

No Human Rights

By A. Madison

On arriving in New York harbor, one is welcomed by Miss America, the Statue of Liberty, Saying, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." The inscription remains the same but, to many who enter our shores, it is only idle prattle with opposite implications.

Immigration Naturalization Service laws say only people fleeing communist governments are given refugee status in this country. They are considered fleeing from oppression.

Documented evidence showing that immigrants entering the United States from Haiti, who are attempting to escape oppression from their government, are given neither refugee status nor asylum. They are considered illegal aliens who come here for economic reasons. Haitians are immediately taken into custody and are imprisoned for long periods of time while awaiting either processing or deportation.

The U.S. Haitian camps have been described as unfit for human living. Haitians are crowded in unsanitary prisons. Many have become seriously ill and are denied proper medical attention. Even though individuals and religious groups have asked that imprisoned Haitians be turned over to them, the requests have been denied.

The Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights states that of the 1,700 Haitians who were detained in the United States and who applied for political asylum, only two were granted asylum. The committee states that the State Department harshly criticizes Russia and other Eastern European countries for considering it a crime to leave without a visa, yet there is no similar criticism of Haiti.

This report states that Haiti announced four human rights improvement steps: Creation of a human rights commission, passage of a law providing for municipal elections, a government invitation to exiles to return to Haiti and retrials in two politically important cases.

The Human Rights Commission has not reported a single instance of intervention in cases of individual rights abuse. If an election should take place, the question of candidacy arises and whether the two political parties will be allowed to function. In the retrial of the two political defendants, they were denied access to family or legal council, specific charges were launched against them the day before the trial and they were harassed and beaten while imprisoned.

While the U.S. Embassy confirms that the returnees have suffered no harassment, it has only reached a very few of the returnees. Rep. Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.) stated that of the 634 people returned to Haiti, contact has been made by the U.S. Embassy with only 183 — and these views.

To correct Immigration Naturalization Service, the House Subcommittee on Immigration has issued the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1983. Rep. Romano Mazzoli (D-Ky.) has introduced H.R. 1510. This bill makes it unlawful for an employer to knowingly hire or recruit illegal aliens.

It also calls for increased border and other legal enforcements; removes adjudication of applicants for asylum from federal courts to state and local courts; increases the number of aliens allowed, annually, in the United States from individual countries; improves the farm labor immigration laws; and considers permanent resident status for aliens who have resided in the United States since before January 1981.

Fauntroy, speaking for the Congressional Black Caucus, stated that H.R. 1510 failed to ask for increased funds so the Immigration Naturalization Service can more adequately perform its duties. He took issue with the bill for removing asylum applicants' cases from federal courts to local courts.

Fauntroy emphasized that the language of H.R. 1510 eliminates class action relief. Illegal agency acts would have to be overturned on a case-by-case basis. Indigent asylum seekers would be required to secure, individually, counsel for relief and asylum seekers intimidated and ignorant of their legal rights would be returned before exercising legal protection.

The Reagan administration continues its interdiction of the high seas policy of Haitians. This is a joint policy between Duvalier and this administration. Interdiction is not meted out to any other boat people trying to enter the United States.

Fauntroy recalls the sad inhumane picture of more than a dozen Haitian bodies that were washed upon the Florida shores, resulting from the capsizing and destruction of an old rickety boat, made by the peasants in an effort to escape the repressive Duvalier regime.

Later, representatives of the Black Caucus visited Haiti with the purpose of a firsthand investigation of conditions. They found that 80 percent of the wealth is controlled by a very few, which means that the majority suffers dire poverty and are not even allowed to register complaints about their inhumane treatment.

Thompson Elected President

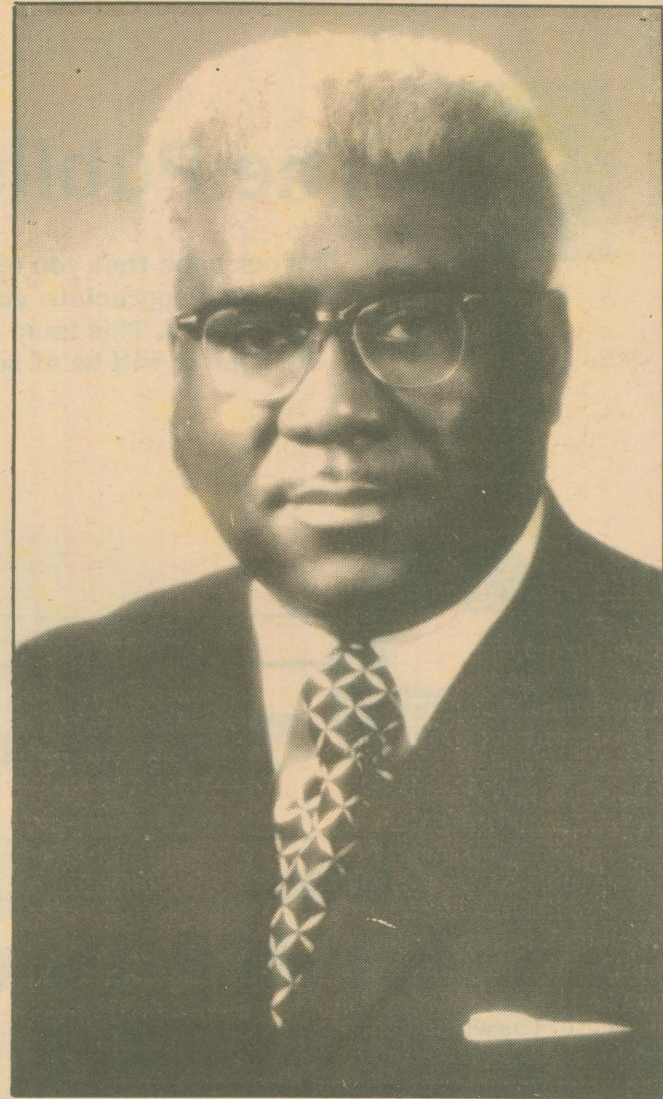
Vincent "Ted" Thompson of Sacramento, Calif., has been elected as the 80th president of the California Funeral Directors Association.

The California Funeral Directors Association was formed in 1903 to foster and perpetuate high ethical standards in the mortuary profession. Each member has pledged to be honest and fair in all dealings, to perform all services in a dignified and respectful manner, and to respect the confidence of every family member. Nearly 600 of the 800 licensed mortuaries in California belong to the association.

Thompson has owned and operated the Thompson Funeral Home in Sacramento with his wife, Beatrice, since June 1948. He graduated from the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science in 1946 and became a licensed funeral director and embalmer in California in 1947. Thompson received his prior education at Fordham University in New York where he majored in pharmacy.

Active in his community and in the state, Thompson attends the Oakpark United Methodist Church, serves as secretary on the Cameilia Memorial Lawn board of directors, is advisor to the Oakpark Neighborhood Council and is a member of the Oakpark Merchants Association. He served as a charter appointee by both the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento to the Human Relations Commission, serves as the California Funeral Directors Association's liaison to the State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers Committee on Apprenticeship Standards and Education and is past president of the Sacramento Area Funeral Directors Association.

Thompson, a licensed jazz saxophonist, is a life member of the Sacramento Musicians Union and plays the big band sound with Bob Motorola's orchestra. He has been involved for the past eight years with the Dixieland Jazz Jubilee and plays on His Honors Band Judge Arthur Eisinger.



Vincent "Ted" Thompson

Hooks Suspension Revoked

Laurie Olson

A majority of the members of the NAACP's board of directors voted Saturday, May 28, to revoke the suspension of Executive Director Benjamin Hooks and request the resignation of Board Chairperson Margaret Bush Wilson.

Wilson, on May 18, had announced the suspension of Hooks based on "reasons which relate to internal management and NAACP policy." She reinstated him, however, on Friday, May 27, one day prior to an emergency meeting called by other members of the board of directors as a result of the suspension.

Meeting in the civil rights organization's Brooklyn, N.Y., headquarters, 54 of the 64-member board of directors voted to revoke and declare null and void Hooks' suspension. Led by Vice Chairperson Kelly Alexander Sr., the members further moved to have Wilson's action "expunged from the records of the NAACP."

In addition, in a telegram authorized by 48 of the board members, Wilson, who was not present at the meeting, was asked to tender her resignation.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the members said that Wilson had neither conferred with the board prior to the suspension nor given adequate reason for the action, which was called "arbitrary, without precedent, contrary to the policies of the NAACP, without cause, unwarranted and an abuse of discretion."

After referring to Hooks as an official whose work is "of the highest caliber" and saying that his "integrity is above reproach," the board majority also passed resolutions designed to "limit and restrict

the chairperson in general control and supervision of employees and officers" of the NAACP.

Specifically, the board ordered that the executive director is the chief executive officer of the NAACP with full powers, duties and responsibilities. The board chairperson: Shall not give orders to staff members without the approval of the executive director; may not authorize any expenditure of funds without board approval except in emergency situations and in such situations the board must ratify the expenditure following the action; may not contract with anyone; may not interfere with the day to day operation of the NAACP; and may not act as a spokesperson for the NAACP.

Also adopted by the board majority was a resolution stripping Wilson of her role as keynote speaker at the 1983 National NAACP Convention to be held in New Orleans, La., in July. Board Vice Chairperson Alexander will assume that responsibility instead.

The directives resolved the reportedly long-standing power struggle between Wilson and Hooks over the management of the 74-year-old organization.

According to a spokesperson in the NAACP's press office, five additional board members who could not attend the emergency meeting concurred with their 54 colleagues on the resolutions.

Wilson, a St. Louis, Ill., attorney, has been chairperson of the NAACP since 1975.

Hooks, a Baptist minister from Memphis, Tenn., has served as the organization's executive director since 1977.

OICs of America Hold Annual Meet in Washington

"Meeting the Unemployment Challenges of the 1980s" will be the target when prominent national spokespersons, including representatives of government, industry, and civil rights, religious and community-based organizations assemble at the 19th annual Convocation of Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc., June 5-8 at the Washington, D.C., Hilton Hotel.

They will focus on the creation of a national employment policy to provide jobs for America's 11 million unemployed, training for the unskilled, re-training for those whose skills are obsolete and a massive grass roots attack on the high level of youth unemployment.

During three days of plenary and general sessions, symposia and workshops, the convocation participants will focus on the private sector and its role in creating a more productive America in light of shrinking fed-

eral resources and widespread budget cuts which adversely affect the disadvantaged persons the OIC has served for nearly 20 years.

Scheduled to receive awards for outstanding contributions on behalf of disadvantaged persons are: Samuel Pierce, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Senators Edward Kennedy and Robert Dole; Robert Smith, president of the Glenmede Trust; Carl Holman, president of the National Urban Coalition; and Marc Stepp, president of the United Auto Workers.

Major industry chief executives designated to receive special recognition at the closing night's Industry Awards Banquet include: Donald F. Craib, chairman and chief executive officer of Sears Roebuck-Allstate Insurance Group; Richard Ferris, chairman of the board of United Airlines; and Harold Sorgenti, president of ARCO Chemical Company.