

Point of View

Editorial

Confronting The Reality

Vernon Jordan, Jr., president of the National Urban League, on Sunday at the organization's annual meeting expressed concern about President Ronald Reagan's "jelly bean" program.

Some of the programs under the attack by the Reagan administration have worked well for black Americans. Others have not. We have no interest in preserving bureaucracies that do us no good. But we must be offered real alternatives and real solutions for the problems which concern us most. Rhetoric and emotion are not enough to get our loyalty.

Some leaders feel that Reagan has come to power in a backlash against bureaucracy, economic uncertainty, and a world perceived as out of control.

We cannot afford to be complacent about the gains we have made. If we are serious about playing a role in the future of America, we will have to put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into our effort. There is no other way.

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



A few years back, 'dear ole England' decided to go conservative again. She dreamed of days gone by as she elected her first woman Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. With a woman at the helm of England's ship of state, many felt that her new policies of conservatism would have smooth sailing and the waves of state ownership would only beat slightly against her bow.

Prime Minister Thatcher steered a course of getting government out of business; out of playing a pivotal role of meeting the needs of the English people. Similar utterances were heard in this country with the election of Ronald Reagan.

As a result of the Thatcher policies and those of her government, 'dear ole England' found herself confronted with riots and looting — a condition remindful of the sixties in this country. In fact, as I sat watching the news, the descriptions of the riots and looting were similar in its genesis: lack of jobs, high unemployment, excessive use of police for-

ce. It makes one wonder about these similarities. London and Liverpool could have been Los Angeles and New York. But these similarities are mainly due to the fact that England, like the United States, is an industrialized country and therefore experiences similar economic pressures — such as those which brought about the riots. The weld of common goal and purposes which has held industrialized countries such as England, the United States and France together is beginning to crack. One reason is the dollar versus the pound versus the franc. When industrialized countries trade, it is for a comparative advantage. If one country has a resource which is a critical need to another country, the country needing the resource pays more for it. This activity usually leads to a drain on the needy country's currency.

The people who do the trading are the corporate giants of these industrialized countries.

See NEAL, page 15

To Be Equal

THE REVIVAL OF STATES RIGHTS

By Vernon Jordan

While public attention is diverted to the heavy budget cuts in social programs, the next stage of the current counter-revolution in domestic policy is quietly proceeding.

That is the packaging of existing federal social programs into block grants which the states would administer with a minimum of federal supervision; in effect, turning over key social functions like health care and welfare to the states.

This new policy of shifting federal dollars, federal responsibilities, and federal powers to the fifty states amounts to a resurrection of the discredited concept of "states' rights."

Black people could teach the nation a bit about states' rights. We know states' rights meant separate drinking fountains, separate schools, separate and unequal lives.

We know that today, state administration of federal programs such as welfare, Medicaid, and others is inefficient and often discriminatory. We know



Vernon Jordan

that state and local administration is a large part of the reason why eligibility rules are ignored to the extent that nearly half of black welfare families are excluded from Medicaid.

Federal aid to education monies are often spent in violation of federal regulations by local school districts that use funds targeted for schools in poor

neighborhoods for other purposes. Many school districts have had to return such misspent federal funds after they've been caught.

Yet, even with this record of inefficiency and misallocation of funds, lawmakers now propose removing

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. is president of the National Urban League.

federal restrictions from federal tax dollars and turning money over to state and local governments to do what they have proven many times over they are incapable of doing — targeting money and programs for the benefit of the disadvantaged.

So while we must oppose budget cuts in programs that do work, we must prepare for the even tougher battle against block grants and the surrender of federal programs to the states.

Some states can be relied upon to institute and administer programs for the benefit of the disadvantaged.

But the historical record, and the record of the current urban block grant programs, clearly demonstrates that many would abuse the rights

of the poor.

Some state and local authorities make a persuasive argument for putting control of programs closer to the people they serve. But local authorities are far more vulnerable to local power structures and voting blocs that would end those programs.

Many states would treat the poor equitably. But rights embedded by law in federal entitlement programs would go by the boards. Twenty See STATES, page 5

PRODUCTIVITY AND WORKER

By Norman Hill

The United Steelworkers and the U.S. steel industry have launched a program which seeks to establish a cooperative climate in the workplace by stressing worker input, into the way a job is done. If successful, this limited experiment in worker co-determination will not only help reverse our steel industry's decline in world-wide competition, but will have enormous implications for the future of all American industry.

In the past, American labor has traditionally sought to maintain clear distinctions between labor and management.

And the plan being implemented by the Steelworkers will not eliminate such distinctions. It will, however, make effective use of rank and file know-how in utilizing plant

facilities and resources in a more effective and productive manner. In return, workers will gain some say in production-related matters at the workplace.

The Steelworker participation program, which was written into the union's 1980 contract, ultimately is directed at enhancing the quality and dignity of work for union mem-

(Norman Hill is Executive Director of the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, which administered and developed the Youth Employment Program.)

bers. The program's provisions call for teams consisting of 10 to 15 workers and supervisors to work jointly in dealing with such problems as health and safety, quality control, production lags and bottlenecks, rational and efficient use of equipment, and ab-

senteism. The program aims at fostering a climate in which workers — who after all know most about how to work comfortably and efficiently — can suggest new approaches designed to improve both industrial output and the environment in which they toil.

In Western Europe, where labor union's maintain distinct lines of division between themselves and management, such experiments in participation and co-determination is most developed in West Germany, where worker and union representatives sit on the boards of directors of a large number of companies. In this manner, workers and their unions have input into management decisions concerning such questions as investment, plan relocation, and workplace regulations.

In the U.S., labor-

management participation experiment is being tried in the auto, electronics, communications, and electrical equipment industries, as well as in steel. If it can succeed in boosting productivity in the way it has in other countries (Japan and West Germany, among them), it will provide a progressive and humane alternative to the conservative approach to productivity.

The Reagan administration and conservatives argue that it is government See WORKER, page 5



Published every Thursday by Galaxy Composition, Inc., 2450 Industrial Rd., Las Vegas, Nevada 89102. Betty Brown, Publisher.

Subscription Rate by Mail: Annually Only \$25.00. All mail subscriptions must be paid in advance. No refunds.

POSTMASTER Send address changes to Las Vegas Sentinel, 2450 Industrial Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102.