EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Memorial Day 1988

The busy pace of modern-day living slows briefly on May 30, at which time Americans pause to pay homage to those who died during our nation's wars.

Black fighting men have always been a part of American wars, from the Revolutionary War to the present, we have fought and died in service to the country.

The memories are perhaps most painful for the victims of the latter-day wars where the enormity of the death toll touches hundreds of thousands of family members of war heroes interred in military cemeteries around the world.

In all too many instances, the dead are forgotten, except for the brief ceremony wherein flowers are placed on the grave site, a quick prayer is recited, and the deceased completely forgotten until next year at this time.

Although a lot of the Memorial Day focus is on our war dead, it should not be forgotten that this is a time when the death of a loved one is also remembered. It is a chance for families to assemble — where the elders can inform the younger members about their dead relatives.

Memorable Day is a time to remember, and if the day sparks even a minute flashback to an event in which that loved one was a part — then the day set aside for memorials has served its purpose.





Parren J. Mitchell

FORMER U.S. REP.

Not in the shadows

Please have patience with me and read these experiences carefully. I have a point to make, and I want to make it through four recent experiences.

On May 16th, during a very severe storm, lightning struck a tower in the Atlanta airport. Air traffic came to a halt. I was in the airport about four hours. During that time, I observed airport workers, mostly young men under twenty years of age. They collected trash; swept carpets; cleaned out ash trays.

These young black men performed their duties briskly and efficiently. I talked with one of them, and asked what did he think of his job. He said he hated it, but was going to keep on working on this job until he found something better. He had finished the 11th grade.

Like many of our young males, he is willing and determined to work.

One day last week, a young man I suppose about age 25, stopped me as I was going into my home. He explained that his fraternity chapter had initiated a big brother program, in which each fraternity chapter member had "adopted" an inner city youth, and really played big brother to his charge.

Big brothers have purchased clothing and tennis shoes for their younger brothers; they study together; they go to athletic events together; and, in general, act as brothers should act.

Our young black men want to give something to the community, they want to serve the community.

On May 18th, I was on my way to Morgan State University in Baltimore. I have no formal affiliation with the university, but use office space there on Wednesdays. I stopped at a fast food restaurant. The young black women and men working there were courteous, efficient and pleasant.

The young lady who helped me said my bill was on the house. When I protested, she insisted, saying, "Someone ought to treat you once in a while." A young male kitchen worker came out to shake my hand. When I asked him about his job, he said it was a nasty job, with low pay, but he was going to keep on working at it until he finished his schooling. He was enrolled in a private technical school.

Our young black males will work and do work.

When I arrived at my office at Morgan State University, a young man, about age 19, stopped me and asked to talk. He explained that he was trying to organize his ROTC unit to give volunteer services to the community. They plan to wear their ROTC uniforms as they visit senior citizens; do work for the senior citizens; transport them to medical appointments, etc.

Our young black men do have a sense of duty and service to the community.

The point I am making is that rarely, very rarely do we hear about the young women and men I have just told you about. They do not make the news; no banquets are held in their honor; they do not receive awards.

On the other hand, in every form of the media, young black males who live in the shadows of life, in the demimonde of drugs, crime, and, anti-social behavior are newsworthy.

They, as gang members, are covered in national magazines, on national television; and their photographs are shown in the newspapers. They are made to appear as vicious, almost subhuman creatures, who are depraved threats to the fabric of society. I am certain many of them are.

But what about the young women and men I met or observed who do not live in the shadows of social pathologies.

Many decades ago, a film, "The Birth of a Nation," portrayed all the black males in the film as criminal predators, who sought only to rape white women; who were liars and thieves; ignorant and slothful. In short, they were subhumans. Such portrayals left a long standing fear, distrust and antagonism towards black males.

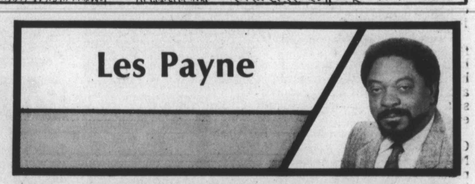
I specifically charged that the coverage in the media and in films, including television films, are having the same effect as did "The Birth of a Nation." Such coverage of young black males is beginning to create an almost instinctive fear, distrust, and, indeed, hatred of them. Out of such fear, distrust and hatred, racist attitudes are spawned and grow.

We have a dreadfully serious problem with a percentage of our young black males. The motion picture, "Colors," rings true. The coverage of drug trafficking by young black males is accurate. We must use every resource we have to end these problems, cost should not be a factor.

But is it fair to always accentuate the negative? Is it fair to ignore the positives? Should not there at least be a balance, and I say, without equivocation, that now there is no balance in coverage. The coverage is such that it almost encourage anti-social behavior.

Come on news commentators; writers of television documentaries; feature writers for national magazines; what about the young black males who live, and work, and plan and dream, not in the shadows of our society, but as good citizens, who do not seek fame or recognition, good citizens who help to hold a community together?

One last question, "What is the hidden agenda behind the negative coverage of young black males?" Do you dare to share it with us?



Les Payne

The candidates debate the issue

A few weeks ago, I got a chance to co-anchor a live hour-long television debate between the three Democratic candidates. Like most newspapermen, I, in my chauvinism, have come to accept the reality of electronic news only reluctantly. Well into the 1960s, I had hoped against all evidence that television as a toy for the masses was a fad headed the way of the dirigible and the hula-hoop.

In recent years, my resistance has been eroded by dozens of appearances on TV shows, most of them news oriented. This experience has not yet allayed my fears that a television personality who has read 50 good books is as rare as an actress who rejects astrology.

Putting a question to a newsmaker on television, I had come to learn, is simple, but formulating one that stuck is quite a challenge. Lawrence Spivak, formerly of "Meet the Press," was a past master. Politicans choked on Spivak's questions even when they were able to slip the noose.

It was an interesting chore preparing for Jesse Jackson, Albert Gore and Michael Dukakis. The trick was to ask a question in such a way that the audience would clearly understand what the candidates were refusing to answer, and, with the camera's eye on them, why.

Since the snows of December, the trio had already participated in 30 encounters with other Democratic candidates who have since fallen away from the hunt. Their answers were slick audio cassettes, keyword coded and filed neatly away in their heads.

The keyword "deficits," say, would bring on the same two-minute response, or a one-minute rebuttal as called for by the debate format, whether in Dallas, Des Moines or St. Louis.

Reporters' questions about issues at home and abroad got the candidates going like so many freight trains; "Contras," click; "Star Wars," clack; "homeless," click; "farm subsidy," clack.

During the flutter of debates, journalists shared certain assumptions and thus candidates tended to get asked, or spared, certain questions. Jackson, for instance, was assumed to be unelectable, so he, and no one else, was often asked what did he really want.

I decided to ask Gore this question, disguising it so as not to set off his alarms.

"The campaign results seem to indicate that you are essentially a regional candidate who has not won a primary outside of the South," I said to Gore. "You have managed to amass 400 delegates. The polls in New York show that you have not yet broken into double digits.

"Given that, and given the fact that you are not likely to win the presidential nomination, is it not true that your campaign essentially now is effectively used to bar the nomination of one of your other opponents here?"

Gore looked stunned even before I finished the question. His condition issued mainly, I think, from the fact that Jackson, not he, was the candidate whose electability, according to the script, was being challenged.

In "challenging the premise of (my) question," Gore cited his primary victories in Nevada and Wyoming and dismissed the reliability of polls. "This race is far from over with (for me)," Gore said.

"A lot of people in New York are looking to an alternative to the approach offered by both of my opponents and that is why there is momentum beginning to occur in my campaign.

"That's why I have had significant endorsements, a lot of excitement and movement . . . I am running to win in this state. I am running to win the nomination."

After taking the predicted drubbing in New York, the Tennessee senator, of course, dropped out.

The rhythm of Jackson's cassette was a bit harder to disrupt. I asked him to put aside his sermonette on beefing up the Coast Guard and state "what specifically you would do as president to interdict the supply of hard drugs on the streets of cities like New York."

With no apparent solution for domestic drug interdiction, Jackson played his answer to the question not asked.

With Dukakis, my first question was fashioned to pout his managerial experience factor into a different perspective.

"You preside over a state with a population less than three quarters the size of New York City," I said. "Your $10.9-billion budget is less than half that presided over by Mayor Koch. Your first term as governor is viewed by some as not being a roaring success.

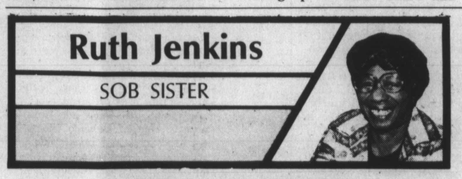
"Why should we expect that your first term as president would be any different, considering that you have not had foreign policy experience, you've not dealt with Gorbachev and you would be inheriting a deficit of 150 billion dollars?"

Dukakis, who did not look well pleased, responded by swinging his 10-year gubernatorial experience against his two opponents like a battle-ax. Interestingly, both Gore and Jackson defended Dukakis' gubernatorial experience as if my criticism would diminish their own qualifications for president.

Throughout the live debate, I was more nervous than during other TV appearances and still have no way of knowing whether we laid gloves on the candidates.

After the show, Kitty Dukakis walked up to black WCBS-TV reporter Randall Pinkston, who had been seated in the studio audience throughout the debate, and said, "You were great; your questions were very fair."

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Ruth Jenkins

SOB SISTER

Who's in charge

If you ask the comedic question "Who is in charge of the Reagan Administration?", you're apt to get a comedic answer. With good reason.

The president has oft been pictured as playing the role of sidelines spectator rather than quarterback on America's athletic field. Relying too often on advisers, notably his strong-willed wife, Nancy.

Critics say she has controlled his sphere of activity based on advice from an astrologer. He staunchly denies that such a star-search has ever influenced his political decisions.

We believe that. So why shift the blame to faraway places? Why take a cheap shot at a decent respectable, unable-to-defend-itself entity?

Despite the snide wiseacre who asked the burning question "What would Reagan have done if the astrologer had advised him to endorse Dukakis (the Democratic contender) instead of Vice President Bush (the Republican hopeful) for election as president?"

Well, it seems that everybody is trying to get into the White House act, one way or another. And astrologers, being taxpaying citizens are equally entitled. One way or another.

The First Family, getting older but not necessarily wiser, certainly has had its share of headaches. So it's understandable if they have increased interest in both aspirins and astrology.

Some of us have problems of the grassroots variety. Day-to-day vexations of existing in a 'hard, cold cruel world'. And we were taught to take our what-to-do? confusions to a heavenly father.

So far, this has worked pretty well. Although sometimes we get an answer which makes us wonder if maybe we had confused the question.

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS



Ethel Payne

BEHIND THE SCENES

Drugs: the problem, search for solutions

First Lady Nancy Reagan's admonition to children is "Just Say No!" The kids are saying "yes" to drugs. So are an estimated 23 million Americans. The problem is out of control and spreading faster across the land than a plague of locusts and killer bees combined.

It has penetrated into small towns of less than 2,000, and like St. George trying to slay the dragon, each time one head is cut off another grows in its place.

Two weeks ago, the Joint Center for Political Studies in Washington held a working lunch session at its headquarters to outline the problem and to come up with some practical strategies for containing the deadly effects of the scourge.

The keynote address was made by Congressman Frank Guarini (D. N.J.), Member of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. The problem is of personal concern to him because his district includes Jersey City, a major port of drug entry on the East Coast.

Both the Federal Government and the private sector are taking the heat for the failure to act more vigorously. One aspect—is the unspoken belief that there is collusion between the enforcers of the anti-drug law and the merchants of narcotics.

The occasional expose of police officers and other officials involved in the profits of the drug trade reinforces the notion that the problem will never be solved so long as the law of supply and demand with its lucrative gains prevails.

Says Rep. Guarini, "The nature of the problem has been understood for 10 years. The problem was not addressed until it became a crisis. The national security is under siege and the enemy is within ourselves."

Some of the grim statistics are: Americans consume annually 180 tons of cocaine, 12 tons of heroin, 200 tons of hashish, and more than 30,000 tons of marijuana.

Eighty percent of the world's cocaine comes from Colombia, South America, a country which is ruled by drug overlords. Their assassination squads reach beyond their borders into the U.S. and European capitals.

The Medelin Drug Cartel is more powerful than the combined military forces of 10 nations.

In the District of Columbia, Washington, the nation's capital, the problem has grown so great that the systematic murders of children by children amounts to genocide. Kids are hooked on the glamor of high life provided through the drug traffic.

Life can be sweet with gold chains, BMWs and pockets full of cash, but it's a short span ending either on a morgue slab or in jail.

In just six months, there have been 33,000 arrests, 8,500 incarcerated, 3,200 paroled, 8,500 involved in the judicial process, 13,000 probations. Hallem Williams, the director of the D.C. Department of Corrections, says that 80 percent of all arrests in D.C. were related to substance abuse.

A dramatic turn in the tide of the drug menace in Washington was the emergence of the Nation of Islam as interventionists.

The theory is that they who have been victimized by the establishment of their political and religious lifestyle have suddenly become the only one to move into an incendiary situation, move decisively and clean out a festering cesspool within hours where police action has been neutralized.

The name of the leader of the Nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan, is enough to send officials such as Mayor Ed Koch of New York into hysteria, and to stir up passions of racial antagonism.

Koch used it in the New York presidential primary to stampede a revolt against the candidacy of Jesse Jackson by the Jewish population. Old sores were opened and may never be healed again because of the Mayor's intemperate and inexcusable exploitation of racial and religious bigotry.

He raised the spectre of Farrakhan, to him the demon, as hated as the Ayatollah Khomeni of Iran, to poison the atmosphere of what should have been the normal routine of the electoral process.

Albert Gore of Tennessee who had naively pinned his presidential hopes on a Koch-Jewish endorsement, was fatally tainted when the Mayor brayed like an ass with his invective, "Any Jew would be crazy to vote for Jesse Jackson."

But when residents of the Mayfair Mansion, a housing complex in northeast Washington appealed to Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, head of the Washington area Muslims for help, they got instant response.

The once affluent housing development was riddled with dope users and dealers who made life so hellish for the law-abiding dwellers that they were afraid for their children and for their own safety.



Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Support the ANC

As millions of voices around the world continue to cry out against racist apartheid in South Africa, there appears to be a crucial turning point on the horizon.

With the exception of the United States and Israel, most of the nations of the world have sought to cut all substantial ties with Pretoria.

In addition, it has become clear which liberation movement has won the popular support of the people of South Africa. No longer is it a question of whom we stand against, but, rather, whom we stand with.

After my recent tour of southern Africa as part of a leadership delegation from the United Church of Christ, I have come to one firm conclusion: the most effective means of supporting the people of South Africa in the struggle to dismantle apartheid is to give all possible, direct support to the African National Congress (ANC).

On April 16, 1988 in Lusaka, Zambia I had the pleasure of taking part in an historic meeting between the leadership of the African National Congress and national leaders of my church.

The ANC delegation was composed of members of their National Executive Committee, including Pallo Jordan, Thabo Mbeki, Ruth Mompati and Jacob Zuma.

The ANC's Religious Affairs Department was also there, including Chaplain Gqiba. The atmosphere was permeated by a sense of mutual respect and solidarity.

What became clear to our delegation was the profound love which the ANC continues to have for the people of South Africa.

We met for an entire day in candid and in-depth discussions concerning the present crisis in South Africa and South Africa's attempts to destabilize all of southern Africa. We also discussed the history and program of the ANC and its vision for the future of South Africa.

Dr. Avery Post, President of the United Church of Christ, stated at the meeting, "The racist apartheid regime in South Africa is perpetrating one of the greatest crime against humanity that has been witnessed in history.

These crimes are not dissimilar or unrelated to the holocaust during World War II, and both of these crimes against humanity were borne out of similar racist/fascist ideologies . . . We are called by God to promote God's justice."

In response, ANC's Pallo Jordan stated, "We have had reason, especially since 1980, to be extremely disappointed with the sorts of responses we have been able to get from the Administration in the United States on issues related to southern Africa.

And we are pleased to have this opportunity to meet with people like yourselves who have been with us in the trenches, fighting for the same end."

Thabo Mbeki focused on the long history and deep affection of the South African people for the African National Congress, reminding us that, "The ANC was founded in 1912 as an organization committed to the democratic, non-racial transformation of South Africa.

"Naturally, we have deep roots within our communities. Generations of black South Africans have grown up in the ANC. So even if they arrested all the leaders and the activists, the community would carry on in the spirit and the name of the ANC."

Mbeki also reported on the latest murderous acts of terrorism committed by the government of South Africa against the ANC: the assassination of Dulcie September, the ANC's Paris representative;

The car-bombing of Albie Sachs, an ANC lawyer in Mozambique; the attempted bombing of ANC's chief representative in Brussels;

And the scores of other persons who have been murdered by South Africa's "Z-death squads" in raids on the neighboring front-line nations.

While I was in Botswana I saw the terrible devastation at the site of a recent raid where South Africa's death squad had murdered and burned the bodies of four people, three of them young women. One of the victims was a church member of the UCC of Southern Africa.

Also at the meeting Ruth Mompati spoke of the millions of children who are being physically and psychologically tortured at the hands of the South African government.

She talked about the ANC youth program that established schools to care for and prepare the youth who escape from South Africa for future leadership.

The beauty of the ANC is that it is preparing future leaders while still respecting the wisdom of the senior leaders of the struggle.

The President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, is 70 years old. He was once the law partner of Nelson Mandela, the noted ANC leader. Mandela has been a political prisoner in South Africa for 26 years.

Those at the meeting reminded us that on July 18th of this year there will be an international celebration of Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday.

As our meeting ended, a member of the ANC delegation requested prayer. Suddenly another member of the ANC began to sing "We Shall Overcome" and, as our voices joined in song, we formed a circle and held hands. As the South Africans say, "Amandla!" — "Power to the people!"



F. Gregory Newton

AIDS, drugs, genocide

Part II

Perhaps the reason for the creation and perpetuation of America's drug culture is to keep the college intellectuals and the potential grassroots civil rights activists too high, confused and desperate to again disturb the quiet and the conscience of the culture's inner decadence.

And now the culture is in the grips of yet another emergency. It is called the "AIDS Epidemic." And likewise, the culture has refused all blame in the new threat — preferring instead to make it a "race" disease — by publishing suggestions that it "might" have begun in West Africa, because a well - known French homosexual had visited there and possibly contracted the disease while there.

Yet, this use of the press to besmirch a race of people — not by fact, but by innuendo and "might be," cannot be-damn the fact of recorded evidence to the contrary, which flies in the face of that strategy of "blaming the victim."

Witness the date - April 3, 1985 - in which it was reported by the news media that the two white nations which invaded and now occupy the soil of dark people in both Africa and Asia-Minor have undertaken an experimental venture to "develop chemical weapons that will kill only *non-white* people."

Those two white nations are "Israel" and "South Africa." To be sure, Israel was the name given to Palestine by Europe's transplanted "white" jews, who now occupy that land; just as South Africa was the name given to south-east Africa by Europe's "white" gentiles, who now occupy that land.

Now these people would kill off those whose lands they have taken. And these are American's allies in racism and exploitation.

This is why the United States, while condemning Nicaragua for crossing the border of Honduras which gives refuge to the Contras-Nicaragua's enemy, she refuses to condemn South Africa or Israel for crossing the borders of Zaire and Lebanon, which give sanctuary to the enemies of South Africa and Israel.

This selectivity points to American hypocrisy and to its aims against the non-white races throughout the world. It is for these reasons that chemical and germ warfare is conducted by these white nations, including the United States.

Now the United States proposes that the AIDS epidemic began in Africa. Could it be that the AIDS epidemic was planted in Africa by those white nations who have been conducting experiments to find such epidemiological germs or chemicals?

Could America, which never denounces these two allies, in or out of the United Nations, be party to that conspiracy?

This might be, when one considers the American hypocrisy of calling for a war against AIDS, on the one hand, while condoning such sexually promiscuous tv enticements as those telephone "love clubs," on the other.

It is such open acceptance of potentially permissive and promiscuous acts which points to the culture as truly a hypocritical one when it claims a desire to halt the spread of AIDS, while spreading the enticements that untimately lead to that disease.

Thus, the evidence is there and documented. We need only to look; for a "holocaust" is pending for those who deny its evidence. It happened that way before - once upon a time - in Germany.

F. Gregory Newton



Walter E. Williams

MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Bootstrap crime protection

Here's columnist Carl Rowan's thinking on crime and terrorism sweeping black neighborhoods: "It seems incredible that black people, so long the victims of mob rule and lynch parties, would be now applauding anti-drug patrols that can only be described as self-glorifying vigilantes."

Let's step back and look at the landscape. In places like Harlem, Oakland, Los Angles, Detroit, and Washington, criminals have virtually taken over black neighborhoods.

Playgrounds, schools and streets have become market places for drugs and drug-related activity that produces holdups, rapes, burglaries, assaults, and murder.

Law-abiding citizens are virtually under house arrest, afraid to even come to their windows, much less venture outside. Kids become addicts.

Young girls turn to prostitution to support their habits, and in the process AIDS grabs a stronger hold. Most of my family lives in North and West Philadelphia, so I get a firsthand look.

On the street where my niece lives, there's a drug house. Since my niece knows it, the neighborhood knows it, surely the police must know it as well. What can (will) the police do?

Aside from their often being outgunned, infiltrated, and intimidated by criminals, laws supported by liberals and civil rights leaders have emboldened criminals to operate openly.

In the face of internal genocide, blacks have begun to police their own neighborhoods. Most notable in this effort have been the Black Muslims. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, Black Muslims have run drug dealers out of a 20-block area.

In Washington, Muslims are working to run drug dealers out of the Mayfair Mansions area. In Oakland, Calif., television news reported citizens, who were not Black Muslims, put the torch to a crack house after having reported it to the police numerous times.

Carl Rowan decries these vigilante activities. But what are the alternatives? Rowan offers this, "The people who legally wear law enforcement badges and operate under the restraints of Miranda and a hundred other Supreme Court decisions are the ones who ought to enforce the law."

Great! That's a pleasing expression of confidence if you don't live in a crime-besieged neighborhood seeing the lives of your loved ones, friends, and neighbors destroyed daily.