EDITORIALS

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THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

All is not lost

If a visitor from a foreign planet happened to pick up a copy of our newspaper, what view of our world would the visitors receive? The specter of racial unrest still looms, evidenced by the ugly situation in Hampden and the ignorant statements of President Reagan concerning Native Americans.

Crime would certainly catch the eye of our visitor, as he reads of an unbelievable alleged rape of an 11-year-old girl. And how favorably would our planet stack up against other members of the solar system when the reader peruses the apparent need for warning signs outside bars? Don't Earthlings know enough to stay away from materials which could harm them?

But let's keep reading, and maybe our perspective will change. Last week thousands converged on the Baltimore Arena to worship, sing, and make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Whether our alien reader worships any sort of higher being is beyond our kin, but the spectacle of thousands in prayer for a better life is certainly awe-inspiring.

And what about the story on our outstanding city school seniors? No planet can be doomed if its progeny is as fine as the young men and women featured in this week's paper.

Yeats, in a classic poem bemoaning the signs of the times, wrote that in present-day life, "the best lack all conviction, (and) the worst are full of passionate intensity."

But, after taking a look at the week in review, courtesy of the AFRO, I think Mr. Yeats, our alien visitor, and anyone else who scans our pages would have to agree that all is not lost. The spirituality of the old and the vigor of the youth still endure, and point the way to a better life for us all.

All news not bad news

Jackson's victory

The nation is not ready for a black man as president. Few care to hear those words, and probably the most enthusiastic assenters to that view are those guys who wear the white sheets or Nazi armbands.

But that painful truth was brought home this spring, as one of the most qualified individuals in America waged a Quixotic tilt at the windmill of national racism.

Jesse Jackson is waging a gallant battle, but one which is foreshortened solely by his race. If Jackson was white, we doubt Mr. Dukakis would find the sailing so smooth as the race for delegates winds down.

However, there is a lesson to be learned from the Jackson candidacy. That lesson is one our fathers and mothers may have been unable to articulate, but one they put into practice every day.

That lesson is simple.

To merely assume that our prospects are limited because of our race is to buy into a soul-destroying myth. One never knows how far one can go until one makes the effort. There is a certain glory in failure when that failure is contrasted with a lack of effort.

What Jackson has done is to raise the possibility of a black man some day making his way into the real halls of power.

The massive effort mounted by party regulars to deny Jackson the nomination is blunt evidence of Jackson's power. How unfortunate it is that that energy could not be channeled toward a more positive goal than merely protecting the status quo.

Those party regulars ignored two important points.

A—The country is in the midst of a fundamental change. B-1 bombers and Star Wars defenses are losing popular support as people begin to see fundamental changes in the way wealth is distributed.

The trade deficit is no longer some economics professor's dreary lecture, but a reality which means lay-offs and cutbacks. People want change, they want compassionate leadership, and Jackson is the only candidate who projects that sort of leadership.

B—Bush and the Republicans are ready. It will take a nimble candidate with a flair for the dramatic to smash the eight-year lock the Republicans have had on the White House.

The election in some ways is reminiscent of the 1948 campaign, when a cocksure, overly smug Thomas Dewey led the Republicans to an unexpected defeat.

The key was the upbeat, indefatigable campaign of Harry S. Truman, who never knew when to admit he was beaten.

Can Dukakis inspire the type of fervor Truman once did? We doubt it, but for the beleagured Democrats, that spirit is sorely needed.

The Democratic party committed its biggest mistake in cutting Jackson. It is not too late to rectify the error, and we hope the party moves quickly to mend its ways.

Meanwhile, despite what happens in Atlanta this summer, the true hero of the 1988 presidential campaign has already emerged. He is Jesse Jackson.

Our Readers Write

Mayor Barry on legalizing drugs

By Marion Barry
Mayor of the District of Columbia

A number of politicians and scholars have been calling for a national debate on the issue of legalizing or decriminalizing drugs. As soon as I said I am in favor of such a debate, some people — particularly reporters — started reporting that I'm in favor of legalizing drugs.

I want to make myself very clear: I am for a drug-free society, I am for a drug-free workplace, drug-free D.C. in fact I'm for zero tolerance. I am drug-free myself. I don't even smoke cigarettes, so I'm nicotine free, also.

But when I put my personal preferences aside, I can see that we are losing what we've been calling the war on drugs. I'm not really sure we've ever mounted a war on drugs anyway; we've had just a few skirmishes or battles.

We have not put all the country's resources into an all-out effort to rid the nation of illicit drugs.

The drug dealers and drug pushers are winning. The people in Central and South America who produce the cocoa leaves are winning. Those who transport drugs into this country are winning.

It's time for us to look at all of our choices, including legalization. We may decide that it's not worth the price we'd pay as a society where the government sells dope. Or we may decide that it's the only way to stop the killing and lawlessness that goes hand in hand with the illegal drug business.

After all, most drugs are already legal, and controlled — drugs such as Valium and codeine.

I believe we must find a way to take the profits out of the drug trade. Right now it's estimated that this is a 150 billion dollar business — that's right a 150 billion dollar business and ball players and young kids can't consume that much dope. A lot of people are involved in illegal drug business—bankers, business people and others.

That's what the killing is about — control of that kind of money. In fact, the price of an ounce of cocaine costs about three times the price of an ounce of gold. Yet, gold has been one of our most precious resources and yet we find that cocaine is more expensive than gold.

If we have a national debate about the merits of legalizing drugs, we could look at what happened during prohibition, when it was against the law to drink alcoholic beverages.

We can look at whether making liquor illegal really cut down on the number of people using it. Or did it only drive the users and sellers underground?

Statistics show that when alcohol became legal, the numbers of people going to the hospital for treatment of alcohol-related illnesses increased. We need to look at why this happened.

We have to do more than just say no to drugs. We have to do more than just have slogans and have rallies and have a good feeling about what we're doing.

Drug abuse has led to the break up of families and threatens an entire generation of our youth as well as some of our adults. Nearly 70 percent of the more than 115 murders committed in Washington this year were drug related.

Questions whether to legalize or decriminalize drugs should be discussed.

But in the mean time, I assure you that the Barry Administration is going to do all within our power to arrest the drug pushers and drug dealers. We also are going to try to help those who come to us for treatment as well as through educational programs to stop people from getting hooked on this poison.

Let us begin the debate, let us discuss all of the angles that there may be. In a democratic society, we should not be afraid to talk about that which is controversial. We're smart enough, we're bright enough and we're stable enough to endure this debate.

AFRO welcomes letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication. Write

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DeWayne Wickham

Presidential Politics

Los Angeles—"Yo, Shakespeare," the dashiki wearing man called out to me from across the hotel lobby. "You here to cover the presidential campaign?"

No, I snapped, angered by my longtime friend's annoying habit of mockingly comparing my newspaper columns to the works of the English playwright.

What are you doing in California? I asked him. What are you protesting against this time?

"Hey, like I'm always about something serious man," he responded. "I don't waste my time doodling 'gar-barge' for the white man."

For Ungawah Jones—a 1960s radical and figment of my imagination—most things in life are reduced to a consideration of black and white.

"I'm here for Tuesday's primary election. I'm in the race, brother. I'm gonna to take my act all the way to the White House!"

What are you talking about? Ungawah, I asked.

"I'm running for president, man. Come November I'm gonna be your new leader," he said.

Wait a minute Ungawah, I said. Isn't it a little late for you to be getting into the campaign? Everybody knows that George Bush and Michael Dukakis are going to be their party's nominees.

"Yeah, and I'm gonna to be my party's nominee," Ungawah answered. "I'm doing what Jesse should have done. I started my own party. I'm the candidate of the Afro-American Peoples Party.

"You see, Jesse messed up. He let them con him into joining their team—they told him he could be a player in their party, and now he's about to be benched, permanently!"

Come on Ungawah, what are you talking about. Jesse Jackson has been a major player in this year's presidential campaign.

"See that's where you don't know what you're talking about fool. The primaries ain't nothin' but spring training. The real season doesn't start 'til the general election campaign begins in September and by then Jesse will be on the sidelines," Ungawah explained.

"That's them smart-a.. white boys that Andy Young was talkin' about. They saw how popular Jesse has become and tricked him right out of the real race." Ungawah offered. "Now it's up to me to be the first black man in the White House."

But how can you get the votes, I asked. You don't have any experience in elected office.

"That's the propaganda they ran down on Jesse. Hey man, I'm gonna do it the same way Ronald Reagan did.

"I got this Haitian brother on my campaign staff. He can work some serious roots on folks. He's got some stuff brewing for them racist in South Africa that I'm saving for Inauguration Day," Ungawah boasted.

"I even broke down and hired a college-educated sister to be my press secretary. Her name is Janet Cooke. She used to work for that liberal rag *Washington Post*."

Hold on Ungawah! Janet Cooke lost her job at the Post after she got caught making up quotes.

"Yeah, well that was a bad move on the Post's part. She made the paper look good—won it a Pulitzer Prize, he countered.

"Janet Cooke can do for me what Larry Speakes did for Reagan. Make me look good. A president needs a press secretary who has a way with words!"

I don't know Ungawah. It all sounds a little crazy to me. Nobody wants to see a black president in the White House more than I do, but I don't think America is ready for you.

"Well, ready or not here I come! I'm in this race to stay. I know what it takes to make things right in this country. I'm gonna name Stokley Carmichael secretary of state and H. Rap Brown, defense secretary.

"And just to prove I'm no black racist, I'm gonna make my man William Kunsler attorney general," Ungawah offered proudly.

It seems that you have things all figured out, I conceded. All you need to do now is win in November.

"No problem. You know the Haitian brother I was telling you about, the one who works the roots? Well, he's figured out how I can wipe out America's trade deficit, balance the budget and fund a war of liberation in South Africa without raising taxes.

"What do you call that if it's not a winning strategy?" Ungawah asked.

How about voodoo economics? I answered.

DeWayne Wickham's column is syndicated nationally by the Gannett News Service.

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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

Hampden horror

A recent series of events have culminated in a harrowing experience for one family and the outrage of nearly everyone else in the city. Memories of an era we had hoped were preserved well enough in our history books have been rekindled because, once again, racism is raising its ugly head.

Like any other family, Eric Boyce-Bey and his wife, Carolyn Braxton-Bey, want to live in a place that is affordable, crime-free, and convenient. They thought they had found such a home on Keswick Road in the Hampden section of the city.

Shortly after moving in, it became apparent that their new home might be the setting for their worst nightmare. A nightmare all too real and seemingly without end.

Windows shattered by rocks were the initial warnings that the Boyce-Beys were not welcomed in Hampden. Neighborhood youth shouting "die n. . . ." were the next sign.

Threats that the house will be firebombed had resulted in round-the-clock police protection.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that, for the safety of their three small children, Eric Boyce-Bey and Carolyn Braxton-Bey will probable leave Hampden, but the bigotry they face may not.

Ironically, the Boyce-Bey family's crisis came to a head at roughly the same time that the House of Representatives approved the Hate Crime Statistics Act (H.R. 3193) by an overwhelming margin.

This legislation would require the U.S. Justice Department to collect and publish statistics on crime (i.e. homicide, assault, vandalism, and arson) which mainfest prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

Data compiled by the Maryland State Police has already proven that acts of cross burnings, the paintings of swastikas, and gay bashing are not always isolated incidents, and that such information can be used to assist in preventing hate crimes.

I visited the Boyce-Bey family twice in the last week and was touched by their calm reserve and their deep religious convictions. While listening to the painful saga of the family's experience, each of their words reinforced the belief that acts of bigotry have no place in our society. They are un-American and unacceptable.

As Moorish Americans, they perhaps share a perspective different from most. Too often they not only fight prejudice because of their skin color but also because of their religion, and an understanding of American history that challenges them to do more and be more.

Thus, they are proud. And, through the simple eloquence of their example, they see, to educate us all, to who they are and how they have come to be.

And yet as I stood with the Boyce-Beys on Keswick Road, the words of a fifteen year old resident of Hampden kept ringing in my ears.

"Desiree," as she is known, was quoted as saying, "I just don't like [black people]. It's not the way I have been raised. This place is white, I wouldn't move down to Cherry Hill, why should they move here?"

Had these words come from an older person, maybe we could have concluded that the goals and accomplishments of the civil rights movement had escaped a few citizens here and there.

But Desiree, born in 1973, emphasize that her **upbringing** precludes her from judging people by the content of their character but rather by the color of their skin.

Governments can pass all the bills they want. But the Desirees of Hampden and other communities serve as important reminders that we still have a distance to go in our efforts to erase racial prejudice from people's minds.

AFRO SURVEY

Will the class of '88 fare better than class of '68?

Michelle McDougald

Michelle McDougald, 21, student: "No. I don't think so. Once you graduate out of high school, all they want to know on a job interview is do you have any experience. Back then, I think some one would be more likely to give you a job. Now, they don't give you a chance, especially if you're black."

Ann Alston

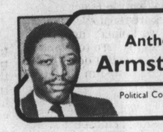
Ann Alston, 37, substitute teacher: "I think generally its better now, but, there are pros and cons. When we came out, we knew how to read, nowadays the graduates do not know how to read. Today, the opportunities are unlimited, but it depends on how much you want to apply yourself and invest in your future. Before, they might have you do a job and train you. Today, they just want to know how many degrees you have. You can work your way out of school and not be able to write your name.

John Parks

John Parks, 35, computer repairman: "Of course, there are more opportunities today, especially in technical areas. More businesses are coming into the Baltimore area . . . . defense plants, Westinghouse. People who get into more technical fields will have more opportunities."

Benjamin McCall

Benjamin McCall, 44, accountant: "I'm not going to say they have more opportunities today. In the 60's and 70's, opportunities for minorities were greater. Some of the gains blacks made in the 60's and 70's are being taken away now. I would say it is at least as had, if not harder, for blacks to break into jobs, and it is also harder to get money for further education."



Anthony Armstrong
Political Consultant

The Academy Awards

Ronald Reagan was once an actor; let's get that fact out of the way right now. That said, however, is the pressing need, especially among black America, to see the president in some other lights. The joke we've carried on for some eight years has worn thin, while the real issues of the last eight years have become increasingly thick.

Ronald Reagan is the president, like it or not. Because he is, there is the practical need to assess this man from the vantage point of the fact of the office itself, even if we can't get over the old jokes about an old actor.

Every president, as if he's reacting to some invisible hand, comes to office with an agenda, Reagan's has been the conservative agenda-stronger defense, less government intrusion, school prayer, greater free enterprise, etc. Yet, all these things are largely for domestic consumption.

On the international front, things have been quite something else. Example: suppose you have a car that needs new tires, and a new engine. So, you buy four new tires because they're on sale, but your engine still doesn't work. Obviously, you're still nowhere-right?

The point is clear, you can fix all you want, but if you don't fix the right things your car still won't move. The analogy somewhat describes the last eight years of American policy, both here at home, and on the international front.

One of the shortfalls of living in the Washington, D.C. corridor is that we tend to get a rather narrow liberal interpretation of most things. And many of us, following along after the pundits, fall into the myopia of the liberal perspective, while we forget that most of America's sensibilities are somewhere else.

For now, America's sensibilities are not so much centered on liberal vs conservative ideas, but, instead, on whether and how this country will fare in the year two thousand and beyond. The old actor has shown he knows at least that much.

So while most of us go on complaining about old issues — food stamps, why we can't get this job or that, whether Reagan is a good actor or bad-the rest of the country is focused on entirely different things.

Reagan and Gorbachev (remember he's the Soviet Leader) are proving the point more clearly every day. These men are, in a very real sense, cousins. What they are trying to do is end what is essentially a family feud.

They are doing so because they recognize that while they go on playing at being archenemy - mostly for the benefit of the unknowing - the real adversary is someone else - namely the peoples of the Pacific Ocean basin.

We go on laughing ourselves silly about Nancy Reagan's astrologer-incidentally, what's your sign? - and about Reagan's habit of falling asleep on camera. The cousins, on the other hand, go about the real business of redefining and protecting their mutual interest.

Perhaps we need to stop laughing so much and look at what's really going on, what's really important.

It was not and is not to our advantage to continue the wholesale diminishing of the reality of our own plight, as we go about the business of giggling at a president who has done more to redefine America's foreseeable future, than any president since F.D.R. (that's Franklin Delano Roosevelt).

As the Soviets and the (white) Americans go about dealing with the realities of the future, wo go on dealing with stuff that isn't even worthy of the past.

If the real issues for the Soviets and the Americans have to do with building a bulwalk against the threat from Asia, then our real issue(s) is building a bulwalk against those among us who consistently tramp on our own interest.

Consistently, we put forth our worst and dumbest, while we allow them to parade as our best and brightest. Talk about enemies; the greatest enemies black people have today are other black people.

My point is certainly not to paint Reagan as an example of anyone close to the best and brightest of anything - even presidents - but it is to say that he has at least dealt with the issues facing America, and sometimes in reasonably successful ways.

On the other hand, too much of our leadership never even looks at ways to solve the problems that so fracture our interest. Our leaders seem not to want to even define what those interest are, perhaps because in doing so they would point uncomplimentary fingers at themselves.

We go about shouting to the rooftops about our own factories. We go on fussing about child care and child abuse; yet, we say nothing to our young about sexual abstinence.

We go on being embarrassed about our own mothers and fathers; who had little education; yet, those of us who have some education can't seem to build as much as our "stupid" parents did.

We go on seeing elected officials, that look like you and me, do things to you and me that we would kill anyone else for even attempting: yet, we tuck in our tails and say or do nothing about it.

Yet, we go on laughing at an old actor who's giving the Academy Award performance of his life. Strange, we people called black people.

You ask, what are our interest? That's an easy one to answer: they are the same as any other group or race of people on this earth-economic well being, family, protection from harm, and general world peace. These are not just the issues of someone else, and no one else has a monopoly on their solutions.

Those solutions just happen to be there - in the cosmos, if you will - and applying them is not the privilege of any one group or another. Yet, the solutions must be applied if they are going to serve anyone, and especially us blacks (Afro-Americans, Negroes, Colored People, and yes, Moorish Americans too - whatever you wish to be known as).

Yet, we go on laughing at Ronald Reagan; and the sad part about it is there's nothing funny! No, the business of governing America these last eight years has definitely not been a laughing matter.

The changes in the world won't let it be; and it least Reagan has confronted many of those changes. That's more than I can say about the leadership blacks have suffered under during the same time period. Maybe what we need is some Academy Award winning actors too.

F. Gregory Newton
Educator

The end of a beginning

And so, we have reached the end of what is only a beginning—a beginning in the embarrassing but honest expose of the American culture as it truly is. But such was the task of the Civil Rights Movement— to expose the truth.

And a basic American truth is that one racial group (called "white") has subjugated all the other racial groups (called "non-white"). Further, it is a truth that this subjugation has been given the "air" of dignity, legality, and justification by the culture, in that "Constitutional" sounding labels have been attached to the groups.

The labels are: (a) "majority" (ascribed to the "white" group), and (b) "minority" (ascribed to the "non-white" groups). This is no accident of chance or coincidence, however; for the term "majority" implies "major," while the term "minority" implies "minor."

Thus, the white race has legalized itself as the "major" race; while it has legalized the non-white races as the "minor" races, creating a "caste" system.

This is significant because the terms which the United States of America claims to hold dear are: (a) "democracy" and (b) "Majority rule." The dictionary defines "democracy" as "a state of society characterized by formal equality of rights and privileges." Yet, it is obvious that America's non-whites are continually denied those rights and privileges which whites continue to enjoy.

Therefore, if "democracy" is the American dream, and "racism" is its nightmare, then those Americans who insist that theirs is a democracy are "dreaming" within a "nightmare." For this is the true America. The other is but a dream.

And so, we should be not angry with those who dare to speak the truth of what America is. We should be angry instead with America—who dares to claim she is what she is not.

Thus, the American culture is guilty of an Un-Constitutional act—the act of determining "majority rule" by "race," rather than by "votes."

What then is to be learned from these facts finally? Is it only that we men are equal in our arrogance and devilment? For, indeed we are! But what we must learn, inspite of our shared iniquitous natures, is that neither of us has the right to oppress the other.

And, since it is the people of color who have suffered the greater yoke of oppression at the hands of the more pale of men, it is the "hue man" (but indeed, all honorable men) who must be about the business of removing that oppression.

Thus, to this end, the "Hue man" must strive more, and trifle less. He must plan more, and play less. He must "over-achieve" more, and "over-dose" less. He must be and remain impatient with all that is negative to "his" full thrust toward freedom, dignity, and growth.

If he is asked to speak low on the matter, he must shout it out all the louder. If he is implored to go slow, he must quicken his pace. He must be as relentless as untiring for his freedom, dignity, and growth as others are against it.

For "freedom" is kin to the "soul," "dignity" is kin to the "self," and "growth" is the bedrock of "life's fulfillment." And for these he "must" be profound. The incomparable Frederick Douglass stated it this way:

"It is not light that is needed, but fire;
It is not the gentle shower, but thunder
We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.
For the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed."