

# Racism, violence, Vietnam are topics in Julian Bond address at Aquinas Monday

A somewhat weary and subdued Julian Bond addressed a full house at Aquinas College Monday night.

The twenty-eight year old Georgia state legislator, who is probably best known for his near nomination as candidate for Vice President in last year's Democratic Convention, spoke on the topic, "The New Politics". While dealing primarily with the new type of political activity rising in our country, Bond also devoted time to attacking the Vietnam war, the Republican administration, and violence in our country.

Bond began his lecture by reading excerpts from speeches given by three famous black men over one hundred years ago. He read these speeches because they were pertinent one hundred years ago and, unfortunately, are just as pertinent today.

An Independence Day speech made by Frederick Douglass, a noted black orator and New York newspaper publisher in the 1850's, was read first. Douglass castigated the emptiness and shallowness of Independence Day for the black man, and went on to say, "There is not a country more guilty of bloodshed anywhere in the world than the United States."

Henry McNeal Turner, a black politician and bishop of the Reconstruction era, was quoted next. Turner called for no retaliation against the white man, and made a desperate plea for the rights due black men on the basis of their part in building up our country. Turner concluded, "The black man cannot protect a country that doesn't defend him."

Bond concluded his series of readings with a quote from a speech given in 1858 by a black doctor and lawyer, Dr John S Rock. Rock praised the superior nature and beauty of the black race as an answer to a statement calling all black people cowards.

Effectively pointing out the lack of change in conditions for black people between the 1860's and 1960's, Bond next made a few comments regarding the Vietnam war. He asserted, "Even though last Wednesday was Moratorium day, there is no need to talk about the war in Vietnam, for every rational and free-thinking person knows it is an immoral, illegal and unjust war. Everyone knows it is not fought for the freedom of the Vietnamese people, but is a stifling of the impulse to control one's destiny. The United States does not respect this right for Vietnamese, Cubans, blacks, or college students." The war, he continued, warrants no further discussion, but the subject of violence does require much discussion and defining.

To understand violence in America, according to Bond, one must give a definition of violence. This definition is "Black children going to schools twelve years and getting only five years of education, thirty million poor people in the United States; an unbalanced percentage of black casualties in Vietnam; property being more important than people; socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor; J Edgar Hoover listening to a telephone conversation; 6,000 farmers getting \$25,000 per year for welfare; and violence, in the final

analysis, is Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew."

Bond next spoke generally of life in America for the black man today and pointed out that, although conditions in this country are on the whole better than in the past, things are getting comparatively worse. Infant mortality rates, unemployment rates, and median family incomes are all worsening for the blacks, as well as for all poor people, stated Bond.



Julian Bond

Not only are the black and the poor being affected, he claimed; now college students, traditionally considered privileged citizens, are being oppressed. Over twenty-five states have passed legislation to punish campus demonstrators and protestors, with some of the laws bordering on fascism. West Virginia, for example, passed a law which makes anyone present at a disturbance guilty if a policeman is injured. However, according to Bond, it is the black man that has suffered the most.

Mr Bond saw a distinct and frightening similarity between the condition of the civil rights struggle in our country now and the conditions of the post-Reconstruction era. "There is a feeling of gloom and despair now because the black man's white allies have tired of the struggle and dropped out," a mood similar to that of the period after Reconstruction. "Just as President Hayes made a deal following Reconstruction which established the Jim Crow era, Richard Nixon entered into an illicit and adulterous political relationship with the notorious land speculator from South Carolina. It was a relationship intended to convince the solid South that Nixon, and not the hillbilly Hitler from Alabama, was indeed the one." The offspring of this deal was things such as the trial persecution of Dr Spock; the firing of the Chicago Eight, who are faced with the unlikely charge of conspiring to incite the Chicago police to riot; and the administration's policy of easing off on school integration.

"Richard Nixon and the South should not be portrayed as the only villains, said Bond. "The real villains are the many people who call themselves 'decent and responsible,' who think poverty is a state of mind, who say all blacks are lazy. The villains are those so-called

'white liberals' who are lazy and do nothing."

The main point of Bond's speech was the philosophy of the "new politics" arising in America today. "The new politics," stated Bond, "are not the new politics of Eugene McCarthy and the others, but are the politics that began in Watts in 1964 and spread to Newark and Detroit. The new politics are the politics that began at Berkeley and spread to Columbia and Cornell." The philosophy of the new politics "is as old as the United States, as old as the Declaration of Independence, which states that whenever a government becomes destructive and oppressive it is the right of the people to alter and abolish it."

The "new politics" appeal to all of those people "who see the United States spending \$30 billion for Vietnam and one tenth as much for the blacks in this country, who see that Saigon has priority over Selma, and who see a country that puts more importance on man on the moon than on man on earth." The "new politics" are for those people whom the United States has failed. "This includes high school students who want more freedom, housewives dissatisfied with high food prices, farmers, tenants, and labor unions."

Following Bond's speech was a short period of questions from the audience.

After being asked whether blacks wanted integrated or segregated education today, Bond replied that blacks wanted only equality of education, something that has been denied for many years. Bond also asked why blacks were always the "integrators" and why whites are always the "integrated."

Several questions dealt with Bond's role in politics and his reactions to current American politics. Bond saw his role in politics as "to be a good public servant," and made no apologies for being a "politician, which is a decent and honorable profession." When asked to identify the persons in American politics that he respected most, Bond declined, but did name Senator George McGovern as "a good man" and identified Iowa Senator Harold Hughes as "an unusually decent man."

Bond finished the question period with a few more digs at the Nixon administration, stating that although last year he didn't feel that Nixon's victory would be much worse than a Humphrey victory, Nixon's domestic policies have been much more destructive than anything Humphrey would have done. With regard to Vice-President Agnew's statement that all of the Vietnam moratorium supporters were "impudent scabs," Bond replied simply, "On election day, someone held a poll on what Spiro Agnew was. Nine out of ten people answered that it was a skin disease."

On this note, Julian Bond closed a simple but elegant speech. The generally subdued nature of the Georgia legislator seems to indicate that he sees a long future for himself in American politics, just as there is a long future in the struggle of black Americans for their freedom.

John Ottenhoff