EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Censorship for real

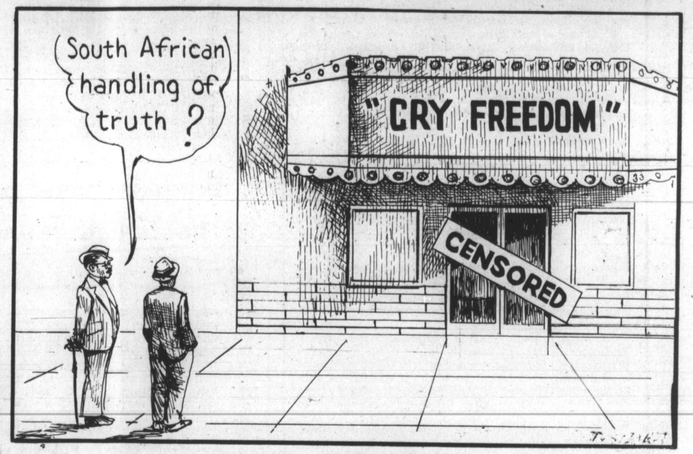
When the movie "Color Purple" was first released, there was wide dissent and controversy loudly proclaimed from proponents and opponents of the film.

When the mobile "School Daze" hit the screen, there was an outcry from the college fraternal community. When the TV series "Africa" was telecast last year, there was wide criticism, charging the documentary was totally biased against Western nations.

But in all cases — there were no attempts in this country to keep the material from being seen by any who wished. Such is not the case in South Africa where the film "Cry Freedom," although passed by the censor board, was nonetheless seized.

The film was declared as threatening to touch off racial violence, thus was withdrawn. When theatre owners started to show the film anyway, police were ordered into the theatres to seize copies of the film.

It is inconceivable that this could be happening in 1988 — but it did, just this weekend. It brings into sharp focus the wide-ranging effects of apartheid, and how it attempts to control the lives of the majority black population of the country.



Ruth Jenkins

SOB SISTER

Murphy's law takeover

We don't claim to be a 'hostess with the mostess'. But we are a whiz at the biz of entertaining out-of-town visitors. Just ask our last houseguest — as soon as she recovers.

When our friend arrived from Washington, we gave her a very warm welcome. The temperature hovered near 100 degrees throughout her visit.

But our little apartment was comfortably cool. And stimulating to companionship. Because leaky faucets in the bathtub and kitchen sink kept us awake most of the night unable to sleep we talked a lot. What is good for companionship. Eh what?

Our friend is hooked on good seafood. So we made reservations at Philly's internationally known restaurant which has specialized since 1865.

In our best bib and tucker to match the elegance of this establishment, we set out two hours early. Our friend had elected to drive from our Germantown abode, so our nephew provided expert travel directions.

But we don't drive. So inadvertedly we guided the driver to streets which don't allow left turns, and to one-way streets with traffic going in the wrong direction. But eventually we arrived at the restaurant and announced our presence to the receptionist.

Then it happened. The electricity system blew out; plunging the entire building in darkness, and shutting down the bustling business completely. Several hundred diners were interrupted in the middle of their meals. Their conversation flicked by flickering candlelight.

Chefs and tuxedo-clad waiters idle with annoyance. Disconcerted staffers tried to assure newcomers that the electricity might be restored any minute. But one waitress confided that it took three hours to rectify the last blackout.

So after an hour of sitting under a panel of U.S. presidents who had eaten there at one time or another, we left the building. With dozens of other potential patrons. Outside an electric company street crew was working feverishly, a moral supporter paced around them with a wine glass in his hand and an urgency look on his face.

We dined there, quite splendidly. The Perrier drink was refreshing, but next time we'll order our usual cocktail. It's tastier.

After a little more lollygagging, we returned to our homebase casino shortly before our departure bus was due. We sat on a bench across the street enjoying the seabreeze and watching the buses arrive, load up and take off every few minutes.

A slight panic set in when we couldn't find one return-home ticket stub. We rummaged through our purses frantically. Finally discovered that we had the tickets all along; they were stuck together because the driver had punched them that way.

With relief, we crossed over to the departure site. Worried about why our bus was so late, we checked at the information booth. Then it happened. Learned we had missed the bus while sitting across the street searching our purses.

Took a cab to the Greyhound bus terminal, and bought other tickets back to Philly. On the excursion bus, we would have debarked right where our car was parked, not too far from home. But travel by this commerical bus required a Philly subway ride and then city bus service to our car.

And then it happened. As we climbed the subway steps to street level, the season's worst thunderstorm erupted. The swirling, drenching downpour which folks had prayed for during two sticky sweltering weeks.

The neighborhood stores were closed. Corner doorways and deserted newsstands provided no protection from the torrential attack. Trying to keep her head above water, our friend laughed aloud. Probably to keep from crying.

It was a sullen, sodden motley crew of passengers who finally boarded the city bus. We suffered in soggy steamines until reaching the corner where our car awaited. Then of course, the storm quit abruptly and the sun peeped through.

We don't seem to need that plea at our house. Funny, but our guests get out from under our hospitality as soon as possible. And don't come back. We wonder why.

Les Payne

Winfield is better than Steinbrenner thinks

My son is a Yankee fan.

That's no big deal, of course. He also likes Dave Winfield, has a Big Dave T-shirt with a "31" on it. He likes the way Winfield hits, throws, runs the bases. Jamal has also read Winfield's book, the one that has caused George Steinbrenner to lose what was left of his bearing.

As one who knows a little about provocative writing, I didn't see much of it in Winfield's book. True enough, as Steinbrenner charged, Winfield pokes fun at his owner's lawyer, the great Roy Cohn, now deceased. The real problem, though, was that Winfield bested Steinbrenner in court and got money for a foundation to which his boss had promised to donate but didn't intend to deliver.

Winfield, for the most part, keeps his gripes with Steinbrenner on the professional and not the personal level. When he slips, though, it's stinging. "As a player, you can always tell when George is in town," he wrote. "It's like knowing when it's raining."

The sharpest jab was probably scored when Winfield wrote that Steinbrenner had a "chubby face." A macho man who fancies himself two parts Gen. Patton for every one part Kaiser Wilhelm won't stand for a black underling, who beat him in court, calling him "chubby."

Whatever the cause, it is clear that Steinbrenner would rather get even with Winfield than have his Yankees win baseball games. He has played his rightfielder toward the back of the lineup, where he would be expected to drive in fewer runs and be less productive generally. Waiting all season for Winfield to slump, Steinbrenner was ecstatic recently when the player's statistics declined from spectacular to merely outstanding.

"What I predicted is coming true," Steinbrenner chortled last week. "I knew (Winfield) couldn't keep it up."

Despite all this, Winfield has thrived this season.

The owner-player tiff aside, what amazes me is how the ruling class of baseball, and the media in general, are following Steinbrenner's lead and beginning to view Winfield as a pariah. It bothers me personally as the father of a Winfield fan, and it bothers me professionally as an observer of race relations in America.

The best example of Winfield's growing alienation was the refusal of baseball managers to include him when polled by the Associated Press as to their All-Star preferences.

With 1.7 million votes, baseball fans made Winfield their second place All-Star vote getter. This was not a mere popularity or longevity vote that some players get after their skills have diminished.

In his best season ever, Winfield ranks in the top 10 of most offensive categories. Among the top players in the All-Star game, for instance, only one player on both rosters had a higher batting average than Winfield. He had by far the best on-base percentage; only one player had more total hits; five had more home runs, and only one player had more runs batted in.

Despite Winfield's spectacular performance, the Associated Press poll of managers in both major leagues showed they would not have selected him for the All-Star team.

How do I explain this to my son?

Shall I tell him that an owner can influence baseball managers' assessment of a player's performance? Is the managers' lesson that a black player should not write a book? Is it that such players should not challenge their white bosses? Or speak when not spoken to?

As a product of his generation, my son hasn't exactly figured out what, if anything, to make of social influences. He has hope still, though his own experiences and observations are eroding it, that a Winfield will be judged by the quality of his skills and his performance and not the color of his skin.

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Parren J. Mitchell

FORMER U.S. REP.

The price of admission

"We do not serve colored." "Colored: Take-out Only." Signs like these were omnipresent in our border and southern states a few short decades ago.

I rearely go to a restaurant for lunch; most often, I have a sandwich and a drink at my desk. This week, however, I ate lunch at a restaurant with a friend. The patrons were the under-forty crowd. 30% of the customers were Black. They appeared relaxed and enjoying themselves in a nice establishment with good food. But it was not always like this. Places of public accommodations were rigidly segregated. How did this change come about?

The change happened because of the perseverances; strength; and determination of Black people who vowed that they would not be denied access to public accommodations because of their race.

In the State of Maryland, Route 40, a major northbound artery, was saturated with diners, motels and lunch rooms which refused to serve Black citizens.

Under the inspired leadership of Walter P. Carter, now deceased, the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) launched a massive campaign to desegregate the facilities along Route 40. Walter Carter was one of the most courageous and inspiring fighters for civil rights I ever met.

The Double T Diner on Route 40 was vicious in the physical violence inflicted on those who sought to desegregate the place, but the protesters continued their efforts. Former U.S. Senator Joseph Tydings placed his prestige (and his chances for re-election to the U.S. Senate) on the line as he moved up and down the northern portion of Route 40, beseeching the owners to open their doors to all because, as he said, "It's the right thing to do."

Another major corridor, Route 50 East, leads to Ocean City where Maryland reaches the Atlantic Ocean. I remember when a restaurateur on Route 50, flanked by male family members and friends, stood at the entrance to the restaurant with shotguns and threatened to kill any Black citizen who sought to enter.

Finally, a state-wide public accommodations law was introduced in the Maryland General Assembly. The Congress of Racial Equality; the N.A.A.C.P.; and scores of other groups began a state-wide campaign to make sure the legislation would pass and would be signed into law.

At that time, I was the Executive Secretary of what is now known as the Maryland Human Relations Commission. After work, each day I would travel to some part of Maryland, attempting to rally support for the legislation. Some nights, I met with as few as twelve people, other nights I would meet with as many as a hundred people. The message was always the same: "We must have the law, and this is what you should do to help."

I remember my frustration in trying to arrange for a rally in a small town on the Upper Eastern Shore of Maryland. The townspeople had been so intimidated that no one would give us a meeting place, not a church, not a school, no private home. We finally met in an old abandoned one-room school. While we met, the K.K.K. paraded on the other side of the road.

All of the work of so many people paid off. An intrepid handful of Black elected officials in the Maryland General Assembly did their job well. The Governor signed the bill into law, and it became the task for the Maryland Human Relations Commission to secure compliance.

MEMBER MDDC NNPA UPI

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ethel Payne

BEHIND THE SCENES

Jesse's challenge

ATLANTA — It was sweet harmony as Mike Dukakis, Jesse Jackson and their wives kissed and made up in a public display of unity. Still, there were lingering questions.

How much was lost in compromising and will the ex-candidate be able to convince his followers to vote for the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket in November? Seven million votes are at stake that's the pile that Jesse accumulated in the gruelling primaries. Will it hold?

Before the lights were turned off in the Omni Center, a panel of pundits on the Public Broadcasting System was setting the parameters of the Jackson participation in the race toward the finish line.

The woman correspondent for **U.S News and World Report** Gloria Borger, suggested that it would be folly for Jesse to go into certain states where he might alienate white voters.

The "three wisemen" who are credited with putting reins on Jackson are New York's Mayor Ed Koch, Charles Robb, ex-governor of Virginia who is running for the Senate and Georgia's Sen. Sam Nunn. Jackson is tar-brushed as "to liberal and too dangerous."

This is not to say that they don't want him to convince blacks and minorities to support the ticket with their votes; but the yellow caution light blinker is on. The delivery man is expected to hand over a full platter through the side door.

Around Atlanta there were mixed feelings about the scenario that had been played out with Dukakis' easy win of the nomination. Ironically, it was California, one of the states in which the black vote gave Sen. Alan Cranston has margin of victory in a close re-election battle in the 1986 that handed Dukakis the 235 votes to clinch the nomination.

At Paschal's restaurant in the heart of the black community where soul food packs customers in, the euphoria over Jesse's messianic speech on Tuesday evening still lingered with the aroma of collard greens and peach cobbler, the talk was all on how the Democratic party would have to come by Jesse.

But a cab driver who took me to the Marriott Marquis hotel, where Jackson and his party were headquartered, had a different view-point.

"You see all this money going down? White folks getting it all - limousines, food concessions, you name it. Andy (Mayor Young) talks about entrepreneurship, but we ain't getting none of it for this convention. I own my cab, but I can't get a license to have a company unless I buy 25 cabs. That's how they shut you out. Jesse talks about the dream, but these blacks they just tap dancing in tennis shoes."

Thus, you have the horns of a dilemma confronting Jesse Jackson. Earlier in the day, the charismatic preacher called his staff together to thank them for their efforts on his behalf and delivered a homily on continuing to work for the ticket. He put much of the blame for his loss of the nomination on the super delegates whom he accused of frustrating the democratic process.

"When you're on the horns of a dilemma, you kill the bull. We must not despair, but keep on fighting and working. We've lost some battles, but still we won. We've finally made it inside the system which is corrupt, but we can turn it around, because it has never served the masses. There is an injection of a new group with hope and faith, Today is the start of a new beginning."

Jackson gave an analogy of children in the dark having fears of imaginary hobgoblins on the walls and when they cry out, their mothers turn on the light, casting away the shadows overcoming their fright.

He continued, "For too long, we have been ruled by the politics of exclusion.

"We are making gains in our reasonable expectations - Andy Young running for governor of Georgia, Mickey Leland running to fill the vacancy if Sen. Lloyd Bentsen is victorious with Michael Dukakis, more blacks in the business."

The race that ended last night starts again today. If you're in the trunk of a car, you don't want the driver to hit the ejection button to throw you out. We must target the congressional districts where the black vote makes the difference.

Expanding the Democratic National Committee is an important method of using our influence more effectively (late reports are that Jesse Jackson, Jr. has been named a member of the committee.)

What did Jesse get out of the deal? — compromises on nine points of the platform which included toned-down language on federal education funding, national health care programs and mutual missile flights test ban with the Russians.

Knocked out of the platform were the five-year Pentagon budget freeze and the call to make the wealthy pay a larger share of taxes. The call for a Palestinian homeland went down to a resounding defeat.

In a sense, one of his biggest bonuses was his children. It was the Jacksonian flair for the dramatic when each of his five siblings stepped forward Tuesday evening to praise their famous father.

Manning Marable

ALONG THE COLOR LINE

Why Dukakis won

Victories in the California and New Jersey Democratic primaries in early June pushed Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis over the top in his run for his party's nomination. In retrospect, Dukakis' successful campaign is difficult to explain.

The Governor was all but unknown outside of New England at the beginning of 1988. He has a speaking style which is bland, and the personality of a snail on sominex.

Dukakis has a respectable track record as a public sector manager, but he's never had the capacity to express a bold political vision which could capture the hearts and minds of voters.

In fact, he couldn't recognize what a political vision was even if it crept up on him in the middle of the night.

So how did this unimaginative, Democratic version of Uriah Heep secure the delegates to win the nomination in Atlanta? First, his noncontroversial stance on most issues placed him ideologically only slightly left of center with the party.

Consequently, most Democrats who had originally favored Hart, Biden, Simon, and Walter Mondale back in 1984 had little difficulty embracing the Massachusetts Governor. His image as a competent technocrat appealed to Yuppie Democrats.

His criticisms of aid to the Nicaraguan Contras played well to the antiwar constituency. Even his noncharismatic image was a plus in the aftermath of Reagan's theatrics and infantile rhetoric.

The white electorate no longer sought to be aroused by passionate if bombastic rhetoric on public policies. A cool, reasoned approach, desgined for the late 1980s, was called for in the wake of the Iran-Contra Scandal and the collapse of the President's domestic credibility.

Second, Dukakis won with money and organization. His campaign workers had raised over $7 million by the end of 1987, about twice the amount of his nearest competitor, Richard Gephardt.

Dukakis has extensive information on the Democratic delegates, down to the smallest personal details. Such careful homework paid dividends in securing the backing delegates who had been originally committed to Hart, Biden or others.

Third, Dukakis's basic strategy was very simple. In brief, it included these points:

(1) A Democrat could be elected president if he avoided Mondale's "mistakes." Consequently, Dukakis had adamantly refused to endorse any tax increases, and has deliberately steered clear of any major ties with organized labor. Dukakis has tried to avoid "The special interest" label at all costs;

(2) Run respectably in the Iowa caucuses, perferably coming in no lower than third place; (3) Organize a landslide victory in neighboring New Hampshire; (4) win two or three major Southern states on Super Tuesday, like Florida and Texas;

(5) Finally, establish himself as the liberal to moderate Democrats' "great white hope," idelogically positioned to the right of Jackson and Simon but to the left of everyone else.

There were a few slips along the way, of course. Dukakis didn't anticipate the sudden collapse of Gephardt, and the striking but temporary surge by Gore after Super Tuesday.

Jackson delivered a black eye to Dukakis at the Michigan caucuses in late March, and briefly it appeared that Dukakis's campaign might disintegrate.

But the New York primary knocked Gore out of the picture, and with his demise, Jackson's marginal hopes for the presidential nomination were doomed. No black candidate could possibly defeat a single white candidate in a one-on-one race.

Dukakis also benefited from the mistakes of other white Democratic candidates. Gephardt won in Iowa, but he was overshadowed by televangelist Pat Robertson's suprisingly strong showing in the GOP caucuses.

Gephardt was stung by Gore's effective television ads, and failed to generate momentum on Super Tuesday. Al Gore became the "Chameleon candidate," changing his public positions at every whistle stop.

Simon collapsed because he never expanded his core base beyond Illinois voters and a small number of white liberals and trade unionists.

However, Dukakis really owes his current stature to Jesse Jackson, in at least two respects. First, he denied other candidates virtually the entire black electorate and millions of additional liberal voters, limiting the available electoral base which other candidates could develop.

Second, running to Dukakis's left, Jesse has allowed the governor to present himself as a fiscal conservative and ideologically moderate liberal, appealing to Gore and Gephardt voters.

Dukakis's chief problem, though, isn't Jesse. His campaign managers have presented an image before the electorate which is extremely fragile.

When placed on the defensive, Dukakis has illustrated no ability to articulate a profound set of policy goals or initiatives which capture popular support. His reputation as an effective manager may suffer due to the recent state budgetary deficit in Massachusetts.

These vulnerabilities raise serious questions about Dukakis' ability to defeat Bush this November.

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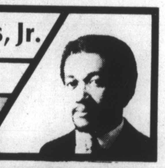
CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL



Racial violence increases

Outbreaks of racially motivated violence perpetrated against the African American, Latin American, Asian American and Native American communities are spreading across the United States at an alarming rate. This type of violent racism has become once again a serious national problem.

Congressman Peter W. Rodino of New Jersey has introduced a legislative bill to establish a special federal commission to investigate racially motivated violence and to recommend preventive governmental action.

The name of the bill is H.R. 3914, "Commission on Racially Motivated Violence Act of 1988." We support the passage of this legislation.

Rodino, who is Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, explained his reason for introducing the bill. Rodino stated, "If some Americans must live in fear for their safety, none of us is truly safe.

"For this reason, I am introducing legislation to create a bipartisian Commission on Racially Motivated Violence." Racial violence, Rodino concluded, "is an insidious cancer on our society that must be eliminated."

Professor Fred R. Harris of the University of New Mexico and former member of the U.S. Senate gave testimony before Congress supporting the Rodino Bill.

Dr. Harris was a member of the Kerner Commission that issued the 1967 report documenting the causative factors of the urban riots of the 1960's.

Ther Kerner Commission concluded that white racism was a key factor that led to racial violence 20 years ago. Dr. Harris today suggests that the problem of white racism is still persistent.

The State of New York has just released the final report of a year-long study conducted by Governor Mario Cuomo's Task Force on Bias Related Violence. This report documents the rise in racially motivated violence across New York.

The Task Force concluded, "Violence directed against persons or groups because of their race, ethnicity, or national origin tears at the very fabric of a democratic, pluralistic society. Such attacks can be neither ignored or tolerated."

We are concerned that the issues of race and violence have been studied and restudied for decades. Yet there has not been a national priority placed on solving this devastating social ill.

After the Kerner Commission issued its report 20 years ago, the recommendations were never implemented. What actually occured was that Richard Nixon was elected President. Nixon's "law and order" only camouflaged the reality of racial violence.

COMMENTARY

Minimum wage must be liveable wage

By Norman Hill

The urgent need to raise the minimum wage may be summed up by a few straightforward questions. Can any American survive, let alone raise a family, earning $3.35 an hour? Can anyone begin building a future, or share in the fundamental social and economic values of the American Dream, making $134 per week, before taxes!

The answer is clearly no. The minimum wage was established in 1938 under the Fair Labor Standards Act to prevent the exploitation of workers and to establish a fair, thus livable wage. Today, it doesn't take an economist to figure out that the minimum wage is in no way fair.

In today's America, with escalating housing costs, food prices, education tuition, and living expenses, it is virtually impossible to eke out a living at $3.35 an hour.

Congress is currently considering legislation to raise the minimum wage, something that is terribly overdue. The minimum wage has not gone up since 1981, the first year of the Reagan Administration, which has argued that raising it would exacerbate unemployment, fuel inflation, and wreak havoc on the economy.

HR 1834, the bill currently before Congress, would raise the minimum wage, and it has the support of labor and the civil rights community.

Most Americans labor under many misconceptions about who earns the minimum wage. Most feel that minimum wage jobs are held primarily by teenagers or young people just starting out. But with the bulk of job growth occurring in the service sector of the economy, the profile of the minimum wage worker has changed.

Today, over 63 percent of the people paid by the hour at or below the minimum wage are adults over age 20. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over 5 million people are paid at or below the prevailing minimum wage. Of these, only 1.8 million or 36 percent are teenagers between 16 and 19. Forty percent are over 25 years old.

Women,who make up 45 percent of the work force, comprise more than 65 percent of the minimum wage work force. Blacks, who make up 12.5 percent of the hourly work force, represent 15 percent of the hourly minimum wage work force.

Demographic trends also indicate that teenagers are not the bulk of minimum wage workers and will not be in the immediate future. America is growing older, and there are not as many teenagers as there were in the middle of the post-war baby boom.

This means that jobs normally taken by teens will either remain unfilled, or will be taken by adults trying to survive and raise families working at the minimum wage.

In fact, three out of five of new jobs created during the Reagan years paid at or below the minimum wage, which means that those seeking jobs will be forced to work for below subsistence wage.

There is no reason to believe the Reagan Administration's arguments that raising the minimum wage will have an adverse impact on the economy. Many of the nation's largest and most profitable companies continued to prosper during years when the minimum wage was raised.

Norm Hill is President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.