

Point of View

SENTINEL EDITORIAL

1980-THE YEAR OF STORM WARNINGS

By Vernon E. Jordan

1980 was a hard year, a year of recession, high unemployment, high inflation, tensions at home and abroad, and an election that installed outspoken conservatives into the White House and the Congress.

The long presidential campaign did not help. American presidential elections are so long and drawn-out the country was in a virtual state of paralysis for most of the year. Major decisions are deferred until after the elections, or distorted decisions are made in an effort to court voters.

There were plenty of events worth recalling now at year-end, but the true significance of 1980 will not be found in any of them.

As I look back at the year I am drawn to the inescapable conclusion that history will see it as a year of storm warnings, a year when long-

simmering problems started boiling to the surface, a year in which all of the latent forces of the past decade became fully visible.

This is particularly true of the state of race relations. It has been a long time since white



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hostility was so strong or black frustrations so deep.

The immediate, visible signs of this were written in the year's headlines. Sky-high black unemployment figures and the sharp decline in already low black living standards provide a tinder-box at-

mosphere in many cities.

In some, like Miami, Chattanooga, and others, that frustration was ignited by the spark of a criminal justice system widely perceived as dispensing unequal justice. Riots erupted when all-white juries freed policemen and others accused of killing blacks.

with blacks. Now the nation knows that tensions are running high and it also knows what it must do to prevent long hot summers of the past.

The economic pinch that deepened black frustration also helped long-latent white hostility to surface. Racism seems on the road to renewed legitimacy. People who

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Given the evidence in those cases, it is incredible that those juries acted the way they did, or at least incredible to anyone still retaining some shreds of belief in the racial neutrality of the criminal justice system.

Those riots were storm signals. A nation that complacently noted the absence of mass protest and of riots had concluded that all was well

were once ashamed of their feelings of prejudice now openly parade them

One of the storm warnings of 1980 was the rise of Klan violence. The Klan can no longer be considered a joke, not when some of its chapters attend guerrilla training camps and some of its members shoot blacks down in cold blood.

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TROUBLE AHEAD FOR BLACKS

By Julian Bond

The most severe blow of the 1980 election is not the exchange of Ronald Reagan's conservative certainties for Jimmy Carter's moderate muddling. Rather, it is the rise to power of some of the Senate's most reactionary members. This is especially frightening for blacks, for it places in control of the Senate a conservative cadre whose voting records can be called anti-black with little fear of contradiction.

Take, for example, Orrin Hatch of Utah, who will become chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. Hatch is described by "The Almanac of American Politics" as "fervent and almost feverish" in his conservatism. He has already vowed to abolish affirmative action for women and minorities.

Another beneficiary of

the Republican takeover of the Senate is South Carolina's Strom Thurmond, who will replace Edward Kennedy as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Thurmond was elected governor of the Palmetto State as a rabid segregationist in 1946. He was the Dixiecrat candidate for President in 1948, a successful Democratic write-in candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1954, and now a born-again Republican.

North Carolina's Jesse Helms will become chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, which has jurisdiction over food stamps and other nutrition programs. Helms is farthest right of the new committee chairmen and the least likely to cooperate with moderates seeking to strengthen social welfare programs.

The party shift in the

Senate gives added clout to a 100-year-old coalition of Republican and Southern Democrats that has already altered national priorities toward spending more for the nation's defense and less for the programs that make the nation worth defending. The new Republican senators will make the coalition almost unbeatable and threaten the further erosion of the civil rights gains won in the 1960s.

This conservative coalition dates back to the Compromise of 1877, when the Republican Senate and the Democratic House conspired to make Republican Rutherford Hayes the winner over Democrat Samuel Tilden in the disputed 1876 presidential election. In return for the presidency, the Republicans promised to withdraw federal troops from the occupied South, leaving

the newly freed slaves to the tender mercies of their former masters.

The conservative coalition was revived in the late 1950s in a vain attempt to block civil rights legislation. It has reappeared occasionally since then.

Last year, the coalition had its way in the Senate on almost every vote concerning energy policy, federal spending and racial minorities. Among its victories were increased military spending at the expense of social programs, protection of the tax-exempt status of segregated private schools and weakening of sanctions against the black-faced, white power regime in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

The Southern Democratic donkey and the Republican elephant jointly triumphed on 65 percent of all Senate votes. Their success rate may approach 100 percent in the Republican Senate.

GOLD CARD FOR SENIORS

As a community service to Clark County residents, 65 years of age or older, the Clark County School District maintains a Gold Card program. The card, issued by the District, entitles the holder and the guest of any age to free admission to sports events, plays and other activities sponsored by schools operated by the district.

Gold Card holders will receive a monthly newsletter with a listing of athletic schedules, school plays,

band concerts, school events, as well as general community information.

Cards are also good for an admission discount to the Jaycee State Fair held each August and Gold Cards are honored by reciprocal agreement, at Bishop Gorman High School athletic events.

Interested persons are encouraged to call the District's Information Office at 736-5304, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday to request a card.



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