

Publisher: BENJAMIN L. HOOKS

Editor: WARREN MARR, II

Assistant Editor: MAYBELLE WARD



*The Crisis*, founded in 1910,  
is the official organ of the  
National Association for the  
Advancement of Colored People.

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ISSN 0011-1422

**PUBLISHING INFORMATION**

Published monthly except that  
June/July and August/September  
are combined issues.

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Second-class postage paid at  
New York, N.Y., and at  
Additional Mailing Offices

ADDRESS: *The Crisis*  
1790 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10019

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:  
75¢ per copy; \$6.00 per year

# the CRISIS

Founded 1910

Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

## A RECORD OF THE DARKER RACES

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COVER: Untitled painting by Aaron Douglas (1899-1979).  
PHOTOS: 365-368, 370-371, George Frye; 392, Wide World.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in  
HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS and/or AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE,  
THE INDEX TO PERIODICAL ARTICLES BY AND ABOUT NEGROES,  
CURRENT INDEX TO JOURNALS IN EDUCATION  
and THE AMERICAN HUMANITIES INDEX.

Articles are also available on microfilm or microfiche from the  
Kraus Thomson Organization, Ltd., Bell & Howell  
and University Microfilms International.



*Executive Director Benjamin L. Hooks greeting 230 black leaders.*

# NAACP Sponsors Black Leadership Meeting

**Opening Statement by Benjamin L. Hooks, NAACP Executive Director, at Black Leadership Meeting on Implications of Ambassador Andrew Young's Resignation as U. S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, August 22, 1979, NAACP National Office, New York, New York.**

This meeting was called for the purpose of dealing with the fallout surrounding the circumstances of the resignation of Ambassador Andrew Young as Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

Over the past week, events have been moving so fast that it has been difficult to consider the whole issue in a comprehensive manner. Many of the issues which we have planned to discuss have been dealt with in other forums. But, there are still many questions unanswered by Mr. Young's resignation. These issues demand that we express our concerns and attempt to give some direction to the search for an ultimate resolution of this crisis.

We strongly believe that in the national interest, the U. S. Government has a responsibility to provide its citizens with the truth while taking every precaution against besmirching or destroying the credibility of so worthy a diplomat and statesman as Mr. Young.

In our meeting today we plan to do four things:

- Issue a statement holding up to light the double standards by which Mr. Young has been judged.

- Call upon this nation to live up to the ideals of decency and candor that Mr. Young established as ambassador.
- Call for continuing dialogue with the Jewish community in an effort to lessen the deep polarization which has been worsening between them and black Americans.
- Underscore the historical involvement of blacks in developing U. S. foreign policy.

We at the NAACP have already expressed our dismay at the resignation of Ambassador Young. We have made known our views that he has contributed immeasurably to elevating U. S. relations with Third World countries, and, with regard to the incidents leading to his resignation, we are convinced that he acted in the best interest of this nation.

It seems necessary and appropriate now that we comment further on the situation which precipitated the Young controversy.

Because of our background, heritage and tradition, there is a natural tendency for many black Americans, historically, to have tremendous sympathy with people who are deprived wherever they are.

This is true of the Jewish people, the Arab people, the Palestinian people, native Americans, Vietnam boat people, Haitian refugees, European peoples who have come to this country in search of a better life, as well as many others.

In the difficult problems of intercultural relations, we must take into consideration, forthrightly, the human component. There is no way that there can be sides where simple human-



*Mr. Hooks, Franklin H. Williams, president, Phelps Stokes Fund; Jesse Jackson, director of PUSH; Rev. Joseph Lowery, president, SCLC; M. Carl Holman, president, National Urban Coalition (partly hidden); Mayor Richard Hatcher, Gary, Ind.; and Ronald Brown, National Urban League.*

ity is concerned. Moreover, the key to a peaceful world is a resolution of the profound differences that separate and divide peoples for whatever reason.

In our view, this is what the enlightened foreign policy of the United States under this administration is all about. It equates the Israeli child, the Palestinian child, the Egyptian child, the Vietnamese child, the Nicaraguan child with our own children, particularly in this International Year of the Child.

We, therefore, applaud all efforts to have people talking, conferring, and understanding one another, and it ought to be the function of our government as a leader of the free world to bring people together for this purpose.

We believe that what Ambassador Young did was aimed at this objective. We further believe that this search for ways to be evenhanded and fairminded must be pursued, because by doing what is best for everybody, we do what is best for America.

What we hope to do here today is to achieve a broad consensus. Obviously we do not intend to circumscribe the ability of any group to pursue these objectives in its own way at its own pace.

This is not the time for arrogance or intransigence, but a time for a mutuality and tempered dialogue. We believe that all thoughtful Americans of all faiths and persuasions concur in these views.

**Statement Unanimously Adopted  
by Black Leadership Meeting,  
August 22, 1979, NAACP National  
Office, New York, New York.**

## *Freedom of Expression*

In support of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference we affirm the right of black citizens and organizations to engage in dialogue with individuals and groups whose actions have serious consequences for them. We applaud the initiative of those individuals and organizations that have come to the defense of Ambassador Andrew Young, our colleague and brother.

We respect and affirm the right of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and any other individual or organization to express their views on international and domestic issues.

We join with Ambassador Andrew Young in rejecting the notion that any foreign nation should dictate the foreign policies of the United States. We summarily reject the implication that anyone other than blacks themselves can determine their proper role in helping to shape and mold American foreign policies which directly affect their lives.

**Statement Unanimously Adopted  
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## *Blacks and U. S. Foreign Policy*

Given the history of racial discrimination in the United States, it should hardly be surprising that the forthright conduct and candor of Ambassador Andrew Young would be cause for so much consternation throughout our government and the nation. Readily acknowledged by friend and foe alike

are Mr. Young's historical contributions in advancing United States foreign policy in areas of the world that are crucial to this country's interests.

Ambassador Young was a spearhead in opening doors that were previously closed to the United States. He was immensely successful in a role in which so many others were colorless or dismal failures. As a black person in an establishment controlled by whites and which historically has functioned for the advancement of whites-only interests, he was color blind. He pursued his mission as an American representing all people, not as a black American. His universal approach to some of the most difficult problems that increasingly have hampered this nation's foreign policy was refreshing.

Ambassador Young conducted his office knowing fully well the interests that are at stake in the pursuit of peace around the world, especially, in this instance, in the Middle East. In every war since the founding of this nation, black citizens have borne arms and died for their country. Their blood was spilled from Bunker Hill to Vietnam. It is to be expected that should the United States become drawn into a war in the Middle East, black Americans will once more be called upon to sacrifice their lives.

Nevertheless, the involvement of blacks and their concern in foreign policy questions is repeatedly questioned. Black American citizens deplore the arrogance that is implicit in this attitude. As a result, the treatment that was accorded Mr. Young by the U. S. Government, especially by the State Department, was totally abhorrent. Black Americans strongly protest the callous, ruthless behavior of the United States State Department toward Mr. Young.

We deplore the history of racism and the bureaucratic recalcitrance that is so endemic to that agency. Black Americans protest the history of employment discrimination at the State Department and call upon the President and Secretary of

State to exert their full authority in pressing for the desegregation of that institution. Every effort must be made to place and advance blacks in positions of authority there.

We hold the State Department fully accountable to the American people for events surrounding Mr. Young's resignation and call upon President Carter and Cyrus Vance to make public the complete details surrounding the Ambassador's meeting with the P.L.O. and the circumstances pertaining to the public disclosure of that encounter.

We demand once more to know why the American Ambassador to Austria was given a mere reminder about U.S. policy prohibiting meetings with the P.L.O. while Mr. Young was harshly reprimanded. We call upon the Carter Administration to account for this gross double standard.

Clearly, the stakes for minorities in the conduct of American foreign policy continue to be high. In energy, the Middle East represents one of the primary areas of supply. As we have seen in recent years, any disruption or uncertainty of supply can have a disastrous impact upon the U. S. economy and that of its principal trading partners as well as throughout other areas of the world.

Africa, likewise, provides the United States with the bulk of many scarce minerals that industry needs. Black people furthermore, have historical and cultural roots in that continent. The moral aspects of the gross violations of human and political rights by the white minorities in southern Africa constitute a direct affront to black Americans. So, it is imperative that we who have so much to contribute to the further improvement of relations with countries on that continent continue to be even more involved in developing U. S. policy on Africa as well as the rest of the world.

Finally, as Americans, black people very strongly resent having the right of their involvement in the development and conduct of U. S. foreign policy questioned.

Neither Jews, Italians, Germans, Irish, Chinese, British,

*Atty. Percy E. Sutton, former Manhattan Borough President, with Georgia State Senator Julian Bond.*



*Vernon Jordan, president, National Urban League and Mr. Hooks.*





*Rev. Jackson, Rev. Lowery and Mayor Hatcher.*

French or whatever other ethnically or nationally identifiable group has any more right to be involved in the development and conduct of United States foreign policy than Americans of African descent. If there is any single area where the melting pot concept applies, it is with foreign affairs. For we either all pursue the common interests of this nation together or help it sink separately.

**Statement Unanimously Adopted  
by Black Leadership Meeting,  
August 22, 1979, NAACP National  
Office, New York, New York.**

## ***Andrew Young—We Are Proud Of You***

It is an accepted fact of American mentality that for any black person to attempt to speak for this country on international matters invites the wrath of those who have assigned unto themselves the role of world leaders. Naturally, this attitude is directly tied to the 400 years of Western colonialism which saw whites as the subjugators of the darker races.

Within the context of this master-servant relationship, Europeans extended their dominance thousands of miles away from their home bases to lands as distant as the Far East. They had near-total control of the principal sea lanes around the world as well as of much of the underdeveloped territories and countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia.

With powerful navies, their new technologies and the resultant need to find an abundant supply of cheap raw materials as well as markets for their expanding industries and commerce, they fashioned ways to control the minds and bodies of those over whom they had assumed control.

Given this history—and nostalgia—it should therefore come as no surprise that so many white Americans would regard with great alarm the initiatives of such a superb dip-

omat as is United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young, the first black to hold that post. The old colonial empires are dead. But the mentality, undergirded by racism, still lingers on in the minds of too many whites.

It follows, therefore, that the singular contributions of another great diplomat, who also was black, Ralph Bunche, have been all but written out of American history. He was, among other things, Undersecretary for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations shortly after World War II. It was he who fashioned the details for Middle East peace in 1949 which resulted in the creation and recognition of Israel as a nation. For these efforts, we are sure, the world is grateful although so little recognition is given to the man who fashioned the settlement for war-torn Palestine.

Against this background, it is somewhat ironic 30 years later that we find the Middle East question now bringing an end to the brilliant tenure of Andrew Young as the American Ambassador to the United Nations. Ambassador Young has been mercilessly assailed for having met with representatives of the P.L.O. He has been made a sacrificial lamb for circumstances beyond his control. Pointedly overlooked, however, is that he was exercising his best judgment, first in carrying out the wishes of his government in getting a postponement of an issue coming up before the Security Council that could have forced the United States into an embarrassing stance.

Second, as president of the Security Council, it is his duty to meet with all parties involved in questions scheduled to be considered by that body. And the P.L.O. was at the center of the question. Ambassador Young, in the manner in which he met with the P.L.O. on a procedural issue, demonstrated great maturity and skill. The overreaction by the national news media, some of the Jewish community, the Carter Administration and some congressional leaders was a regrettable consequence of the double standard by which this nation judges its black leaders.

*Franklin H. Williams, Rev. Jackson and Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy.*





Rev. Wyatt T. Walker (standing); William H. Oliver, vice president, NAACP National Board of Directors; Julian Bond; and Dr. Kenneth Clark.

Pointedly and tragically overlooked in the hysterical reaction to Ambassador Young's meeting with the P.L.O. is that the encounter did not change—neither was it intended to alter—U. S. policy regarding United States dealings with that group. Furthermore, Ambassador Young did succeed in his mission. He won an agreement on postponing the upcoming debate on Resolution 242 and the Palestinian homeland issue.

The question of black-Jewish relations being worsened by Ambassador Young's resignation, not surprisingly, has flared into the open even more heatedly than in the past. It must be emphasized that for blacks, the issue is not one of anti-Semitism or irrational hatred of Jews. Historically the object of bigotry, Jews easily empathized with the traditional victims of racial hatred in this country.

Blacks, however, were deeply affronted by the inherent arrogance in the attacks upon Ambassador Young by certain Jewish groups and the news media for his having dared to place the interests of the United States above all other considerations.

To his inestimable credit, Ambassador Young has warned about inciting black-Jewish tensions in his support. That certainly was appropriate. The Ambassador's gentlemanly response to the circumstances leading up to the premature curtailment of his United Nations tenure cannot mask the double standard by which he has been judged. He has been excoriated and pilloried by the nation's media, sundry people and organizations. Yet rare is such a giant of a man who has served his country with such outstanding success.

Because of this double standard, we find that the American Ambassador to Austria met with the P.L.O. in that country three times; yet he was only "reminded" of his government's policy. No public explanations, however, have been given about the full nature of Mr. Wolf's meetings.

We fear, however, that at this stage, not much more will be revealed about those encounters. It really matters little. For the whole history of the treatment that was meted out to

Ambassador Young demonstrates that it will be a long time before this double standard of judging black people will be brought to an end.

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## *Black/Jewish Relations*

Since the beginning of this century, some American Jews and Jewish organizations have openly joined with black Americans in the struggle against religious bigotry and racial hatred. They saw in the treatment that was accorded blacks a reflection of their own sufferings extending back over thousands of years. The interests of blacks and Jews in seeking an end to the destructive and irrational hatreds were mutual.

However, the key question before us as representatives of the black community in America is the more immediate problem of the extent to which the successful demand for the resignation of Ambassador Andrew Young has in fact further damaged an already unhappy relationship between the American Jewish organizational spokesmen and the rank and file and the leadership of American blacks.

Since it is clear that the resignation of Ambassador Young has seriously intensified tensions in black-Jewish relations, then any attempts to seek to relieve these tensions must be based upon contemporary realities. At this time attempts to deal with this problem by emotional rhetoric, past defenses and denials can only exacerbate the problem.

There is no question that individual Jews and Jewish organizations and their leaders have worked as part of a liberal coalition with blacks and organized labor to form a powerful political force for social and economic reform in the United States. It is also clear that Jewish organizations and leadership have done so when it is in their perceived interest to do so as we do. It is reasonable to believe that they will continue to work with blacks when they believe that it is in their interest to be allied with blacks and our aspirations.

However, it is a fact that within the past 10 years some organizations and intellectuals who were previously identified with the aspirations of black Americans for unqualified educational, political and economic equality with all other Americans abruptly became apologists for the racial status quo. They asserted that further attempts to remedy the present forms of discrimination were violative of the civil rights laws.

Powerful organizations within the Jewish community opposed the interest of the black community in the *DeFunis*, *Bakke* and *Weber* cases up to the United States Supreme Court.

Beyond that, some Jewish intellectuals gave credence and policy substance to such concepts as "reverse discrimination" and "quotas" as reasons for restricting further attempts



*Julian Bond, Kenneth Clark, Vernon Jordan and Benjamin Hooks.*

to continue to seek remedies for present discrimination against blacks. The term "quota" which traditionally meant the *exclusion* of Jews was now being used by many Jews to warn against attempts to *include* blacks in aspects of our society and economy from which we were previously excluded. To many blacks this seems to be a most perplexing Orwellian perversion of language.

Black America is also deeply concerned with the trade and military alliance that exists between Israel and the illegitimate and oppressive racist regimes in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. That relationship, in our view, imposes upon Jewish organizations in this country an obligation to insist that the State of Israel discontinue its support of those repressive and racist regimes.

These causes of black-Jewish tension could only give aid and comfort to those who previously were as anti-Semitic as they were anti-black. It is also possible that it completed the circle of black separatism and bitterness.

Realism demands that the burden of resolving the black-

Jewish tensions which have been brewing for years cannot be placed disproportionately on the backs of already overburdened blacks; Jews must show more sensitivity and be prepared for more consultation before taking positions contrary to the best interests of the black community.

Realism demands also that all discussions seeking to ameliorate or resolve fundamental differences between American blacks and Jews be conducted in terms of specific issues and problems rather than in terms of emotions, supplication, subtle or flagrant threats and coercion or arrogance.

Whenever the legitimate concerns of blacks are or are perceived to be in conflict with the interests and policies of Jewish organizations and leaders, then those differences must be made clear and if possible resolved. If those concerns cannot be resolved by rational discussions and in an atmosphere of mutual respect, then realism demands that blacks will differ with Jews even as Jews will differ with blacks. Each group will then use whatever power and influence it has to pursue its own goals. ■