

viewpoints



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The Death Penalty

The recent action of the Supreme Court of the State of Alabama affirming the death penalty is disappointing and disconcerting. We condemn capital punishment. It is cruel and inhuman by nature; irreversible in implementing; and discriminates against the poor and non-white in administration.

The legalized sanction of the killing of a human being as a means of resolving social problems sets an example of violence that has deadly reverberations throughout our imperiled civilization. The survival of the world is sorely threatened by violence, and unless we put an end to violence, violence will put an end to us. The death penalty denies the sacredness of human life, while offering no proven deterrence to crime.

We find especially disappointing, the opinion of Justice Adams that we must no longer fear racial discrimination in the imposition of the death penalty. We strongly refute such an assertion. While we find it somewhat painful to repudiate the opinion of one we love and respect and who has attained a high office he deserves, nevertheless, our responsibility to conscience, and our calling as advocates of the poor and as lovers of justice demand that we cry out against that which denies the moral imperatives of our faith and ignores the lessons of history.

The indisputable fact is that in Alabama the decision to seek the death penalty in criminal cases is still (as always) an all-white decision. The district attorneys who make the decision, in all 38 judicial circuits in Alabama are white! The indisputable fact is that while Blacks comprise approximately 25 percent of the population, 60 percent of the inmates on death row are black. The indisputable fact

is that the presiding officer in each case to be tried under the death penalty structure in Alabama, will be white! Every circuit judge who tries criminal cases in Alabama is white! (And always has been). There is only one circuit judge in Alabama who is Black and he tries only cases related to domestic affairs.

In virtually every case in Alabama involving a Black defendant (and a white alleged victim), the district attorney "strikes" the available Blacks from jury service.

When Tommie Lee Hines was tried recently in Birmingham (where Mr. Adams was Hines' attorney), the district attorney used every single challenge afforded him by law to "strike" Blacks from the jury. As a result, only one Black juror served on the case in spite of the fact that one of three residents in the community is Black.

The total lack of Black district attorneys and criminal court judges, and the pattern of racial discrimination in this state soundly refute any claim that justice is now color blind in Alabama. We applaud the appointment of Mr. Adams to the Supreme Court of Alabama as a step in the right direction, but stand in stout denial that this one step in the right direction wipes out all the inequities of history or closes the gap existing between justice and injustice for Black and poor people in this state. The criminal justice system in Alabama remains repressive for Black and poor people!

We support the Black elected officials in the state who have consistently opposed the death penalty. Capital punishment is still for people who have no capital. The affirmation of the death penalty is a step backward in man's journey toward human-ness and justice!

Peace Elusive in Zimbabwe

Despite the Election last April of Robert Mugabe to Prime Minister, ending 7 years of bloody warfare that took 30,000 lives, peace has not come to Zimbabwe.

As of November, more than 55 civilians had been killed and about 3,000 injured in internecine fighting between guerrilla factions in the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) coalition.

There are about 35,000 restless guerrillas congregated in post-war bush camps anxiously awaiting compensation in jobs and housing, and often their frustration explodes in drunken marauding on neighboring white farms.

Also discontent is prevalent among the native population, many of whom have begun squatting on private white farmland because they are angry that government land reform is too slow. The Commercial Farmers Union, which represents white farmers, said that 60 percent of their land holdings have been hit.

some \$13 million in government funds, 320,000 acres of land previously owned by whites has been redistributed.

But more compensation for his restless soldiers and war-weary civilians must come at the expense of the whites, who the Prime Minister does not want to disturb because they are vital to the commercial sector and produce 90 percent of the marketable farm products.

Ian Smith's Rhodesia, while racist and repressive, bequeathed Mugabe with more black college graduates, more black grade school pupils, more paved roads, cars, televisions and western creature comforts than any other black-ruled African country. It has the continent's most balanced economy, and it earned more than \$8 billion annually in foreign trade even under trade sanctions imposed during the war years. It produces 2.5 million tons of food each year, which makes the country

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AROUND THE WORLD



by Lawrence Muhammad

Whites have been leaving Zimbabwe at a rate of 18,000 per year and are getting even more edgy. The former white commander of the Rhodesian army, who had remained after liberation at Mugabe's request and was one of the Prime Minister's most important allies, quit last Fall in frustration over continued guerrilla feuds. And many professional whites, who provide management and technical expertise for the country's diversified industry, applaud Mugabe's easy transition from guerrilla leader to statesman, but are given pause when his democratic pledges are postscripted with qualifiers like "at least for now" and "for the time being," which may signal that vengeance will come in the future. Exacerbating these fears was the recent acquittal of a militant black government official who was accused of murdering a white farmer.

Prime Minister Mugabe, who has pledged compensation for all white land redistributed and adherence to multi-racial, democratic government, is walking a tightrope. After 90 years of African rule, beginning when Cecil Rhodes established camp in Salisbury in September 1890, the bulk of the country's wealth is in white hands. So while the government is 80 percent black controlled, the social structure of colonialism remains unchanged. Whites are still atop the social pyramid, most government functionaries are holdovers from the Ian Smith regime, and whites control most of the arable land and produce the bulk of agricultural goods.

But Mugabe has pushed for black advancement, appointed blacks to the judiciary and in high civil service positions, put a freeze on white promotions, and set one of the highest minimum wages on the continent. Using

Chronicle Letters

Dear Editor:

This is just a note to express my appreciation to Duane and Rachel Jackson, Khalid Fattah, and the other organizers of the (1st) first Winston-Salem community-wide Kwanza Celebration.

The festivities were held on Friday, December 26th and Wednesday, December 31st (the first and sixth days of Kwanza) at the East Winston Library. Both nights, overflow crowds jammed the library to get a fuller understanding of the African cultured celebration. The seven principles of Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-determination), Ujima (Collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative economics), Kuumba (Creativity), Nia (Purpose), and Imani (Faith), were elaborated on very effectively by guest participants - each delineating how these principles can be applied to our struggles here in Winston-Salem.

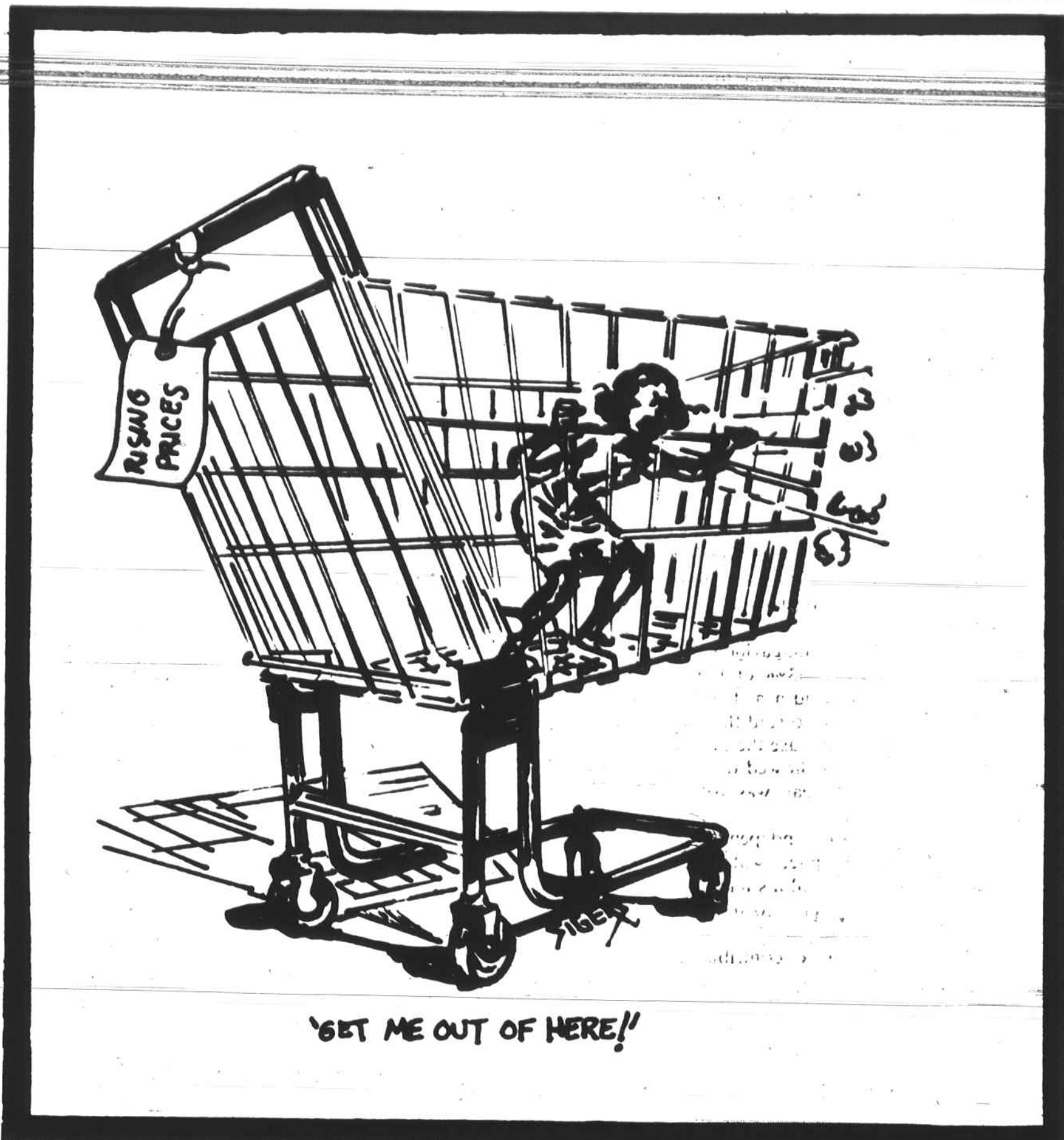
Among those participants included: Alderman Larry Little, Ms. Dotie Butler, Herman Aldridge, Angela Ingram, Linwood Oglesby, Rashidah Iddeen, Nelson Molloy, John Stepney, Lynn Harper Epps, Tracy Singletary, Marty Penn, Veronica Templeton, and Mazie Woodruff.

Providing the cultural entertainment were the fantastic "Healing Force," the talented Otesha Troupe, Howard Mungo, Bill Jackson, Clifton Graves, and Larry Leon Hamlin.

The spirit of unity that was present at these festivities speaks well for the organizers, as well as those community folk who came out in support of this program. Those of you who missed the local Kwanza certainly were deprived of a culturally rewarding experience.

Again, Asante (Thank-you), to the Kwanza Planning Committee.

Clifton E. Graves, Jr.



William Raspberry

Weighing Touchy Subjects

Washington--I've finally licked my weight problem. For a year, I've been assaulting my bathroom scale to the tune of 175 pounds--a blubbery 15 pounds more than the charts say I should weigh for my height and build.

I am now pleased to report that I am some 25 pounds underweight. Moreover, it required no jogging, no starvation, no diet boks or liquid protein. All it took was Dr. Reubin Andres, that brilliant Johns Hopkins professor.

I still weigh 175 pounds, mind you. Andres' brilliance rests in his discovery that the charts are wrong.

Hear this genius: "The results (of his review of 40 studies, covering six million people around the world) all point in the same direction: The desirable weight if you want to live longer has been underestimated. The current charts on doctors' walls, and our own ideas of desirable weight fixed by a sense of esthetics, are not desirable if you want to live longer."

Particularly encouraging is his finding that the highest longevity for one group of middle-aged workers (employees at a Chicago utility company) was for men who were 25 to 32 percent over their "desirable" weight.

What that means is that instead of the 160 pounds the charts mandate, my best weight is actually between 200 and 211 pounds. The 175 pounds that once had me 15 pounds overweight now leaves me practically svelte. Brilliant man, that Andres.

Actually, Andres isn't the first person to discover that the power to define is the power to cure. Several years ago, the American Psychiatric Association cured the problem of homosexuality--not by changing anyone's sexual behavior but by deciding that homosexuality is not really a problem.

More recently, there is phenomenon called "the new chastity." Adherents, including a fair number of newlyweds, simply decide to abstain from sex. What

these pioneers have created, though they seem not to be aware of it, is a cure for sexual dysfunction. If sexual dysfunction is defined as the inability to perform normally, then it can be cured by the simple device of changing the definition of normal. If chastity becomes normal, there is no such thing as sexual dysfunction.

Any careful newspaper reader can think of other examples: school districts that cure the problem of nonlearning not by improved teaching but by setting lower standards; social statisticians who cure poverty not by improving income but by reassessing the assets of the impoverished.

Marijuana use is no longer a social problem but a normal, if illegal, activity of the young. What used to be marital infidelity--a problem--is now "open marriage"--a new "lifestyle."

I remember seeing (in the New York Times, I believe) a feature on "natural gardens." The idea was to declare a truce with bindweed, thistle, chickweed and plantain: to stop calling them weeds, which is a declaration of war, and make peace with them as part of a "natural" landscape.

Your scraggly, unkempt lawn is transformed, like magic, into nature's own garden, and you don't even have to cut the grass.

The prospects are endless. Yoke robbers could be transmuted into income-transfer specialists. Joblessness could be redefined as full-time leisure. Racial animosity could become ethnogenesis.

We've got a hostage crisis? No, sir. We've got 52 people on indefinite foreign assignment.

The beauty of the approach is that it doesn't cost anything, neither money nor exertion. Problems simply evaporate, like dew in the August sun.

So pass the butter, sell the lawnmower and let's light up a joint. And please not tonight, dear.



To Be Equal

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

The Changing Of the Guard

January 20 marks the day America changes Administrations; the White House gets a new occupant and the nation new leadership. It is also an appropriate time to assess President Carter's four years of leadership. That leadership was judged and found wanting by the electorate last November, but I have a feeling that history will judge the Carter Administration more favorably than did its contemporaries.

much. It presided over four years of peace, in itself an accomplishment in this troubled world. In the Middle East, it helped Israel and Egypt to bury their long enmity. However imperfectly implemented, its human rights policies saved countless lives and brought a measure of morality to the international scene. And the Carter team can be especially proud of its success in improving America's relations with the Third World, and especially with the closer ties with mineral-rich Black Africa. A major accomplishment was helping to bring independence and majority rule to Zimbabwe. The domestic situation was plagued by inflation and

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