

commentary

Editorial

“Excellence Without Excuse” The Eagle To Fly High Again

Dr. Leroy T. Walker's choice of the theme “Excellence Without Excuse” for his address at North Carolina Central University's Fall Convocation on October 6, as well as the guiding principle of his administration as interim chancellor of the university, should certainly be welcomed, shared and supported by all who appreciate what the institution stood for historically.

“Excellence Without Excuse” is welcomed by those who have winced and cringed in more recent years at the general lackadaisical attitudes and and poor performance levels of too many (not all) students and faculty.

“Excellence Without Excuse” must be shared by students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, trustees, and the community at large if Dr. Walker is to reverse the downward trend he inherited and return the school to its once proud academic prominence. All top administrators who are responsible for implementing the programs at NCCU must be imbued with the Walker theme. And, if they cannot support this theme wholeheartedly, they should remove themselves as impediments.

“Excellence Without Excuse” must be supported in every conceivable way, by every individual who has any conceivable connection with NCCU — whether casual or formal, paid or unpaid — if Dr. Walker's theme is to be realized. He must have the support of the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, the North Carolina State Government, and parents of students.

He is to be commended for setting this tone, for he is grabbing a tiger by the tail and he knows it. If any one person can orchestrate the bringing of that tiger into line, it is L.T. Walker. His many years of association with NCCU date back to the days of the institution's founder, Dr. James E. Shepard, who so meaningfully instilled into his students that “an Eagle is no ordinary barnyard fowl.”

Walker is a highly personable and academically trained man who has brought national and international acclaim to NCCU. His name is associated with athletics at the highest levels. He has served as president of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics with contacts with coaches and presidents of the nation's foremost colleges and universities. The banner of NCCU has been unfurled heroically with first honors in more than twenty centers of the United States. Internationally, Walker was associated with the U.S. Department of State as a liaison in Asia and Africa carrying the skills and standards of U.S. programs. He carried those skills to the United States Peace Corps. Durhamites, North Carolinians and alumni were indeed proud in two international Olympics when NCCU won gold medals.

It is healthy that NCCU has an interim chancellor — particularly one who, we believe, has the guts and determination to do what needs to be done. For a lot of wounds and perceptions of hurt need time to heal.

It is healthy for those faculty members who have stayed who perceived themselves as having been under a plantation system with favors falling from the plantation master in terms of whether one disagreed with him vigorously, disagreed with him mildly, or did not disagree with him at all — the last category being the most favored group.

The healing time is needed as an absorption sponge for those who perceive that they have been maltreated in program, budget, salary, promotion and tenure. We are sure that Dr. Walker knows his patience will be tested in hearing these tales of woe, and it is hoped that the problems can be solved, but at least he can be a sounding board for the aggrieved and they will be unafraid.

Some pains can be eased and soothed by the reinstatement of many of the school's traditions which have been ignored recently, leaving a vacuum — traditions which are the “seeds that bring forth the harvest of the future.” The alumni will certainly be pleased and current students will learn that they are a part of a greater heritage.

“Excellence Without Excuse” will go a long way toward offering a challenge, once again, and attracting top students and scholars whose numbers have waned during the seemingly laissez faire years.

Operating a university is an awesome task. No one should expect miracles from Dr. Walker in a short period — just expect a good beginning. At the same time, the total university should thank the Board of Governors for naming Dr. Leroy T. Walker to bring some peace, harmony and order to a situation which was seething just below the surface. Dr. Friday should be commended for having the good judgment to recognize that many things needed to be pulled from beneath the rug, aired, cleared and cleansed before any new chancellor takes over the helm at NCCU.

“Excellence Without Excuse - A Shared Responsibility” bodes well for Dr. Walker's beginning. We hope he will be accorded what ever length of time it takes to get the job done.

The Eagle can fly high again.

To Be Equal

Protecting the Constitution

By John E. Jacob
Executive Director
National Urban League

The Constitution is a frail document, notwithstanding the fact that it has served as our basic law for nearly two hundred years. It has survived because the flexibility of the amendment process enables it to be updated to meet changing needs in a changing society.

Traditionally, amendments are made by a process that includes proposal by two-thirds of both Houses of Congress and ratification by three-fourths of the states.

If an amendment passes this hurdle, we can be sure that it reflects a national consensus. Under this process, it is virtually unthinkable that basic freedoms could be compromised.

But there's a second way to amend the Constitution. Two-thirds of the states can petition Congress to call a convention to propose new amendments. That hasn't happened since the first Constitutional Convention in 1787. No subject has been considered so serious a threat to the nation to warrant a Convention.

And a Convention itself is a threat to our society — it is an unwieldy instrument that could come into being to consider one amendment and wind up transforming the entire Constitution into something very different.

Lawyers disagree about the powers a Convention would have. Some say that it can consider only the amendment for which it was called; others say it can consider any and all amendments. Nor do they agree on the procedures involved in calling a Convention — how many delegates, how they are chosen, and more.

All of this would be academic, of interest only to scholars and constitutional lawyers, if it were not for the fact that 32 out of the necessary 34 states have already passed resolutions asking Congress to call a Constitutional Convention to consider a balanced budget amendment.

If just two more states join the pack, we could face the most serious threat to our Constitution in well over a century. Once

convened, the Convention could rewrite the Constitution, including the sections guaranteeing our most precious liberties.

It makes no sense to take such a risk. Even those who doubt that a Convention would tamper with the Bill of Rights, for example, can't be sure that key provisions would not be rewritten in such a way as to weaken present guarantees.

Just think of all the so-called social issues causing ferment today — school prayer, abortion, busing and others. It is likely that a Convention could try to ram through amendments dealing with such issues, especially since the traditional amendment route has forestalled them.

Then there's the ostensible reason for calling the Convention — to consider a balanced budget amendment. That too is an emotional issue that could not withstand the light of day of the traditional amendment process.

Congress and enough state legislators know that a balanced budget amendment would be a mistake. It would simply encourage governments to change their bookkeeping, not the deficits. In many cases deficits make sense. A balanced budget today, for example, would immediately cause a massive Depression.

Too many of those 32 state petitions for a Convention were passed because irresponsible legislators pandered to extremist anti-tax groups. Many voted for the measure thinking a Convention would never come about anyway, and this was a way to register support for balancing the budget.

Now that a Convention has become an imminent possibility it is important for legislators in states considering joining the petition to think harder about its implications, and for those states that have already passed the measure to work for repeal.

The traditional amendment route provides for change while protecting our rights; a Convention could go far beyond that mandate to imperil those rights.

From the United Nations

Begin's Shadow Hung Ominously Over Black America Africa, and the Middle East

By Curtis T. Perkins

The old terrorist, Menachem Begin has just stepped down as Prime Minister of little Israel. I say ‘Hallelujah,’ and I would assume, hopefully, some in Israel and the fairer elements of our United States and perhaps most of our civilized world would join my sigh of relief. This intransigent leader, the adventurer in Lebanon along with his pal, General Ariel Sharon, dripping in blood and in a quagmire of misdeeds is calling it quits.

He leaves in no circumstance of glory — for thousands have died from his bombs in Lebanon's Sidon and Tyre and in Beirut as well. He claims defeat of the PLO and brags — he has rendered this spokesman for the Palestinians their death knell. Yet, I predict the PLO and its adherents, like most peoples seeking freedom, will prevail. One day they will have their own nation.

He chose not to initiate talks with Yasser Arafat and like his predecessors, dragged my country to put the PLO in quarantine. It is strange indeed that former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, would place our great democracy in a straight jacket by establishing a policy of ignoring the PLO — who are mandated partners in any semblance of peace in all of the Middle East. Blindly, every administration since, including Presidents Jerry Ford and Jimmy Carter, has followed Mr. Kissinger's edict. Those friends of Israel in the United States have zealously echoed the policy in this regard as set down by Mr. Begin and his underlings.

Again the loud mouths, including pro-Israel editors, broadcasters, columnists, reporters and Heads of Organizations, are saying Mr. Begin's departure as Prime Minister of Israel means no change in his policies. I pray such prognosticators are wrong — and if not, God have mercy on all. Because here lies the Genesis of World War III unless the Palestinians are given a place to live.

As a columnist for scores of black newspapers throughout our great land, I have met personally many of the editors and publishers of this group. They believe as I do that there should always be an Israel with guaranteed borders and recognition and tolerance of its neighbors.

Prime Minister Begin never accepted this principle of international behavior. He violated many a UN resolution by going boldly on in establishing settlements on the West Bank and Gaza. He invaded Lebanon and has set again new territorial expansion for his people. He took over the Golan Heights from Syria with guns, tanks and planes. He has constantly violated the air space of his Arab neighbors by continuing sophisticated surveillance. His most dastardly act in this regard was the bombing of the nuclear facility in Baghdad, Iraq. At an August meeting of the UN Security Council, our U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Dr. Jeane Kirkpatrick, vetoed a resolution which asked Israel to dismantle her settlements on the West Bank and cease the construction of others. The world shakes its head in dismay at such shenanigans on the part of Israel and her bully big brother, America.

THE BEGIN LEGACY

Here are a few of the many negative items Menachem Begin has left his nation, the USA, and the world:

—An inflation rate in Israel of over 140%

—Hundreds of Israeli lives lost in Lebanon. These casualties are growing.

—A defiant and international outlaw partner, South Africa, with apartheid practices and the nuclear bomb which Israel helped to develop. Israel invariably supports South African policies.

—3 million homeless Palestinians who are harassed on the West Bank and stereotyped wherever they are.

—A forgiven U.S. debt of well over 50 billion dollars which is responsible for inflation and the U.S. debt affecting the American economy.

—An annual drain of \$5,000,000,000 (billion) of American taxpayers money, philanthropy bonds for Israel — which affects U.S. funds for domestic urban needs. Most of this money to Israel has gone to military expenditures.

—Huge expenditures by the UN as a result of Israeli intransigence. This includes meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly and the maintenance of UN peace-keeping units in the Middle East.

—Continuing interference and disruption of U.S. Foreign Policy.

—Bold manipulation of the U.S. Congress — where members for political reasons vote overwhelmingly for practically every appropriation for Israel.

—Excessive domination of the U.S. media and the western press of the United Nations.

—Lack of full diplomatic accord with Egypt — because of Israeli militarism.

BEGIN'S EFFECT ON AFRICA

Since Israel now gets over 45% of the U.S. Foreign Aid budget, little if any money is left for black Africa. This is greedy, for Africa below the Sahel needs infrastructures and direct funding.

Yet, as Mr. Begin leaves, some African countries are coming out of the closet and boldly embracing Israel. The Arabs are also to blame for this since many are not keeping their commitments to black Africa.

...ON BLACK AMERICA

Recently the organizers of the 20th Anniversary March on Washington in honor of the late Dr. Martin Luther King were criticized by key Zionist organizations for urging a settlement of the Middle East problem. These organizations not only withdrew their participation but blamed the March leaders for being anti-Israel and being too inexperienced in foreign affairs. Yet blacks know that world economic matters affect their jobs. U.S. dollars gobbled up by Israel decreases funding for major aid to the cities where blacks live for their retraining and business development.

When such groups, in their own selfish interest, try to pool black Americans for digging in such things, blacks, as the March, don't need them.

It is not necessary to spend billions for Israel playing at war and making graves.

It is Begin's shadow which creates these scare tactics against blacks and their yen for affirmative action.

MEANWHILE IN GENEVA

Ms. Lucille Mair, that capable Jamaican who is Secretary General of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, has felt the Begin shadow on her task. For Israel has not extended her conscience to help give these displaced Palestinians a chance to live in their own land.

Instead, with the collusion of a stupid U.S. foreign policy group, Israel has tried to thwart Ms. Mair's meeting which was mandated by the UN General Assembly.

Yet as of this writing, some 130 nations will tackle the Palestinian question and unfortunately further isolate Israel in the process.

The Palestinian matter has to be resolved. Those who follow in Mr. Begin's evil shadow must cast it off.

The world will be better for it.

As this old fighter, so filled with vengeance, fades into oblivion, he could do one graceful thing: give back his Nobel Peace Prize. With the deaths which he has caused, he does not deserve this salute to tranquility and peace.

SAME KIND OF SUCCESSOR?

Yitzhak Shamir has been elected to succeed Mr. Begin as head of his Herut Party and as Prime Minister of Israel. The man is of the same ilk as Mr. Begin. He has practiced spy terror, assassination and is a known hater of Arabs as he is of the Stern Gang mentality of the old Zionist guerrillas.

Mr. Shamir is a hardliner and was Israel's Foreign Minister until his elevation. Most people, knowledgeable in Israeli personalities of those in power, predict little change in Begin's policies under Prime Minister Shamir.

If this is the case, it is the United States which must put control on Israel. President Ronald Reagan must stop the settlements, get on with talks with the PLO and get Israel out of Lebanon.

Black American leaders must get into a Middle East peace initiative all the way. We must demand a cutback on taxpayer dollars wasted on Israeli militarism and have this money rerouted to help ease the 56% unemployment rate of our black youth; build housing, and minority business. Blacks must put the entire treatment of the Palestinians on the 1984 election agenda.

Blacks must cease being afraid of the likes of Shamir and cheering section here in the United States who make a sham of U.S. foreign policy.

What Israel needs is a younger leadership to take over who wants peace and is willing to seek out the PLO and negotiate

Alice Dunbar NELSON

Born July 19, 1875 in New Orleans, and a graduate of Straight University, she soon went north to teach in college—shown here as a young lady, at the time she organized the Douglass Publishing Co., Harrisburgh, Pa. She edited many important books bearing on Negro life! On March 6, 1893, she married the poet Dunbar! She was famous in World War I as an organizer of women for the National Council of Defense. Continental Features

