the President. A few years ago, when blacks were disenfranchised and politically quiescent, some of them probably would have supported the President. They can no longer do this with the assurance of the past because of the presence of black voters and because of the increasing political consciousness displayed by blacks.

Thus I do not see the recent series of presidential vetoes as cause for despair. There are clear opportunities for political gain--because of Watergate, because of the economy, because of the growing lack of confidence in the policies of the Nixon Administration.

The sentiment of the nation is not, as some say, opposed to the programs which blacks need. There is strong congressional support for the minimum wage, for health care measures, for housing and education legislation and other measures which would benefit blacks disproportionate to other segments of society. Our job is to make certain the nation understands that the moral failings of the Nixon Administration embrace poverty and economic injustice, as well as political scandal.

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A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

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(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

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For further information, contact:

Rustin column

THE ROLE OF THE BLACK UNIONISTS

(Editor's Note: This week's column is an excerpt from a speech delivered by Norman Hill, Associate Director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, at the Institute's Fourth Annual Conference. Hill has been political, civil rights and labor organizer during an extensive career devoted to the struggle for racial justice. In this speech he deals with the unique role of the black trade unionist, a subject of importance, not only to the labor movement, but to the black community as well. B.R.)

By Norman Hill

The emergence of Watergate as a major issue has obscured the fact that, during the most recent period, the political situation has not been encouraging for blacks and their allies. On the local level, of course, we have witnessed unprecedented advances as, each year, blacks make further inroads into the political system.

But on a national scale, we find that we are not defining the issues which determine the thrust of social policy. Those issues, rather, are being defined by the likes of Spiro Agnew and George Wallace.

Thus in the 1972 presidential election busing was a central issue, but not quality education. Both candidates spent plenty of time denying they favored employment quotas when the real issue, about which we heard almost nothing, was developing a program to ensure decent jobs for everyone. And while crime and violence affect minorities and poor people more severely than anyone else, once again our forces were not defining the issue--Agnew was.

It is small comfort that Agnew has suffered a fall from grace, and Wallace has apparently muted his rhetoric. For no matter how crippled the President may appear to be, he still retains the strength to veto minimum wage legislation, education bills, health care bills, and other essential measures.

The challenge to the black community is to take these issues and make them our issues, so that we can offer a broad program that appeals to the majority of Americans who are not affluent.

And if we are going to formulate a program that draws the support of all working people, and help build a movement that can take the initiative from the Nixons and Wallaces we must build on the organizing skills and positive

We must go beyond the point where the primary objective of black politics is simply getting more representation. There are now more blacks and more Latinos holding public office than at any other time -- and that is a great accomplishment. But we can no longer be content with representation as an end in itself. We must be concerned with whom that representation feels responsible to. Are our officials concerned with a few more patronage jobs, or are they committed to fighting for programs that will benefit the poor people and working people that comprise their constituency. The question of who we elect is much more basic than how many.

Where there is confusion, where there is a misunderstanding and when there are a few people who are trying to misguide black people, black unionists must stand up and speak out for what makes good sense. In other words, become the voice of militant responsibility in the community.

Finally, the black unionist must take a more active role within his own union so that he can effectively tie the civil rights and labor movements together. We believe that, because of the sacrifices of A. Philip Randolph and because of the example he set, the national trade union leadership recognizes the unique role of the black unionist as never before. But it can't stop there. Union activists can determine whether the political decisions of their unions are truly in the mutual interest of the labor movement and the minority community. But they can serve this role only by exercising their democratic rights, by raising their voices and helping to make decisions on these issues. There is no other way.

(The full text of Norman Hill's speech is included in a newsletter published by the A. Philip Randolph Institute. The newsletter also contains speeches by Congressman Andrew Young, Bayard Rustin, AFL-CIO President George Meany and other labor and civil rights officials. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the newsletter, or a list of Randolph Institute publications, should write: A. Philip Randolph Institute; 260 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10010.)

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

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Rustin column

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL

The renewal of the Middle East War, with its fearful human cost, has driven a knife wound deep into the soul of a world which longs for peace. Its reverberations, spreading like an exploding mortar shell, are felt around the globe by all who value justice and humanity. Most horrible is the waste of young lives--the best and bravest of the warring nations.

With the resumption of hostilities, there is a compelling impulse to blind oneself to the implications of this conflict. Many Americans have already succumbed to indifference or indecision: recent polls indicate that roughly one out of two either do not care about the outcome, or cannot summon the will to choose between the two sides.

Many blacks, confronted with profound injustice here at home, may wonder about the significance of a war which rages thousands of miles away. They ask how does the outcome of this distant conflict affect their weary, centuries-old struggle for freedom and equality.

But it is precisely because blacks have survived despite hundreds of years of oppression, and persist today in the face of the continuing destructiveness of prejudice, that they cannot now turn away from other, equally oppressed peoples.

To achieve full equality in America requires that all people, wherever they may be, be allowed to reach their full human potential. And this means, in the context of what is happening right now, that Israel must survive.

There is a common history of triumph in the face of oppression that binds black people to the Jews. We are joined by a legacy of suffering, and by the commonly shared belief in the Judeo-Christian doctrine of "one humanity, one God."

Both Jews and blacks respect and have a personal stake in the spread of democracy. Surrounded by the autocratic, despotic countries of the Middle East, Israel alone adheres to the democratic principles that are a precondition to freedom.

Israel, as a progressive and democratic nation, is the ultimate reflection of traditions which run throughout Jewish history and culture. Wherever Jews are, they stand firm for the extension of human rights for all people.

During the period following the end of Reconstruction, a time when America turned aside from the plight of the freedman, Jews gave invaluable assistance to the Negro struggle. When the South was doing its best to keep the black man illiterate, the Rosenwald family established a fund which salvaged the Negro college system. And in the early years of this century, when the black cause was not a popular cause, Jewish liberals, like Joel and Arthur Spingarn, helped establish the NAACP and were instrumental in ensuring its survival during its most difficult years.

At a later era, Jews provided critical financial support for Dr. Martin Luther King during his protest campaigns: two thirds of the money donated to a defense fund established when Dr. King was falsely accused of income tax evasion were contributed by Jews. And who can forget that two Jewish youths, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, died arm in arm with James Chaney in the backlands of Mississippi.

In addition to dramatizing the moral kinship between blacks and Jews, the Middle East crisis is important for what it implies about the lasting nature of prejudice.

Six million Jews were annihilated during World War II for no other reason than they were Jews. And yet this painful, tragic lesson has not been sufficient to convince mankind of the stupidity of racial and religious hatred. Today anti-Semitism persists in the hearts of many men and many countries, awaiting the opportunity to rise to the surface disguised as anti-Zionism.

Blacks well understand that where anti-Semitism exists, racial prejudice ultimately follows. Those who historically have felt hatred, contempt and superiority towards Jews, have looked on Negroes with hatred,

contempt and superiority. Thus it is little surprising that the most determined opponent of American aid to Israel is Sen. J.W. Fulbright, who during a lengthy political career has voted against, and spoken against, and filibustered against the cause of civil rights.

This is why our fates--the fate of Jews as embodied in the State of Israel, and the fate of black people as reflected in their struggle for equality and dignity--are inseparable. Blacks must support Israel in her hour of need. For we, who have undergone 350 years of oppression in America, cannot ignore the just cause of a people who have known oppression for 2,000 years, all across the world.

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE

260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

NEWS RELEASE

(212) 533-8000
Bayard Rustin
Executive Director

For Release:

For further information, contact:

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Bayard Rustin

NIXON SHOULD RESIGN

The most distressing thing about the governmental crisis which has engulfed America is that the President does not seem to recognize that a crisis in fact exists. Instead of facing the issues involved, he obscures them, projecting himself as the victim of a malicious press and questioning the motives of Special Prosecutor Cox. He persists in the policy of concealment and subterfuge that has marked the Administration's response ever since the time, many months ago, when Nixon supporters dismissed the Watergate break-in as a "caper." Neither the President's actions nor his words suggest an awareness that withholding potential evidence from a criminal prosecution represents a blatant disregard of basic democratic and constitutional principles.

The Constitution demands that the President "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." This is an absolute responsibility, not subject to individual whim. And yet the President has chosen to ignore this responsibility, submitting neither to its spirit or letter until forced to bend by the bipartisan outrage of the nation.

This is particularly unsettling for blacks, since our civil liberties depend above all else on the President's determination to enforce the law, regardless of his political philosophy. Although opposed to the 1954 Brown decision, President Eisenhower ordered federal troops into Little Rock when Governor Faubus defied court desegregation directives. Had he placed his natural impulse above the obligation to ensure that the law is carried out, Eisenhower would have set back the civil rights movement for years to come, while destroying the federal system of government.

By surrendering the tapes to Judge Sirica, the President has done little to allay the worst fears of Americans. There are still unanswered questions, and the President has made it abundantly clear that, short of another judicial confrontation, he will not provide the answers. These questions suggest broad implications about the functioning of democracy. The ITT case, for example, calls to question whether national policy was being formulated on the basis of law, or was determined by the promises of campaign contributions. Then there are the questions about the President's land transactions and other personal financial dealings; whether the President was taking advantage of high office for personal enrichment.

To prejudge these cases before the proper officials have examined all the facts would do an unconscionable injustice to the President and to our system of law. The dilemma facing Americans is that the President will not cooperate with a full and impartial investigation, thus thwarting the only means of removing the cloud of suspicion which hovers over his office. As the AFL-CIO said, in calling for the President's resignation: "When the President appears fearful of facing a Supreme Court composed in large measure of his own appointees, the public can scarcely resist the darkest speculations."

The crisis which the President has brought upon himself and the nation has multiplied and deepened our problems. Our domestic policy can be summed up in one word: "veto." Our foreign policy is suffering at a time it can least afford to suffer.

I do not contemplate the possibility of the President's resigning or his impeachment with any feeling of elation. Nor do I call for his removal from office because of political differences, profound as they may be.

The fact is, however, that the President no longer has the ability to govern effectively, nor the moral legitimacy to guide the course of the nation.

The only principled alternative left is for him to resign, and spare the country a protracted, agonizing period when we would be, I fear, without a leader. And if Nixon fails to resign, I feel it is incumbent on the Congress to initiate impeachment proceedings. Should