

The DOJ targets black officials

A growing mountain of evidence indicates that at least since 1977, members of the Justice Department's "permanent bureaucracy" have been behind a concerted effort to mount selective and vindictive prosecutions against black elected officials. This pattern has been most recently documented by Dr. Mary R. Sawyer in her 1987 book, *Harassment of Black Elected Officials: Ten Years Later*, a followup to her initial 1977 report, *The Dilemma of Black Politics: A Report on Harassment of Black Elected Officials*.

This matter has been before the House of Representatives since at least Jan. 27, 1988, when then-Congressman Mervyn Dymally placed before the House a shocking document. It was an affidavit sworn by an FBI agent, Hirsch Friedman, concerning an FBI policy named Operation *Frühmenschen* (German for "primitive man"). According to Friedman's testimony, "The purpose of this policy was the routine investigation without probable cause of prominent elected and appointed black officials in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States. It was explained to me that the basis for this *Frühmenschen* policy was the assumption by the FBI that black officials were intellectually and socially incapable of governing major governmental organizations and institutions."

Dymally insisted that the Judiciary Committees exercise their oversight responsibility by opening investigative hearings into the allegations. Although that demand has been reiterated repeatedly over the last seven years by various members of the Congressional Black Caucus, no such oversight hearings have ever occurred.

In testimony delivered at 1990 public hearings,

Dymally explained, "This is the way the harassment begins: Someone in the Justice Department calls his favorite newspaper and leaks a story. The reporter is assured that the information has come from a reliable source and prints an article citing allegations and charges. After the article is printed, the Justice Department initiates an investigation based upon the article, which more often than not, is based on its own leak."

Mary Sawyer's 1977 report named the following leaders as targets of such campaigns: New York Congressman Adam Clayton Powell; Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes; Gary, Indiana Mayor Richard Hatcher; California Lt. Governor Mervyn Dymally; Missouri Congressman William Clay; New York Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm; Detroit Mayor Coleman Young; Fayette, Mississippi Mayor Charles Evers; Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson; Michigan Congressman Charles Diggs; U.S. Sen. Edward Brooke; and Colorado Lt. Governor George Brown.

More recent cases include that of Congressman Harold Ford of Tennessee, who in 1987 was indicted on 19 counts of mail and bank fraud, stemming from loans he had received from the Butcher family to aid his family funeral home business. The Butchers' banking empire collapsed in 1983, triggering the largest banking collapse in Tennessee history. The 1987 indictments followed four years of personal contention with the U.S. Attorney's office in Memphis, Ford's political base. Two grand jury investigations during that period brought no charges. A first trial, in 1990, resulted in a hung jury, and it was not until April 1993 that Ford was acquitted of all charges.

Another prominent case is that of Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, who was imprisoned in 1990 following an FBI "sting" operation. Now back in the mayor's seat, he has been targeted by a new task force headed by two Assistant U.S. Attorneys, including a former top aide to former U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens, who ran the 1990 sting.—*Dr. Debra Hanania Freeman*

Davidian compound—a plan which Richard strongly supported. After Reno was finally persuaded to go ahead with the gassing plan, Richard was the DOJ official who handed to Reno the documentation from the FBI justifying the planned attack. For personal reasons, Keeney was scarcely involved during the final days of the crisis; the Justice Department report states: "AG Reno relied a great deal on DAAG Richard during the latter days of the crisis."

Michael Abbell, the cartel's contact

On June 5, federal prosecutors in Miami announced the indictment of six lawyers and 56 other individuals in connec-

tion with a multi-count indictment for racketeering, narcotics smuggling, obstruction of justice, and money laundering. Among the indicted attorneys were two former Assistant U.S. Attorneys and a former director of the Office of International Affairs at Justice Department headquarters, Michael Abbell. The prosecutors announced that three of the attorneys, including Abbell's law partner Francisco Laguna, had entered guilty pleas.

Abbell joined the Justice Department in 1965, shortly after receiving his law degree from Harvard. In 1979, he became the director of the newly created Office of International Affairs (OIA), where he handled, among other things,