IN MEMORIAM

May we let our light so shine that it will illuminate that which is good and beautiful, and magnify our Father which is in heaven. May we stand strong and firm against despair, falsehood, rudeness, hatred, pessimism and prejudice.—Carl Murphy, Editor-Publisher—1889-1967

A Dangerous Game

The McKeldin, Pollack-Reed faction, led by Third District Councilman Frank X. Gallagher, and which dominates the City Council, had little difficulty Monday night ramming through the Department of Public Works Reorganization Bill.

Net results of the political power play were an increase in the mayor's supply of political plums (five additional major appointments) and new patronage for councilmen responsible for railroading the ordinance through to passage.

When it came to the Public Accommodations Bill, sponsored by Fourth District Councilman Henry G. Parks Jr., the same coalition was equally adept at killing that measure.

The bill was defeated when Third District Councilman Larry S. Best "passed" after vowing his support.

Among commitments Mayor McKeldin made to push through the Reorganization Bill was a major city job for Mr. Best, either in the Sanitation Department or the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency.

Mr. Best is job hunting because the Bard Redistricting Plan has cut the number of Third District Councilmen from four to three. Since he was appointed and his colleagues elected, a gentleman's agreement dictated Mr. Best should bow out.

Although he had been assured of a city job by the mayor, the question arises as why did he vote against the Public Accommodations Bill, especially since it was Mr. McKeldin who extracted his pledge of support.

In Extensive debate and negotiations prior to introcuction of the bill, it was determined that three votes were needed for passage.

The mayor secured a promise of support from Mr. Best. Mr. Parks convinced Fifth Councilman Reuben Caplan, and Catholic leaders persuaded Third District Councilman Joseph Curran to come out in favor of the bill.

All had voted against the measure previously. Only Mr. Best reneged.

City Hall reports say he was threatened by members of his coalition that if he voted for the bill they would not confirm his appointment to the promised job.

Mayor McKeldin, who has earmarked many of his plums for other members of the coalition, made no visible effort to apply pressure for Mr. Best's confirmation.

Thus the Public Accommodations Bill was killed.

This invariably happens when vital issues become political footballs.

There is one difference here, however. They are playing with high explosives.

That's a dangerous game, even for politicians.

AFRO In Vietnam

Our Mike Davis is in Vietnam.

While there has been a steady flow of the pros and cons of what has become known as the "nasty war," as far as philosophical, military and moral ramifications are concerned, there hasn't been much dialogue as to how our fighting men view the conflict.

Mike's assignment then, is to seek out husbands, sons, sweethearts and other relatives of AFRO readers and report on their impressions, activities and outlook on the controversial war on the other side of the world.

In doing so he will be perpetuating an AFRO tradition and hopefully bring our readers a bit closer to their loved ones who have answered the call of duty in the defense of their nation's interests.

A competent and veteran newsman, Mike, we have no doubt, will soon be dispatching graphic accounts of the most vital ingredients of the confusing war in Vietnam — the "little" fighting men, women and civilian personnel.

Here at the AFRO we feel that is exactly as it should be.

An Obvious Decision

Within a few days Liquor License Commissioners David Shay, chairman; Elmer O. Harris and Joseph G. Finnerty Jr. must decide whether the Fireside Inn and Knotty Pine bars bill be allowed to be relocated at 2201 W. North Ave. and 4244 Reisterstown Rd., respectively.

In view of the overwhelming outpouring of angry opponents last week to public hearings on the proposed relocations, the commissioners' decisions should be obvious.

Both should be denied.

In the interest of justice to crimes of violence, disorder and unrest in bar-infested slum neighborhoods, liquor outlets should be decreased, instead of increased.

* * *

IN THE INTEREST of justice to hard-working citizens who have literally hocked their very lives in order to escape the ghetto and establish a semblance of decent homes for themselves and their families, they should be allowed to live in peace and quiet without interference from drunks and hoodlums.

Both are part and parcel of neighborhood bars.

Fact is the time has long passed when bar owners can justifiably drive daily into the slums, dispense the spirits until frustrated human beings are driven to the brinks of insanity by alcohol and retreat to the safety of suburbia.

We are of the firm opinion that when neighborhood bars must close in the interest of public improvement they should stay closed or the owners should take them to their own neighborhoods.

They are not needed — or wanted — in the already congested, rat-infested and crime-ridden inner city.

Mitchell's Letter

Clarence M. Mitchell Jr. states correctly in a letter on this page that the AFRO has consistently called for united political action by Senator Verda F. Welcome and his son, Clarence Mitchell III.

The AFRO further thought this unity of the top political leaders in the Fourth District important enough to assure both of support for any bipartisan slate the two agreed upon.

It was Senators Welcome and Mitchell who decided, without prompting from the AFRO, to participate in meetings of a larger group to select a district-wide slate — after community organizations declined to rubber-stamp the initial ticket the senators had proposed.

Senator Mitchell personally cast his organization's ballot when the 42 groups met to select a slate.

But when the democratically chosen slate failed to satisfy him, Senator Mitchell, in what seems standard practice for him, walked out on the ticket and filed his own. All four of the candidates he backed who were not members of the community-supported ticket were defeated.

In noting this the AFRO on page 4 — in a June 17 editorial, stated in clear and positive language: "All of them ran far behind his mother, Mrs. Mitchell, who proved the most popular vote getter in the race."

We agree it was a tribute to her many years of fine work and recognition of the important role the community is certain she will play at the convention. These were among the reasons the AFRO supported her.

The AFRO assures Mr. Mitchell that attention has been paid to his letter. It is understandable that a father would feel distressed at reading criticisms of a son.

However, the AFRO does not think it has been either snide or unfair in writing about Senator Mitchell.

It is the responsibility of the AFRO to report defeats as well as successes, to comment on what we see as bad judgment and errors as well as the wise actions taken; and in both cases this must involve friends as well as foes.

This the AFRO shall continue to do.

Visiting Baptists

Baltimore is honored to have with us this week the Fifth annual session of the Progressive National Baptist Convention and its president, Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, is one of the distinguished guests among us.

An estimated 5,000 delegates and other visitors are participating in the sessions. Headquarters for the convention is Cornerstone Baptist Church the Rev. I. Logan Kearse, minister.

Important business of the congress, courses in church work and educational discussions are being featured along with sermons and special reports.

Before the congress ends its sessions here on Sunday, we expect thousands of Baltimoreans will have benefitted in many ways.

We welcome the Baptist leaders and members from around the country and hope them every success in their convention here.

They have paid us and our Baptists here a great tribute by having selected our city as a meeting place.

We hope they will return soon.

Proud Papa

For any father the birth of a first son is a momentous occasion.

The proverbial bursting of the vest buttons and the generous distribution of cigars are normal side effects of such a glorious event.

The pride, therefore, which must have welled in the heart of George Lee McCurdy Sr. on June 6 must have been more than considerable.

It is difficult, perhaps, for the average father to comprehend the magnitude of the pride which obviously seized Mr. McCurdy.

His feat, if not — in the opinion of the experts — is phenominal, it is certainly highly unusual, at least for this geographical setting.

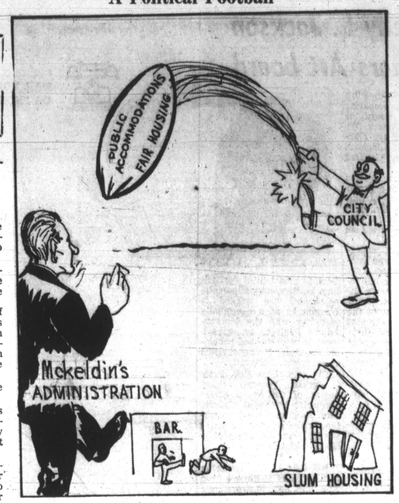
Mr. McCurdy is 74 and his wife, Mrs. Elsie McCurdy, is 42.

Mr. McCurdy is not only a new and proud papa, but he is still a competent truck driver, a profession he has faithfully pursued for a quarter of a century.

He may not be an unusual specimen as far as the experts are concerned, but to us, he is.

He and Mrs. McCurdy have our heartiest congratulations.

A Political Football



THE PEOPLE SPEAK:

Senator's Father Angered

Readers are invited to submit letters for publication. All letters must be signed but signatures will be omitted if requested. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length. Address them to "Our Readers Say," Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore

Dear AFRO:

As the father of Sen. Clarence Mitchell, I am greatly distressed by the continuing snide and unfair comments made by your writers.

I have frequently felt anger at some of the things written by Max Johnson, political writer, but your editorial in the June 17 edition is one of the most unfair of all the other comments that have given me concern.

It was the AFRO that consistently called for united Mitchell-Welcome political action.

The senators attempted to fake that kind of action in the Constitutional Convention election and your editorial rewards their efforts by implying that they sought rubber stamp approval.

On the other hand, you commend the organizations that joined in selecting a slate, but you fail to mention that they refused to let at least one important organization even cast a vote when candidates were selected.

You are also careful to point out that some of the Mitchell supported candidates ran far behind his mother."

Of course, that is a left handed way of soft pedaling the fact that his mother ran far ahead of all candidates in the Fourth district and got far more votes than most winning candidates throughout the city.

By any fair judgment of the news, the vote cast for Mrs. Mitchell was a tribute to her work in the city, state and nation. Yet your tabulation of it is buried on page 31.

You do not mention that Senator Mitchell refused to let the race of those seeking election to be a barrier to support.

His organization (of which I am proud to be a dues paying member) backed Henry Waskow, a very fine educator who happens to be white.

Mr. Waskow did not win but I am happy to say that I voted for him and I am thankful that my son and his associates stood up for the kind of fair play that most of us have been trying to build in this country for the greater part of our lives.

As you say in the editorial "voters (do) control (the) 4th." Your writers should know, but possibly will not admit, that Senator Mitchell and people like him are largely responsible for the growth of independent voter power and the destruction of boss control in the Fourth District.

I state unequivocally that when the Pollack machine was repudiated in the Fourth District there was real danger that another, although non-white, machine could have replaced it.

All of my life I have opposed machines of any shape or color in politics.

I state, again unequivocally, that Senator Mitchell's victories in his House and Senate races helped more than any other force to keep power in the hands of the people where it belongs.

I regret to say that in my opinion (which I can support with news-clippings and columns) there are some people on the AFRO staff who seem to have great difficulty in saying anything complimentary about Senator Mitchell, but they are quick to offer criticism.

The editorial illustrates the foregoing. You may not pay any attention to this letter, but I have gotten a great deal of satisfaction out of writing it.

Sincerely, but with anger
CLARENCE M. MITCHELL JR.

P.S. You can get some idea of how I feel when I tell you that I typed this letter myself at 12:45 a.m. on June 17 immediately after reading the editorial and without consultation with anyone.

Abramson Happy

Dear AFRO:

I was very happy to receive the endorsement of the AFRO-AMERICAN in the recent election. I consider this endorsement to have been a major factor in my election, and I want you to know that I am very grateful.

Your confidence in me will not have been misplaced, as I will continue to work hard to further the interests of the people in my district.

MURRAY ABRAMSON

Thanks To Voters

Dear AFRO:

I wish to thank all citizens who voted or worked in any way in my behalf to help elect me as one of the delegates to the Constitution Convention to represent the 4th District.

It is gratifying to know that the community solidarity — held together — with only one exception — throughout the screening and the campaign.

The 4th District citizens should feel proud of its accomplishment because it again helps to prove that in "unity there is strength."

That fact holds much promise for the future for the minority as well as the majority groups in Baltimore City.

I shall take the responsibility seriously and with the interest of each person at heart try to contribute in such a way that we will be able to advance individually and collectively.

(Mrs.) RUBYE H. GILL

Political Notebook

Prucha, Not Best, Key In Rights Bill Defeat

By MAX JOHNSON

Time is ripe to clarify the hassling that has developed surrounding the proposed public accommodations ordinance — which would outlaw racial discrimination in all city bars and taverns.

Much news media attention has been centered on the abstaining in the City Council voting Monday of the 3rd District's Larry S. Best — which let the measure fall in a 10-10 deadlock.

But — was the Best vote really the logical key one for passage at that time?

I don't think so.

The Best issue has clouded the picture — regardless of claims of a promised favorable vote.

More will come about this a bit later down.

* * *

LET'S LOOK at the nay vote that really should have been — by any reasonable thinking — a yes vote.

It came from the 2nd District's Clement J. Prucha.

Why Councilman Prucha chose to kill the public accommodations bill Monday evening on the Council floor is a paradoxical move.

For he did so in the face of circumstances that strongly demanded his favorable vote.

Here are some of them:

1. Councilman Prucha's 2nd District is now enlarged and colored citizens comprise 45 percent of its voters.

Reports out of that district are that he will seek reelection this fall.

Why, then, did he all but commit political suicide Monday by voting against the ordinance which would have extended just rights to his colored constituents?

Councilman Prucha can't be elected again without their votes — and in the face of his action Monday evening in that crucial balloting, their votes for him would be foolish.

2. Councilman Prucha's 2nd District embraces the Greenmount Ave. area where civil rights groups have recently centered attention on breaking racial barriers at some taverns.

Fortunately to date there have been nothing more serious than minor troubles.

High tension remains though — tension that could explode with any unsuspected spark by a rowdy opposition.

As a councilman then — Mr. Prucha's nay vote was not in the best interest of his own district.

It certainly was not in the best interest of the city.

Had he chosen to vote for the ordinance Monday — a grave threat would have been removed.

Violence could have erupted in Councilman Prucha's 2nd district along the Greenmount area after his Council vote Monday evening — and spread elsewhere about the city.

His was the logical vote at that time to wipe out racial discrimination in city bars and taverns.

THE CASE of Councilman Best abstaining in the voting presents a somewhat different picture.

His 3rd District has a bare minority of colored citizens and voters.

This district now has four councilmen — but, through redistricting adopted, will with the coming elections have three councilmen.

Councilman Best is an appointee who filled the vacancy created by the death of George Arthur.

As an appointee — he is the more vulnerable.

So — Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin set out to make a deal with him on behalf of passage of the public accommodations ordinance.

The reported bait was a key city job — possibly a spot in the Council's just authorized reorganization of the Department of Public Works which carries ten political plums.

Icing the cake was the promise of a favorable vote the 4th District's Councilman Henry G. Parks Jr., sponsor of the ordinance, claims he obtained from Mr. Best.

Apparently — the word got around in a lot of opposition quarters and pressure mounted around the 3rd District councilman.

The result Monday was he just didn't vote for or against the ordinance.

This, under logical reasoning, put the thing right back in Councilman Prucha's lap.

When the tie vote ended — he could easily have changed his nay vote and pushed the measure through by a 11-9 vote.

Actually as I see it — he had more concrete reasons to vote favorably than Councilman Best.

If the Prucha constituents vote him back in office — they deserve anything he does.

Pin-Point

An Analysis Of A Paralysis

By GEORGE W. COLLINS

While the issue is still in the air at this writing, it is safe to say that the question of public accommodations will be settled soon — one way or another.

It is reasonable to assume that either a maneuvering McKeldin administration and a less than brilliant City Council will decide to either continue the asinine practice of honoring human dignity on a percentage basis, or require all places of public accommodation to serve the public.

Were it not so tragic it would be comical that this issue has not been resolved in one of he nation's major cities in the latter half of the 20th century.

This tragic fact, however, is sufficiently treated elsewhere in this edition and additional comment here would be superfluous.

It is merely recalled now because there are several vital lessons to be learned from the debacle put on display Monday night in the City Council.

First and foremost — and I hope our segment of the community got the message — there is no substitute for power.

* * *

DEVASTATING, I thought, was the way selfish men wield naked political power.

After watching the way the ruling majority of our councilmen, which forms the second half of the executive - legistative coalition — promote its political interests, it is difficult to believe that power can be tempered with a sense of morality.

Colored Baltimoreans and their progressive counterparts in the white community therefore are whistling in the dark to think that "We Shall Overcome" because most of our current councilmen feel that they are morally bound to serve all the people.

The unescapable conclusion is obvious.

There must be a resounding shake-up in the council.

A combination of the registered voters in the colored community and other fair-minded voters is more than capable of effecting that shake-up.

The question is will they?

* * *

UNFORTUNATELY, WITH the primary election slightly more than two months away, close examination of the political picture in our community give cause for concern.

Source of this concern can best be described as a paralysis of multiple dimensions. There are several contributing factors responsible for this political immobility.

Among them are:

A tendency to confuse token political power with real political muscle, personality conflicts, gullibility and a false sense of individual importance.

A tragic tendency of a self-designated status of "leader," in spite of an abundance of evidence point to a lack of leadership ability is another weakness of major proportions.

There are many others.

* * *

IT WOULD be a grave sin of ommission not to point out here that these afflictions are evi present in other communities.

Unlike other communities, however, we do not have adequate representation in the councils.

While we represent more than 40 percent of the total population we only have one councilman—and I can count from one through two.

Numerically there are now two councilmen of color sitting in the chambers—Henry G. Parks Jr. and Walter T. Dixon.

* * *

HONESTY COMPELS a blunt confession at this point of discussion.

While Councilman Dixon is a gentle, kind, and considerate man, his usefulness in terms of advancing the need of his colored constituents in particular and Baltimoreans of color generally is negligible.

Mr. Dixon owes his first allegiance to the political faction to which he belongs. To his credit he is a faithful and obedient member.

That faction, it has been demonstrated time and again, is not sympathetic to colored voters achieving anything more than token political power.

Man has yet to devise a method wherein he can faithfully serve two factions in perpetual conflict. Mr. Dixon is not exception.

* * *

OUR HOPE then must be pinned on the shoulders of Mr. Parks who, without question, has been one of the few stalwart men in a council distinguished by its mediocrity.

The time is ripe for an expansion of the competent, and progressive image Mr. Parks has etched in the council.

A citywide sense of purpose welded by raw determination can send an enlightened delegation carrying real force to a redistricted council in November.

We have a golden opportunity to elect an unprecedented number of competent councilmen of color to work with forward-thinking representatives from other districts.

Realization of this goal will only be achieved if we recognize the multitude of forces to be reckoned with.

* * *

FOR INSTANCE, would-be candidates for the various "top spots" in city government will attempt to inflate individual egos by soliciting prominent men of color to "run on my ticket."

If the political mentality of Baltimore is examined it will become immediately obvious that that is exactly what is intended—run, not win.

The real purpose of this maneuver is to attract colored voters for the top candidate while the colored running mate is literally cut to ribbons in other districts.

* * *

I DEVELOPED a keen suspicion of this invitation because it is coming from many would-be "top" candidates who have never been, and are not now, and will never be sympathetic to our needs.

Another stumbling block will be visible by Wednesday.

When the final would-be candidate has signed his name at the Supervisors of Elections, it's dollars to donuts that there will be more office seekers from districts where our political potential is the greatest than common sense allows.

Most of them, if the past is any indication, will have as much chance of winning as they have of displacing the No. 1 man in Moscow.

The net result of this madness will be the dissipation of our voting strength.

* * *

THEN THERE is factionalism to be reckoned with.

Factionalism as such is not a dirty word. But when factionalism—as it inevitably does—is given priority over unity it becomes obscene. It is high time we grow up.

AFRO Credo

A newspaper succeeds because its management believes in itself, in God and in the present generation. It must always ask itself—

Whether it has kept the faith with the common people;

Whether it has no other goal except to see that their liberties are preserved and their future assured;

Whether it is fighting to get rid of slums to provide jobs for everybody;

Whether it stays out of politics except to expose corruption and condemn injustices and prejudice, or compromise.

JOHN H. MURPHY SR. — 1920

—Parks hit for blast

(Continued from Page 32)

gical in view of Mayor McKeldin's consistent support of civil rights activities, even when it was a most unpopular issue.

"The real blame lies with the all - Democratic, highly-factional City Council. Apparently it is the Democrats, not the Republican mayor, who seeks to hinder the appropriate advancement of civil rights legislation."

* * *

TAKING A SWIPE at the leading candidate for mayor on the Democratic side, Mrs. White charged, "Politically, the control of the City Council votes lies with the president of the City Council.

"It is obviously Mr. D'Alesandro who is ineffective with party colleagues."

* * *

TURNING AGAIN to Councilman Parks, Mrs. White said, "It would be well for Mr. Parks to give second thoughts to emotional statements made based on frustrations with the Democrats who turned their backs on colored citizens again."

Mrs. White also questioned whether Councilman Parks and Mr. D'Alesandro made a costly political mistake in placing trust in Third District Councilman Larry Best.

She recalled that it was Mr. Best who authored the anti-colored districting effort aimed at cutting the power of colored voters in Baltimore.

She said it would have been both wiser and easier to put pressure on Second District Councilman Prucha.

Mrs. White agreed with Councilman Parks that some changes need to be made in the City Council makeup and suggested that election of some Republicans and the development of a real two-party system is needed.

Mr. HERBERT GARDNER & FAMILY

Wish to thank the Baltimore police department, Commissioner Pomerleau, Captain Moody, Northern District Lt. Joseph Judd and Captain Dennis Mello of Western District for the assistance and protection that they rendered at the wedding and reception of our daughter, Ann Gardner.

Our Heartfelt Thanks To All

HERERT GARDNER AND FAMILY

JUNE 28

"The Hunters." — history of the colored citizen series — a film at Pratt Library's Pennsylvania Ave. branch at 7:30 p.m.

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