EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Freedom

Ever drop a pebble into a body of water and gaze at the ever-widening circles which emanate from the pebble? Those circles are called concentric circles, each slightly larger than the one that comes before.

Freedom is similar to those circles, in that independence for one person is only circumscribed by the greater freedom of another.

Blacks have the right to vote and hold any job available, but whites are not encumbered by decades-old prejudices and racial stereotypes.

Americans reportedly have the highest standard of living in the world, but we have found it impossible to export that standard to another nation.

Our freedom is, or course, dependent on others, and unfortunately the extent of our freedom, historically has meant the subjugation of another people.

Native Americans were free to roam the plains and woodlands of our nation, but the freedom of those who celebrate the Fourth of July proved incompatible with the liberty of the first Americans.

Those men who spent that hot summer day signing our Declaration of Independence were protesting their own lack of freedom from what was then the most powerful nation on Earth — Great Britain.

But for the British, the demands of the colonists were unreasonable, as Americans were not considered as free as native Englishmen.

And the colonists themselves, while full of fulsome praise for the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity, found those commodities in short supply when it came to our own ancestors, their slaves.

How free are we today? In contrast to the lives of even our most immediate ancestors, we are free indeed.

But that should not give us reason to neglect our struggle in an orgy of celebration.

Even today we see our own "buppie" class turning its back on the decade's long struggle which produced that class.

We find our black professionals, our best and brightest, moving out of the city, out of the community, and out of the collective spirit which once sustained our lives.

Like those concentric circles, however, their freedom is illusory. Those same prodigies know, either subconsciously or consciously, of the daily struggle they must wage with that larger concentric circle of racism to make their own place in the sun.

Unfortunately, they have chosen to cast their lot with those same individuals who have become adept at modern-day racism.

Our "buppies" too often fail to place themselves in the perspective alluded to earlier. That is, they fail to see themselves as yet another ring in that mass of concentric circles which illustrate the dynamics of our world society..

In other words, by failing to come to grips with the reality of their blackness and their true place in our society, they remain ignorant of that larger ring which surrounds them and their efforts to succeed.

On this Fourth of July, as we barbecue and bake or swim and sun, let us all stop for a moment to reassess our concentric freedom in a so-called democracy which, either convertly or overtly, still insists on calling us all inferiors.

First budget

Mayor Schmoke has completed his first major rite of passage as the city's chief executive by winning approval of his initial budget.

Although approval was not achieved easily, passage of the budget is a testimonial to the mayor's unique style of governing.

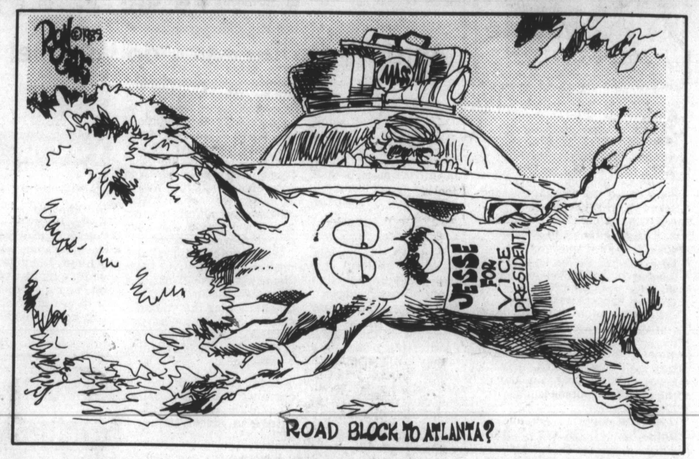
Whereas many in the City Council once feared the histrionics and vindictiveness of former mayor, William Donald Schaefer, the 18 councilmen saw no reason this time to vote out of fear.

They all had been lobbied and although some chose not to be swayed by the mayor's minions, enough came aboard to push through the budget.

While many may claim that the opposition floundered because of a lack of unity, we feel Mayor Schmoke triumphed because he was successful in individualizing the concerns of specific council members and working with them to ease their concerns.

Some say the council attempted to show its manhood by building a coalition opposed to the budget.

Maybe so, but, we think the council showed its maturity by debating the budget reasonably, then passing it in fine fashion.



LETTERS

Beware of mainstreamers

Dear Editor:

Hide the womenfolk and children. The "mainstreamers" are coming.

This posse of varmints has been on the rampage for years. All of them complain about Jesse Jackson's "leftist politics," asssserting that his views are not in the "mainstream" of political thought.

The mainstreamers include — but are not limited to — syndicated columnist Ben Wattenberg, who's been on Jackson's case for years; syndicated columnist George Will, who probably thinks Jackson is the antiChrist; "The New Republic" editor Morton Kondracke; and WBAL radio talk show host Ron Smith, who has dubbed Jackson the "anti-American" candidate and told one listener that Jackson was not a "mainstream Democrat."

Jesse Jackson? Not a "mainstream Democrat"? On that point Smith is absolutely correct. Mr. Jackson is not a "mainstream" Democrat." That's why I voted for him.

What, exactly, is there in the history of mainstream Democrats — or mainstream Republicans for that matter — that would inspire Jesse Jackson to be one?

Well, let's see now, about 150 years ago, mainstream Democrats would have supported slavery, black codes and the disfranchisement of blacks and women.

It was very likely that a mainstream Democrat would return a fugitive slave to its owner, where the poor man or woman would face certain torture or death.

It was even more likely, though, that a mainstream Democrat would buy or sell a slave.

The leftists of that period were the abolitionists. They were men and women like William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Tubman. They were men and women who were, in retrospect, quite correct in their positions.

Some of you will no doubt cry "Foul!"

You will claim that it's unfair to go back 150 years in history to prove the mainstream politicians can be wrong on occasion.

Fair enough. Let's go back 25 years, to when the majority of mainstreamers, both Democrats and Republicans, opposed civil rights legislation.

The "leftists" of that era — the Jesse Jackson of their time — were people like Martin Luther King of SCLC, James Farmer of CORE and John Lewis and Julian Bond of SNCC.

All four of these men seem pretty moderate in retrospect, don't they?

But that's not the point. The point is that the civil rights legislation passed in that era — and which today's mainstream Democrats take so much credit for — was actually brought about by pressure and agitation from the leftists of that era. We should give them the credit for that legislation, because they deserve it.

What, on the other hand, can we give mainstream Democrats of that same era credit for? The tally is not impressive.

1. The Bay of Pigs fiasco — It has been described as nothing less than a brazen act of naked aggression against a country with whom we were not at war.

2. CIA plots to assassinate Fidel Castro — The Democratic administration then in power knew the CIA collaborated with organized crime figures in the attempts. And we call the PLO terrorist.

3. The escalation of the war in Vietnam — Over 50,000 Americans killed, who knows how many thousands of Vietnamese, and the end result was hundreds of thousands of American soldiers going thousands of miles from home to burn down some peasant huts and murder a bunch of trees.

Other examples, if any are needed, might include President Kennedy appointing to the federal judiciary a judge who openly used — in court — racial epithets against black people.

President Kennedy made this less than noble gesture to appease that segment of mainstream Democrats known as Dixiecrats.

When a group of Mississippi blacks who supported the Democratic platform of 1964 went to the convention and challenged the credentials of a group of segregationist Dixiecrat delegates who opposed the platform, guess who the mainstream Democrats ended up seating?

No, Jesse Jackson is definitely NOT a mainstream Democrat. I say thank God, and God save us from mainstream Democrats.

GREGORY P. KANE
Baltimore

Back to Jefferson

Dear Editor:

The favorite ploy of these black politicians, and Jackson is the main offender, is to call everyone who comes down the pike a Nazi or racist.

The fact of the matter is that they are the biggest racists in the country against their own people in their support of abortion. In their support of abortion and these eugenists of Planned Parenthood, they have committed more atrocities against their own people than all of the apartheid leaders of South Africa.

Dukakis and all the secular humanistic liberals running this year are political clones of Jackson and so I, a democrat, am switching this year. When are these Democrats going to depart from the path of Marx and get back to Jefferson?

That outraged grandfather of eight angels and Veteran of World War II
CORNELIUS U. MORGAN

DeWayne Wickham

Glitter and gladiators

ATLANTIC CITY - When the aging soul music group launched into one of its biggest hits of the 1970s a large man with hair seemingly teased with static electricity leaped to his feet.

Don King rocked and swayed his hulkin body in the aisle of the casino showroom as the O'Jays sang "For The Love of Money," an up tempo tune about people's greed for the almighty dollar. It was the night before the richest bout in the history of professional boxing and King, the event's colorful promoter, was in a partying mood.

And why not? The receipts from Monday's heavyweight fight between Mike Tyson and Michael Spinks are expected to exceed the gross national product of Grenada.

And King, the fight game's dominant match maker, will join Tyson and Spinks in pocketing mega bucks for his role in the 91-second title fight. The men who used to handle pairings at the Circus Maximus would be shocked!

Back in the days when Roman promoters made gladiators fight to the death before approving spectators, the survivor's reward was often a follow-up bout with a lion.

The only money to pass hands then did so between those in the stands who came to cheer on the brutal competition. If a gladiator was lucky he got away with his life.

For his part in winning "the undisputed heavyweight championship" of professional boxing — a feat he accomplished in less time than it took Jeffery Osborne to sing the national anthem before the opening bell — Tyson will earn at lest $20 million dollars.

Spinks, who spent about a third of the fight flat on his back, will take home a reported $13 million dollars for the eight punches he suffered at the hands of the awesome Tyson.

The Spinks-Tyson fight is expected to gross about 100 million dollars, and as the bout's promoter King will pocket a princely sum for his efforts.

Today professional boxing is the only American sport which comes close to being truly dominated by its athletes, a good many of whom are black and wold have been gladiators in the time of Caesar.

Both Spinks and Tyson exercise control over their careers and the people who manage them in ways that would cause George Stienbrenner to hyperventilate.

In fact, with the exception of the involvement of Donald Trump, the billionaire New York developer and Atlantic City casino owner, it was the "gladiator types" — King and Butch Lewis, Spink's manager — who exercised the most control over the championship fight and the money it generated.

In the Circus Maximus of old there was no such mixing of gladiators and the patrician class!

Still there was evidence of the decadent society all about. Gold of nearly every description was in abundance. There were gold chains. Gold teeth. Gold shoes. And a gold "Rope" with a diamond encrusted Mercedes Benz emblem that hung around the neck of a man dressed in a Fila sweat suit.

All of this caused someone to comment that one of the concessionaires "must be out there selling Mr. T starter kits!!!"

More likely the case is that just as in the days of ancient Rome the fight game attracts a strange breed of spectators, people who take pleasure in watching one man pummel the body of another.

What is different about today's competition is that the gladiators have more than a life and death stake in the outcome of the bout.

The Afro-American
MEMBER
MDDC NNPA UPI

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

One day at a time

For those of us who have never suffered the physiological and emotional pain of alcohol or drug addiction, it is impossible to know how tough it must be to finally break free of its grasp.

It is often a long, frustrating process, characterized by varying degrees of success and failure.

Since most people find it extremely difficult to kick their habits without professional help, we are fortunate to have the Baltimore Recovery Center (BRC). With a working philosophy of "one day at a time," BRC is helping hundreds of citizens remain sober and drug-free.

Operating under the guidance of Chief Clinical Officer Ronald Rogers, and financed by state, federal, and private contributions, BRC serves as a comprehensive alcoholism/addictive disease treatment system with four separate facilities; the Detoxification Unit and Burgess Recovery Center at 1846 Gay Street; the Hollins Place Intermediate Care Program at 16 S. Poppleton Street; and the Lawrence Halls Therapeutic Community at 19 W. Preston Street.

The wide range of services include street rescue, medical triage and referral, and inpatient detoxification.

In addition, two well-organized residential programs provide treatment and housing for the chronically ill, and aftercare services for those who have completed the intermediate care phase of treatment.

Although BRC does have a waiting list of men and women needing help, no one is refused treatment because of inadequate health insurance or limited funds.

BRC will arrange a payment plan whereby fees are determined on a sliding scale, based on ability to pay. Those without any resources are still admitted.

Just as addiction is not an overnight occurrence, neither is recovery.

Consequently, BRC has designed a 28-day inpatient treatment program which consists of individual and group counseling, aftercare planning, and peer support in a community setting.

Phase One of treatment is **detoxification**, whereby the patient is placed under close observation to ensure safe and complete withdrawal from alcohol and/or other addictive drugs.

Phase Two of treatment is **education and counseling**. Patients are informed bout the nature of their illness and asked to accept their conditions as being chronic.

In addition, patients are required to become active in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA). Most importantly, they are reminded that they must take responsibility for their own recovery.

The final phase of treatment is **aftercare**.

This fifteen-week program is essential to a smooth transition from inpatient treatment to again becoming an active and productive member of society.

The self-diagnosis and education processes are intensified, and continued involvement in AA and NA are strongly encouraged.

Aside from the patients' determination to overcome their addictions, BSC's staff is the key to the program's success. Rarely is a group of workers so dedicated to the cause for which they have been hired, and for good reason.

Many are recovering alcoholics and addicts themselves.

More importantly, according to program director Shelly Sutto, "We are committed because we see the fruits of our labors everyday.

There is no greater feeling than knowing that a counseling session or pep talk kept a person from taking the drink that would wipe out months of sobriety."

AFRO SURVEY

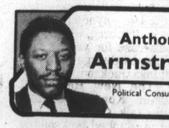
As the Fourth nears, do you feel independent?

Charles Johnson, 33, Crime lab tech. It's hard to say how independent I feel because I'm working right now and that takes away from a man's independence. If I were unemployed, I would have more independence, but a lot more stress.

Gary Lockett, 37, Administrative officer. I feel fairly independent. Our independence has increased. We have made a lot of strides, but a lot more can be done.

Theresa Howard, 39, cook. I feel a little independent, but not much. Really, independence means you're suppose to be free, but if I consider the job and children, independence doesn't really cover anything.

Warren Nixon, 48, salesman. I feel independent as far as my job and social status. Nowadays, you have freedom to do more, there are more opportunities for blacks today than in the past.



Anthony Armstrong
Political Consultant

Political leadership revisited

Every time it's suggested that Baltimore's black community, the educated and the not so educated, lacks political sophistication someone looking to curry favor with us stands up and shouts, "Thats an insult to the intelligence of the black citizens of Baltimore."

No it isn't an insult at all; it is, however, a recognition of a need and a responsibility our community has to begin acting like we take politics seriously.

Unlike planting our heads in political sand, which is mostly what we do now, this community should admit its political shortcomings and resolve to trade our ignorance for some basic political common sense.

The theory in black and white political circles has often been to encourage black people to leave politics to those who say they know, those who have gained a measure of our trust.

This theory has strategic underpinnings that work on the principle of, keep 'em dumb.

It wasn't a vicious theory as much as it was a racist assumption that blacks really don't have the abstract mental dexterity supposedly required to fully grasp the convoluted machinations of politics.

Because of this blacks, it was said, preferred to leave political decision making in the hands of others.

It was benevolent white liberals who first, as Frederick Douglass put it, "did us the favor of wondering what to do with the Negro."

More recently its been equally liberal blacks who we've elected to represent "the blacks."

The exchange, however, has done nothing to change the underlying theory or practices the theory spawns. It's still essentially keep 'em dumb.

Politicians that know you don't see it as their responsibility to teach voters the game of politics — quite the contrary is usually the case.

It's in the interest of every living soul over 18 — the body politic — to instruct themselves, in an effort to oversee the public actions of their elected representatives.

All you're doing is looking out for your own interest. Muslims have a favorite phrase, "Allah sees all, but every man should still tie his camel up at night."

The same gist of thought is helpful in perceiving politics. Certainly politicians watch over all, but each man had better look out for his own political camels.

As a community of interest, Baltimore's black citizens really haven't done a good job in this all important regard.

We've allowed some people to get by us and into political office that we shouldn't have; and then we've compounded our initial mistakes by not keeping close check on those same officials once in office.

It's happened over and over again; the latest spat of collectively embarrassing news serves to reflect one part of the total problem.

Of course someone will say the other side has their charlatans wearing dirty linen or saints wearing rags; but so what, who's got time to worry about their problems? Furthermore, since when did knowing that another person was just as unaware as you make you any less unaware?

Besides, a strong case can be made that the other side is a bit more politically astute than us; and if not more astute at least more adapt at isolating their political mistakes long enough to get rid of them.

Term after term we go hiding ours, reelecting them, offering more excuses for them than they've the nerve to offer for themselves.

Based on public actions it doesn't even appear that we offer criticism in private.

"After all, he's or she's black"; or, "he or she hasn't been in office long enough."

As if being black was somehow synonymous with messing up, or an explanation for consistently inferior performance.

Too much of our leadership still makes itself invisible until reelection time when, again, they ask you for your vote.

Too many can't tell you what they've done or hope to do to help.

Many seem to want to be elected officials just to be elected officials, like part-time real estate salesmen who want only just to be elected officials, like part-time real estate salesmens who want only to be able to say they are.

Being black is no excuse, especially when the other side is consistently playing above the rim on us. Nothing gets initiated.

Not much, not already clocked in, gets completed.

People sit there, in the councils of government, just picking their noses. The terrible result is that we continue giving our votes, in too many cases, to people who have shown no more than the guts to ask for them.

What's at stake? An honest answer may not include a whole list of specifics, but it should provide the clear understanding that something very serious is going on.

It's helpful to admit that problems exist, as a first step forward solving them; and it is no disgrace to admit that as a people we do have things to learn about politics and politicians.

The real mistake, of course, is pretending to know and acting mainly on such pretenses.

It helps, also, to know something about human nature; and conventional wisdom still has it that when the cat's (the voters) away the mice (the politicians) will play.

We should always remember who's who in the political equation, that the politicians work for us, not the other way around.

Forget about the past status — lawyer, doctor, plantation chief — to view would-be political leaders from the vantage point of what they've done in the political arena, not medicine, law, or some other disassociated endeavors.

Huey Long, Richard Daly, Clarence "Du" Burns, Tom Bradley, Tom Smith — like them or not, all are or were excellent politicians — all were good at something before they were politicians; but once in the game everything else became of no consequence.

What I mean is that politics is a game that requires 25 hours a day, eight days a week to master well enough to effectively represent others.

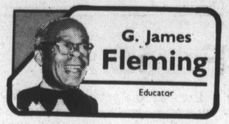
It's not a set of things one can pick up and put down; and once on you it acts like hot grease.

These people are not movie stars; stardom puts smoke in the eyes of the unknowing — politician and voter alike.

We blacks ought to stop treating them as if they are.

Close your eyes and ask yourself, "If this person's name or fame wasn't such and such would I vote for him or her?"

If the answer is no or anything other than a firm yes then, perhaps, it's best to look elsewhere for political leadership.



G. James Fleming
Educator

Damned whether he does or doesn't

Jesse Jackson, the runner-up in the Democratic race for president, will probably be "damned if he does and damned if he doesn't," whatever route he takes at the coming Democratic Nomination Convention.

So, to a lesser degree, is the plight of Michael Dukakis, the front-runner, who will be the Democratic nominee for president, unless a bolt of lighting strikes him.

The situation of the Rev. Mr. Jackson is the more precarious. What are his options? There are at least four:

1. He can persist — come what may — in his thrust for the vice presidential nomination, as most of his staunchest supporters want him to do.

2. He can declare that he does not choose to run for vice president, without any strings attached, in a magnanimous gesture towards party unity.

3. He can make a deal for something, or some office, substantial, for himself or for the enhancement of his rainbow coalition, and subsequently withdraw.

4. He can throw the weight of himself and his delegate bloc behind Gov. Dukakis for the kind of balance considered desirable for vice president, and to insure a winning ticket — a person with notable foreign affairs experience and experience in governance.

If Jesse Jackson, with 7,000,000 votes in his memory and 1,200 seated delegates pledged to him, choose the first option, and is rejected, the convention, will turn into a free-for-all, the Democratic Party's image will suffer, and large numbers of Blacks will sit out the general election in November or give their support to the Republicans.

Not all Blacks will desert the Democrats, however. There are substantial numbers who, it is believed, subscribe to the proposition that the candidate for president has the total right to choose his running mate, by virtue of the political allignment, the attractiveness and the geographical background of said choice.

On the other hand, if Jesse Jackson's persistence — or lack of persistence — arouses the worst sentiments and treatment at the hands of the party and of Dukakis, then a much larger number of Blacks, and other minorities, may "take a walk" and not vote in November — at, least not vote the Democratic ticket.

Everywhere there is heard, "They must treat him right, with respect."

What is "right" and what is "respect" only time will tell.

Certainly, Jackson must feel that he has made an impact on the party platform; certainly, he will have to be given an important, prime time, spot on the convention program; certainly, he should have a voice, if not a vote, in the selection of the vice presidential nominee.

If Jesse Jackson persists in claiming first consideration for the vice presidency, he will be damned as a "spoiled child,"a bad team player, and he may find himself without further real influence among the wheelers and dealers in the party.

If he caves in too early and too easily and "cooperates" with the party power structure, he will be damned as having "sold out" by his followers, as "having let his people down."

Indeed, for the Rev. Mr. Jackson, he will be "damned if he does and damned if he doesn't."