

# EDITORIALS

## Black History Awareness

Last week on ABC-TV's "Nightline", host Ted Koppel moderated a debate between a black Chicago educator and a black actor who was appearing in that city in the play, "Tom Sawyer", adopted from a book of the same name. The educator expressed the viewpoint that the book should be banned from school libraries because it uses the word "nigger" which is very offensive, especially to young blacks. The actor's view was that the book is a quality piece of literature that reflects some of the historic conditions of its time.

Furthermore, eminent black historian John Hope Franklin suggests in a recent newspaper article that historians "think straight" about man's historic past. Dr. Franklin's article states that "...historians and would-be historians have been remarkably adept in using history (or the lack of it) to promote a favored position." The Chicago educator wants to eliminate certain aspects of history because they might be offensive to blacks. Likewise, in 1959 the Daughters of the American Revolution wanted to ban about 250 high school and college textbooks because the books contained pictures of unemployed Americans during the Great Depression in government free food lines. The Daughters made the assumption that pictures of the free food lines represented a bad image of America instead of keeping them in historic perspective.

Any distortion or omission of historic facts, whether they reflect positively or negatively on a particular group of people, geographic region or otherwise would be to undermine the very value of history - that is - a storehouse of the past experiences of mankind.

Concern for integrity in this area takes on even greater significance when the Association of American Colleges report that the college curriculum has been watered down to the point that "almost anything goes" and the traditional 4-year bachelor's degree has lost much of its intrinsic value. Among the areas of intellectual slothness said to be too often tolerated by colleges and universities is that of a lack of "historical consciousness," that is, not meaningful sense of past events.

Thus, as we celebrate Black History Month, we must be ever mindful of the need to think straight about Black History in order to assure accurate recording and analysis of black contribution and involvement.

After all, a people, a region, or a nation, are first and foremost the products of their past and their experiences. Without our history properly recorded we have no sense of who we are or where we have come from.

Thus, within the hoopla of Black History Month, let us pause to give some intellectual thought and pursuits to what our history is all about. If we don't we may not have a need for Black History Month next year.

## South Africa-The Unknown

Senator Teddy Kennedy made a recent trip to South Africa presumably to express support for the plight of that nation's majority black population that is ruled by a small white minority. While reports indicate that Senator Kennedy was generally warmly received wherever he traveled, his visit became a rude awakening for him. Unfortunately, not adequately aware of the complex nature of the civil rights struggle of the blacks, "cape coloured" Indians and other mixed race people in that nation, Kennedy's strong criticisms were severely attacked by all factions along racial and political lines.

Kennedy, like most Americans, doesn't know or understand the many aspects of South Africa's highly complex political, racial and social climate. In particular, few Americans understand how drastically different the colored peoples are. First, in America white comprise about 89 percent and black, 11 percent of the population. In South Africa white comprise only 20 percent of the population and have absolute rule over the 80 percent black and mixed colored peoples.

South Africa is a nation where the police can arrest or detain a person without official cause and imprison him/her for an indefinite period of time.

Nelson Mandela, the leader of the South Africa's black underground recently rejected a conditional offer of freedom from 21-years in prison, if he would renounce

overthrow of the government by force. In his first public statement in 21 years - a violation of the law- Mandela said in a statement read by his daughter to a crowd of 8,000 in the enforced all-black township of Suweto, "Only free men can negotiate.

Prisoners cannot enter into contract. I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people, to be free." Such courage brings quickly to mind thoughts of Martin Luther King Jr.

Other things too little understood about South Africa is that a major part of secondary and college education for blacks and other minorities is paid for by American corporations; most non-whites are required to live in suburban ghetto townships often without in-door running water; all non-whites are required to carry ID cards when in the white areas and must produce them upon demand by a policeman at any time; unemployment among non-whites remain constant at about 22 percent; non-whites are paid less than half that of whites for the same work; and there are classes of non-white people: cape colored (partly white), Indians, other Asian people and blacks, each with separate schools and living areas, each on a social pecking order as stated but below whites. This is indeed quite different from the racial, economic and social problems Americans know. Yes we need to know more about South Africa before making policy decisions.



## "There Ain't Gonna Be Anyone Like Him"

"There ain't ever gonna be anyone like him, not now, not ever. He was the first one, you know...He was the first one." A phrase commonly said after the shocking news of the death of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., in April 1972.

In the public eyes Powell was exceptionally extraordinary, larger-than-life, thus causing him to be beyond description. He was neither dull, boring or without style. Controversy was the essence of his existence! Whether he was fighting for Civil Rights, chairing the House Education and Labor Committee, or womanizing -there was always controversy.

As a Harlem congressman and as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Christendom, Powell was able to establish the most powerful black political base the nation had seen at that time. Adam Powell, Jr. was the first black leader in the nation who was financially supported by the people he served. Affording him the opportunity to freely speak his mind.

In the early 1940's the state of New York realigned its districts thus giving Harlem a new congressional seat. Powell took the opportunity and launched his national-political career and became the East's first black member of the House of Representatives in 1945. His primary concerns were those of discrimination in the military, capitol hill facilities and banding federal monies for projects in which discrimination took place. Dur-



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ing his political career he became spokesman for and represented not only his Harlem constituents but black people across America.

Powell reached the high point of his career as a civil rights advocate and a statesman when he became Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee in 1961. During his short five years he produced 58 of the most aggressive bills during the Kennedy-Johnson Administration. Such bills include the War on Poverty, the Liberalization of the School Lunch Program and the Manpower and Development Training for more jobs. He achieved a high level of winning by never having a bill from his committee defeated on the House floor once it was presented.

Even though he reigned in glory on the House Committee, the vast political empire he had

achieved began to crumble. Lawsuits, public humiliation and loss of constituent support began to surface. Powell attempted to fight back through numerous speeches outlining what he had done.

As time passed more controversy followed Powell. He took a European tour with his 21-year-old office receptionist, Corrine Huff, Miss Ohio of 1960 and Mrs. Tamara Wall a woman who served as Labor Counsel for Education and Labor. It was stated that the trip was designed to study equal employment opportunities for women in common market countries. The trip was plagued by bad press calling the trip immoral and a farce. The story goes on. An investigation was set out of Powell's affairs by a select committee of House members - reason being that Powell misused public funds to take the tour and that he was in contempt of the New York State Courts.

The Committee recommended that Powell be censured publicly and stripped of his seniority. However on March 1, 1967, the House overrode the recommendation and voted 307 to 116 to exclude Powell from Congress totally. This in a sense broke his spirit. For the first time in over 25 years Powell was completely vulnerable. Even after Harlem re-elected him in a special poll back to his seat and after the Supreme Court found the House in violation of the constitution in excluding him, Powell maintained a low profile and showed signs of insecurities.

Powell felt the only way to find peace and contentment within himself was to step out of the limelight. So he and his last companion, Darlene Expose, retreated to Bimini, a Bahamian island, and spent his final years. Meanwhile, full scale campaigning took place to elect Charles B. Rangel. He defeated Powell in the Democratic Primary and in 1971 assumed Powell's seat in congress and became the first change of mind in Harlem in 26 years.

Even after the bad press and adverse controversy Powell's fans and some supporters remained true. His brilliance, style and compassion radiated through his outgoing personality. He gave people hope and results. He was considered the leader of the pack that spawned Leon Sullivan, Wyatt Tee Walker, Ralph Abernathy, Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King, Jr. After Powell began his "crusade" church after church caught the spirit. Thus when Dr. King began his Civil Rights Movement, churches and ministers across the country acknowledged that social justice was more than Gospel applied to Modern Life. He fought, struggled and finished while maintaining strong faith in the church and God.

All of Harlem and people across the country mourned his death on April 4, 1972. He even had the audacity to die in a hospital in cosmopolitan Miami! He lived a life of glamour and indulgence - but he never forgot the people who made him by doing everything in his power to better their life styles. However, he made it clear that one man or woman cannot do everything.

## From Capitol Hill

# Congress "Must" Pass Civil Rights Restoration Act

By Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post

Last year the Supreme Court made it possible for states, local governments and most institutions that receive federal funds to discriminate against minorities, women, the disabled, and senior citizens. The decision limited anti-discrimination to a particular education department that discriminated. Before Grove City, all agencies that received federal funds were prohibited from discriminating against minorities, women, disabled and senior citizens.

The 1984 Civil Rights bill which restored the pre-Grove City cuts was passed by the House of Representatives, overwhelmingly, only to be killed by the Senate.

Senator Bob Dole, the new majority leader, hastily drew up a bill, during the last days of the 98th Congress, which states that there can be no discrimination in the use of federal funds by educational institutions. In a press statement, Dole announced that he has introduced his civil rights bill. He feels this is a compromise that civil rights groups should accept. Dole emphasized that the grandfather provision contained in his bill which states, "that in circumstances not involving educational institutions, the jurisdictional reach of these laws as it existed prior to the Grove City case should continue to apply." The majority leader says his bill is a middle ground approach which can build consensus support.

Ralph Neas, Executive Director of the Leadership Conference, an organization of a cross of ethnic, religious, racial, sex and national groups says the Dole bill only refers



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to educational institutions, but does not ban discrimination in federally supported areas of health, social services, transportation and housing. Even in education it is flawed. It could codify Grove City. The Leadership Conference says, "while the Administration-Dole bill purports to remedy the consequences of the Grove City decision, it could leave millions of American unprotected by our civil rights laws. Such a result is unacceptable to those who believe in equality of opportunity for all our nation's citizens."

The Dole-Administration bill could deny medical care for blacks at a state hospital, even though it receives federal funds, could refuse to permit adoption of disabled children, the elderly could be denied immunization by a city's clinic. Even in education, elementary and high school girls could be denied access to certain courses.

Senator Kennedy characterized the Senate's action in refusing to pass the 1984 Civil Rights bill as highly unfortunate. He stated that

no congress committed to the principles of equal justice can permit the Grove City decision to stand.

Senator Mathias, who will take the lead, along with Senator Kennedy, in channeling the bill through the Senate said, "I am pleased to join with members from both Houses of Congress and from the civil rights community to get the 98th Congress started on the right foot, by introducing the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1985."

Representative Leland, Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, emphasized that for two decades all Republican and Democratic Administrations made sure that all institutions receiving federal funds did not discriminate. Leland said that since Grove City the Federal Government subsidizes discrimination against minorities, women, the disabled, and senior citizens.

Representative Pat Schroeder gave statistics which supported the fact that Title IX increased the number of women in all of the professional schools. She stated that congress modeled Title IX after Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. She noted that if Grove City is allowed to remain, the number of women in these professions could certainly decrease. Schroeder says it is an outrage to allow government that collects taxes equally, to spend them in a discriminatory fashion.

Senator Allen Cranston, said that the 1985 Civil Rights Restoration Act is about only one thing and that is discrimination. He said the question is whether funds of the U.S. government should be used to support discrimination against any class of individuals in our society. Cranston

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