

Industry, GOP Back NAACP On Energy: Is Labor Next?

In the three weeks since the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) went public with its policy statement for nuclear energy development and economic expansion, the political climate in America has decisively changed.

Industry, industry-related newspapers, and leaders of

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the Republican Party have rallied to support the progrowth statement; Congress has raised an opposing voice to the energy conservation policy of Energy Secretary James Schlesinger and to the proposal to prevent the proliferation of nuclear technology; and, within the Administration itself, factional opposition is just beginning to surface against the domestic fascist policies of Schlesinger and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Patricia Harris.

These industry representatives and leading Republicans are two of the crucial elements of a national coalition that must quickly solidify if Schlesinger's Winter Energy Emergency Plan to dismantle U.S. industry is to be stopped. As one of the most authoritative figures in the civil rights movement told NSIPS on Jan. 31, the strategy must be to build a "big labor, big business, big minorities" coalition to return the country to the path of industrial progress.

Up to now, one vital element has been missing from the civil rights leader's formulation — the American trade-union movement. Now, in the changing political climate forced by the NAACP's continuing strong stand in the face of the hysteria unleashed by media in the U.S., individual trade-union leaders have begun to step forward. In Los Angeles, Frank Wood, Sr., president of the Teamsters Joint Council No. 2, has personally — but not as a union representative — endorsed the NAACP statement. In Canada, five labor officials have done the same.

According to radio reports on Feb. 2, the Michigan Coalition for Jobs and Energy, a coalition of labor and industry leaders, has publicly endorsed the NAACP's energy proposal.

The Press Tries Again

It is this potential for an alliance between the NAACP, organized labor, and industry which continues to be the principle concern of the racists at the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the Institute for Policy Studies' *Real Paper* and *Village Voice*. Their consistent method is to lie that the NAACP has sold out to "Big Oil" and that its energy resolution endorses deregulation of natural gas and oil prices, and thus higher prices.

But, this week, the paper most responsible for circulating that lie — the *Washington Post* — was caught in the act. Tom Turner, a member of the NAACP Executive Board and the head of the AFL-CIO District Council in Detroit, stated flatly, "the *Washington Post* slandered me" in its article Jan. 28. That article "quoted" Turner and other ALC-CIO leaders on the NAACP Executive Board saying they would "make sure" that the NAACP "revises its policy at the next board meeting." Turner, in fact, told *Washington Post* reporter Austin Scott that there was "no division at all" on the Board.

NBC-TV joined the media ranks this week to try to convince its viewers that there is a split in the NAACP. On Jan. 30, a full 10 minutes of its New York City local evening news was devoted to an interview with NAACP Executive Director Dr. Benjamin Hooks. NBC's resident black woman reporter pilloried Hooks: "You don't really agree with this energy program, do you, Ben? Were you in the room when the decision was reached? Why don't you act like the executive director and take control over this mess?"

In response, Hooks emphasized — as he has consistently in speeches over the past month — the necessity for an expanding economy and expanding industrial jobs to ensure a future for all Americans, black and white.

And the *New York Times* tried once again, printing a letter to the editor from former aide to Henry Kissinger Leonard Rodberg denouncing the NAACP. Rodberg, who now heads an IPS splitoff called the Public Relations Center, said that the NAACP's emphasis on energy- and capital-intensive economic development will "encourage the major cause of the unemployment that is endemic today among minorities..."

But, on Jan. 30, Margaret Bush Wilson, head of the NAACP Board of Directors, shot back in an interview with the *Times*. Reaffirming her support for a progrowth energy policy, Wilson informed the *Times* that the attacks on her for selling out to the oil industry "do not deserve the dignity of a reply...The issue is what kind of energy policy will lend itself to an assurance that we'll have a viable, expansive economy, one that is not restrictive, because under slow growth, blacks suffer more than anyone."

The NAACP has made it clear that they will not easily succumb to the slanders of the liberal press or denunciations from trade union agents like the head of the Coalition for Black Trade Unions. But will trade unionists who have supported policies of growth in the past follow George Meany and Lane Kirkland into slave-labor projects under Humphrey-Hawkins legislation while American industry shuts down? Or will they join with industrialists and GOP leaders in the NAACP's fight to save America as an industrialized world leader?