

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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ERNEST H. PITT
Publisher

NDUBISI EGEMONYE
Co-Founder

DENNIS C. SCHATZMAN
Managing Editor

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Office Manager

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Advertising Manager

MICHAEL A. PITT
Circulation Manager

VINSON DEWBERRY
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EDITORIALS

A cry in the wilderness

THELMA Small, the demure but serious owner of TES Dress Shop on Fifth and Liberty, came before the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity in an eleventh-hour plea for help.

"Ours is a cry in the wilderness," she told the men and women who see more African-Americans in a given week than any other leaders in the Winston-Salem area. She was pleading on behalf of the 14 merchants who will be uprooted and possibly destroyed if the federal court judges have their bullying way.

They have forced the city government to ignore a \$250,000 study, paid for with taxpayers' hard-earned money, and are trying to force a proposed transit center into a bad location.

In response, the Ministers Conference vows to "fill City Hall" Monday night at 7 p.m. Let us show our support for the owners of these small businesses and be there.

Our nation's greatest cleric, Martin Luther King, once said, "A threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Let us show our support for these small minority businesses by showing up at City Hall on Monday night. For tomorrow, you may be next.

The Goetz verdict

THE jurors in the Bernhard Goetz case who said on national television that race played no part in the verdict are either hopelessly deceived or being simply less than candid.

One juror even went so far as to say that if the defendant -- Goetz -- had been black and the teen-agers he shot had been white, the decision would have been the same.

The record of American jurisprudence simply does not support such an assertion.

Two recent cases tell the story.

In one, Edward Earl Johnson, a 26-year-old African-American, died in the gas chamber at Parchman Prison during the early morning hours of May 21. He was judged guilty of robbing a white woman in Mississippi and killing the sheriff's deputy who responded to the call.

This judgment came in spite of the fact that the woman who was robbed originally said that Johnson wasn't the robber. She later changed her mind. Johnson had no previous record and worked at a local factory in Walnut Grove, Miss.

On the night of the robbery and killing, Johnson's car broke down in the general neighborhood of the woman's house. Johnson called a repair truck for assistance.

No court testimony put him on the scene of the crime, simply in the vicinity. No court evidence provided him with a motive, or put the murder weapon in his hand. Yet a Mississippi jury returned a guilty verdict without benefit of motive, real opportunity or a weapon.

That racist tradition, which unfortunately is alive and well in America, is why an African-American facing court under the same charges and weight of evidence as Goetz would have been convicted on all charges, not just one.

But the racism of this nation, supported and fed by the court system, cuts both ways. African-Americans aren't always its victims, but whites almost always appear to be the target of its benefits.

Consider, then, the case of Vincent Chin, 27, an Asian-American who was beaten to death in 1982 by a white man and his stepson. The killing took place in a parking lot outside a Detroit restaurant.

In court, eyewitnesses testified that the two men killed Chin, and the two men -- Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz -- admitted killing the Asian-American.

But the presiding judge allowed the two men to plead guilty to manslaughter. The judge, Charles Kaufman, sentenced the two men to probation and a \$3,000 fine.

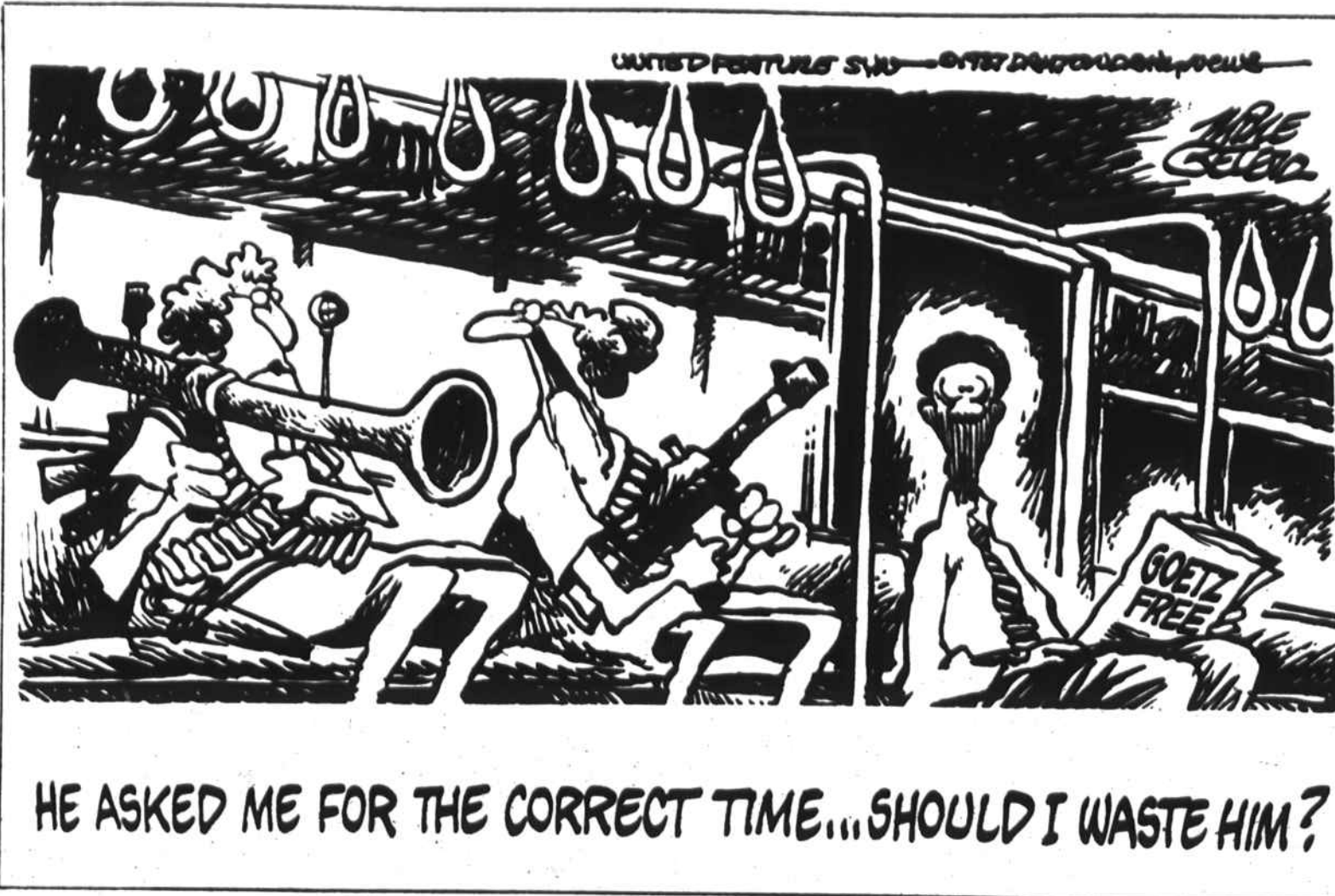
Why?

"We're talking here about a man (Ebens) who's held down a responsible job with the same company for 17 to 18 years," Kaufman explained before announcing his judgment. "And his son is employed and a part-time student You don't make the punishment fit the crime; you make the punishment fit the criminal."

There it is!

Two cases that prove that America still condones racism, as if proof were needed, and that Goetz was found not guilty of all but the gun possession charge because he is white and the young men he shot -- menacing or not -- were African-Americans.

So make no mistake, the Goetz verdict was racist.



HE ASKED ME FOR THE CORRECT TIME... SHOULD I WASTE HIM?

Jesse'd be halfway there, if only ...

NEW YORK -- Since the withdrawal of Gary Hart from the presidential race, there has been a great deal of talk and speculation within some media and within certain political circles that the prospects for the Rev. Jesse Jackson's candidacy have greatly improved as a result.

It would seem reasonable to assume this, given that the departure of a front-runner usually means that the second-place candidate gains in stature and resources. However, this is not the usual scenario and will not follow the characteristic pattern. If Jesse Jackson were white, he'd be halfway to the presidency by now. But Jesse Jackson is black. And Jesse Jackson is progressive. And the Democratic Party is structured to guarantee that Jesse will not gain from the folding of the front-runner's campaign.

I am a strong supporter of Jesse Jackson. I backed him in 1984 and I plan to do so again in the 1988 Democratic primary. But we mustn't be seduced by the momentary equalization of percentages in the popularity polls and by the descriptions of Jackson as a possible "front-runner."

Jesse Jackson does not gain from Hart's departure for one very simple reason. Racism. And I don't mean the racism of individual white voters who may have supported Hart's campaign. I mean the racism of the Democratic Party -- its structures, its rules, and its process.

While Jackson may participate to a certain extent in the inner life of the Democratic Party, he is

GUEST COLUMN

By LENORA FULANI

nothing like the white candidates, all of whom, whatever their political beliefs, are hooked in to some segment of the official party structure. When Hart's support is redistributed, it will end up in the hands of one or several of the other white candidates.

Jackson has been frozen out of the process that dominates and determines the selection of the Democratic nominee because the white party bosses don't want and don't intend for him to win.

It is for these reasons that I am firmly committed to running a black candidate, with the Rainbow social vision, for the presidency as an independent in 1988. The New Alliance Party, the country's only black-led, multiracial progressive independent electoral party, has already begun a national ballot access drive to secure a position on the ballot for that black independent in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

This independent campaign is in no way a detraction from Jackson's primary bid. In fact, it is just the opposite. But the African-American community must have an alternative to the dead end of Democratic Party racism, exclusion and discrimination. We cannot go on as the second-class citizens of the Democratic Party -- always loyal, never rewarded. We need to move on to an independent, black-led, multiracial party that

is fundamentally based on our agenda, our concerns, the needs of our communities and our children. We need a third party.

I have already spoken with Rev. Jackson about our plan to support his primary run with complete dedication and then -- barring his winning the Democratic nomination -- moving on to back a black independent. This two-pronged plan is called "Two Roads Are Better Than One." I have urged -- and continue to urge -- Jesse Jackson to keep the door open to allowing the voters of the Rainbow movement to vote their conscience and not party line after the convention here in Atlanta.

There are many, many thousands of people across this state and this country who recognize that the Democratic Party applies a racist double standard when it comes to blacks.

Our people have a powerful tradition, a moving history, of fighting against that double standard and for our freedom. We must continue that tradition and we must continue that fight. Only this time the fight must be to lead our people through the Jackson primary campaign and out of the Democratic Party, onto the independent path. In 1988, two roads are better than one.

Dr. Lenora Fulani is an Executive Board member of the New Alliance Party and director of the Community Clinics of the Institute of Social Therapy and Research.

Rise in minimum wage is overdue

NEW YORK -- Five years ago the nation was debating a youth subminimum wage. Conventional wisdom said that high wages caused a lack of competitiveness and a loss of jobs.

Today, the debate centers on the long-overdue rise in the minimum wage.

Congress is considering action that would raise the minimum wage in steps from the current \$3.35 an hour to about \$4.65 in three years.

The current minimum wage has not been raised since 1981. But the cost of living has risen 28 percent since then. That means the minimum wage has been effectively cut by 28 percent over the last six years.

Historically, the minimum wage has been at a level of 50 percent of the average wage for non-supervisory private workers. That relationship held until the early 1970s, when it dipped below the 50-percent target.

And in the 1980s the traditional relationship was drastically broken. Today's minimum is less than 40 percent of the average wage.

It's time to play catch-up now. The minimum wage is a good place to start, since raising it would enable many families to work their way out of poverty by earning a living wage.

Only about a third of all workers earning the minimum

TO BE EQUAL

By JOHN JACOB

wage are teen-agers. The rest are adults -- and many of them are family heads.

A basic principle of a democratic economic system is a living wage. Today's minimum is not a living wage -- a full-time

new jobs are in the low-wage service sector, so a higher minimum will raise living standards for workers in the fastest-growing jobs.

But there is a downside that can't be dismissed. A rise in the minimum wage will mean some job losses. Small businesses will be less likely to hire new people and will be more likely to lay off



worker making the legal minimum today earns about \$1,770 less than the poverty line for a family of three.

Because wage scales for many jobs are tied to the legal minimum, a rise in the minimum will have an important spillover effect, raising wages of millions who are slightly above the official poverty line -- people who are poor by any definition but the government's.

That's important because most

workers. That has to be faced. There will have to be some kind of trade-off here, and the balance favors going ahead with a higher minimum.

The best way to deal with that problem is to ensure training and skills programs that help low-wage workers move into better jobs.

John E. Jacob is president of the National Urban League.

Maybe they'll figure it out

VERNON ROBINSON
Chronicle Columnist

A busload of black church members making a fellowship visit to Winston-Salem arrive at a local motel. The group leader goes to the check-in desk to sign in and pick up the room keys. The manager says that there must be some mistake, even after the group shows their reservation confirmation.

When the group leader asks to use the phone to call the local host congregation, the group is refused and is directed across the street. Finally, after the group gets checked in, the manager closes the pool due to "chemical imbalance," kicking black kids out of the pool while white guests remain -- evidently not affected by the "chemicals."

A white hair stylist with a booming integrated clientele decides to sell her shop and move her clientele to another establishment. She begins looking for a place to rent a chair.

She finds the ideal location, inquires about renting the chair and tells the manager that she has some black clients. The manager answers, "Black people won't fit in with this clientele."

Did these incidents happen 30 years ago? How about 20 years ago? Ten years ago?

These two incidents happened three weeks ago. Are you really shocked?

Winston-Salem has a long way to go in terms of race relations. It is still OK to sing racially offensive songs at political gatherings (a Lincoln Day dinner, no less). When the Lawrence Joel Memorial Coliseum was dedicated, those who fought tooth and nail against naming the building after a black man stood smiling as "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" was sung as part of a medley.

Personally, I do not mind if these folks keep fighting the Civil War -- as long as they keep losing.

Doesn't it strike you as odd that Larry Womble makes years of substantive contributions to the Board of Aldermen, but when he raises the name of the Dixie Classic Fair with several other issues, the Winston-Salem Journal runs the Dixie story for several days?

This is the same Journal that cannot find any "qualified" black reporters in the same town that a "qualified" black police chief cannot be found. Maybe there's something in the water?

Greensboro's daily paper has managed to hire a black assistant managing editor. When the Klan marched this time around, Greensboro had a black chief of police.

You may not have been aware of a study that the city fathers commissioned to see what opinions corporate relocators, the people who decide where companies move, have about Winston-Salem. Black folks won't be surprised to hear that these executives said Winston-Salem was racially divisive.

Other folks were surprised -- probably the same folks who don't understand why black folk are upset that the Crosby raised close to \$700,000 and gave less than \$1,000 to black-controlled charitable groups in Winston-Salem. They probably don't understand the apparent double standard with regard to city guaranteed loans. Can you imagine how anybody could think of our city as racially divisive?

A lot of people are concerned about the Klan. I prefer the loonies in the white sheets. It's the respectable ones in the pinstriped suits that you have to watch out for.

One of these days, those who run this town will figure out that racism is not only dumb and immoral, but it's costing them millions in economic development as well.

Vernon Robinson is chairman of the 21st Century PAC of North Carolina.