

Van Jones: Black, Red, and Green

✖ The Van Jones incident boiled to the surface and exploded very suddenly. When I first heard the sound bites and the pundits, I doubted their veracity. I thought to myself, there is no way that this man is a self-confessed communist. I hoped that the brilliant Yale Law School graduate did not really have a racial “chip” on his shoulder. Unfortunately, as I did just a little research on Jones’ life and times, I quickly discovered I was wrong.

Now that he is gone, the average person may think that the controversy should be over. Not so. The ideological bias he brought to his job – not simply Jones’ past problems – are a part of my ongoing concerns. His official title was Special Adviser for Green Jobs at the Council on Environmental Quality. Jones’ unofficial, personal mission seemed to be to recast the “extreme green” movement as a “people’s revolution” instead of the elitist movement that it is. In his book, *The Green Collar Economy*, he admits that it is not yet “fashionable” to be concerned about social justice and equity in the radical green movement. Nonetheless, seeks to cast a vision that mixes Marxism with green consciousness. As he preaches a new green gospel, he distorts his movement’s elitist roots by attempting to shroud his agenda in civil rights imagery.

Here is a paragraph from Jones’ book:

“Living mainly in Hollywood, Silicon Valley, the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle and Boston, many of the architects of the green economy have photographs of Mohandas Ghandi on their walls. They consider themselves tolerant and open-minded people. Almost all of them, if asked, would confess to a deep respect for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the civil rights

movement.”

As I read these pages, I wanted to know who the architects of this movement were. I quickly realized that the book was designed to become the manifesto of Jones’ movement. Look at the list of the book’s endorsers: Al Gore, Gavin Newsome, Carl Pope, Thomas Friedman, Tavis Smiley, Senator Tom Daschle, Larry Brilliant, Arrianna Huffington and Nancy Pelosi. To top it all off, the forward of the book was written by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. This list of supporters is a veritable who’s who of powerful liberal activists.

Once one discovers that the book has a major Marxist agenda, it becomes fascinating to discover who is the target of the book. The Green Collar Economy paints the new green movement as full of virtue, while actually attacking large, Bible-believing churches. Specifically he stated, “Megachurch pastors with mega-white teeth assured their far-flung flocks that, with the right amount of prayer and right mental attitude, great abundance, tons of wealth and high profits were sure to be enjoyed by all ... So we ordinary people ... ran after every solo solution we could find. We worked longer hours. We worked extra jobs. We hocked our homes. We bought lottery tickets. We sought shelter under a house of credit cards.”

I have no idea what churches Jones observed or how he decided that megachurches contributed to the economic problems of the nation. One thing is sure – Jones’ work is socialistic in its leanings and seeks to rewrite history. The book ends with an interesting call to action. Jones asks the reader to lobby his/her mayor to sign a local government green job pledge.

As I started this article, I asked the question: Who helped this community organizer move from community activist to a New York Times best-selling author? Although I cannot specifically name Jones’ mentors and sponsors at this time, it’s obvious that Jones was groomed to be a new green spokesperson. His job

was to change his movement's elitist image, while promoting its new manifesto.

The truth is that radical environmental groups believe the country should produce less energy, driving prices up in order to force energy conservation. The movement will wind up constructing financial hurdles that will raise the cost of goods made in America. The Cap and Trade bill passed this summer creates such a hurdle. Cap and Trade is, at its root, a massive tax. In a manner of speaking it is a regressive tax, because the poor spend more proportionally on energy than others. Therefore the disposable income of the poor will decrease because of energy costs.

Our poorest citizens spend up to 50 percent of their limited income on energy, while the average American spends only 5-10 percent of their income. In comparison to their rich suburban counterparts, poor families are sometimes forced to make serious choices between food, medicine or fuel. As a result of this dilemma, 8 percent of households with incomes between \$33,500 and \$55,000 will have had their electricity shut off this year due to non-payment. Increasing the cost of energy will decrease energy consumption, while multiplying energy costs for the poor. These numbers hardly represent a people's revolution. They show a deep disregard to the needs of the poor both domestically and abroad.

What do the working poor really need? There are a few clues available. A recent national poll, which included 80 percent self-identified Democrats, produced fascinating results: 76 percent of African-Americans want Congress to make economic recovery instead of climate change its top priority. The same study says that 56 percent of the respondents believe that policy makers have failed to consider "economic and quality of life" concerns of the black community. Finally, over 70 percent of the respondents don't want to pay more for gasoline or electricity.

After Jones' true colors were revealed, his resignation was necessary. His brand of green activism would have been detrimental to the nation, long term. Let's insist, as voting citizens, that Jones' replacement focuses more on problem solving than rhetoric. Let's insist that he unifies the races and classes with a balanced green strategy.