

Editorials & Comments

Young's Foot-In-Mouth Diplomacy

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Editorial Writer

Shortly before being confirmed as ambassador to the U.N. over 18 months ago, Andrew Young admitted he had no answer to a CBS-TV news reporter's question as to why he (Young) had expressed opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam but applauded Cuban involvement in Angola as a "stabilizing influence." However, since that time, Young has had plenty of answers, and ironically, often the right answers for questions that we're asked in the wrong setting. What we mean is that Young has been using what his critics have called "open-mouth diplomacy" to express his personal views as a black American from a U.N. platform designed to communicate some aspects of American foreign policy.

For example, when Young said in April last year that the United States "shouldn't get paranoid about communism" in Africa and should avoid "knee-jerk reactions to it," he was saying that people in underdeveloped ill-fed nations can't afford the luxury of debating ideologies when death from starvation and malnutrition is a daily event. Black Americans have long understood this; whites, fail to get the message. Such observations by Young deserve better than to be called "open-mouth diplomacy."

Institutionalized Racism

On the other hand, when Young apologized after accusing Britain of having "institutionalized racism more than anyone in history" and when he said the white-rule government of South Africa is "illegitimate," then reacted to criticism by calling his remarks "unrepresentative," we witnessed "foot-in-mouth diplomacy." The point is, Young's statements about both nations are historically true, yet for reasons of foreign relations, he was forced to modify his original remarks. In so doing, Young gave credibility to two lies, lies that will be perpetuated in the history books of the western world even more than in the past.

Furthermore, while President Carter was protesting the trial of Anatoly Shcharansky in Moscow last week, Young belittled the trial in a French newspaper interview where he was quoted as saying "after all, in our (American) prisons there are hundreds, maybe even thousands of people I would call political prisoners." This too was another chapter in Andy Young's "foot-in-mouth diplomacy." This was evidenced by the fact that Amnesty International, the leading authority on political prisoners, admits to only 17 such prisoners in the United States.

The Post hopes that in the future Ambassador Young will think more before he speaks and then choose his

words more carefully. We say this because it is better to have not uttered a truth - as in the case of Britain and South Africa - than to do so, and in the process of retracting it for reasons of diplomacy, give validity to a lie.

Finally, since Mr. Young's own words indicate some wide difference in the meaning of the term "political prisoner," and since he obviously has no knowledge of how many such prisoners there are in the U.S., his international remarks were stupid, irresponsible and did not serve the best interest of our nation abroad nor black Americans at home.

Non-Thinking Mind

Mr. Young's big mouth and apparent sometimes non-thinking mind is tragic because they are overshadowing the credit he richly deserves for improving American relations with the so-called Third World nations in general and some important African nations in particular like Nigeria.

No Mr. Young, we don't need "foot-in-mouth diplomacy," it's bad for you and your credibility, it's bad for America and it's bad for minority group people at home and abroad.

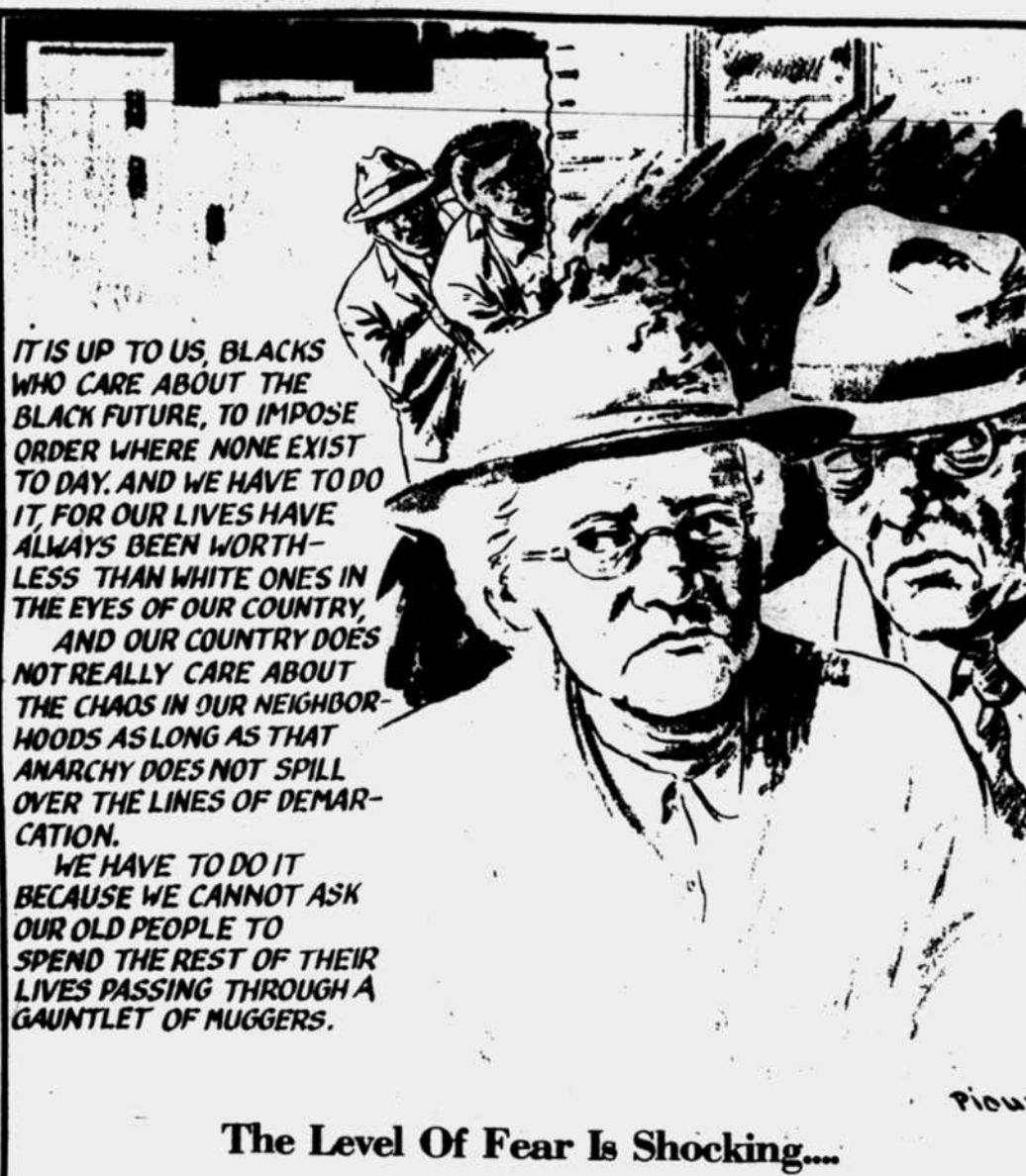
As we observe the impact of California's Proposition 13 tax revolt concept upon public schools across America, it brings to mind the fact that in the decade of the '70s numerous communities have rejected school bond requests.

Thus, Proposition 13 in its variety of forms, school bond rejections and the declining tax revenues in many urban areas are among the reasons for so many reports about shortened school years, long Christmas holidays and dissatisfied teachers.

Combining these problems with the pre-occupation many school systems experienced with school desegregation, is there any wonder that competency test scores are low, teenage pregnancy is high, student discipline is out of control and too many parents are either apathetic toward or intimidated by the school and its staff.

These conditions would appear to indicate that there is a direct relationship between the spread of Proposition 13 and the level of competency test scores.

It is in our view well past the time for Charlotteans to look seriously at the implications of the loss in state and local funds for the school budget for the coming year. The question we need to ask ourselves is basically this: Will that few cents in tax savings be worth the value of lost educational opportunity for our children?



"Tax Revolt" Is Concern

Atlanta, Ga. - Calling for the "rollback of property taxes" if they reach "confiscatory levels" and property taxes which accurately reflect what it costs to provide essential local government services, more than 4,000 county officials here this week approved a resolution on tax reform and responsible government.

The resolution was adopted during the National Association of Counties (NAACo) 1978 annual conference where Proposition 13 was one of the dominant issues at the meeting. The tax reform resolution calls on federal, state and local officials to renew their efforts to eliminate waste, reduce bureaucracy and cut red tape in government. It also calls on county officials to support the President and Congress in their efforts to balance the federal budget at the earliest possible date and to "assume our share of that responsibility."

The resolution recognizes that property tax levels are often intolerable and that the property tax itself has been asked to carry far too many governmental burdens. The resolution points out that too often the "over-loading" of the property tax is not the result of votes by local elected officials but rather the mandates of federal and state governments.

Reacting to the resolution, NAACo's 1977-78 President William O. Beach of Montgomery County, Tenn. said that he believes counties are willing to take "their fair share of cuts" when it comes to national tax reform as long as efforts to reduce government spending occur at all levels of government - federal, state and local.

Also discussing the tax re-

form mood of the country was Jack Watson, Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, who was the keynote speaker at the opening general session.

Watson told the delegates that "a democracy needs a concerned and vocal constituency in order to work well."

"We need the pressure provided by the public...to give us the energy and the will and the leverage to challenge our own government bureaucracies that are frequently to large and so intractable that they try the patience and creativity...of even the most dedicated public official," Watson said.

However, he added that he feared that "a healthy and appropriate skepticism about what government can do is turning sour."

"It seems to me that, as a nation, we have become preoccupied with what we are against and have momentarily lost our vision of what we are for," he said.

As a result, Watson warned county officials, "In responding to the battle cry of California taxpayers...we must be careful not to destroy the local tax systems that constitute the cornerstone of local control over local services."

Sen. James A. Sasser (D-Tenn.) said at the following morning's session that he didn't believe that the American people wanted "meat axe" cuts in vital, basic services.

However, he added that Proposition 13 type initiatives will be encouraged by indications

from the federal Congressional Budget Office that California's Proposition 13 will reduce inflation slightly and by the fact that state governments now have "an aggregate surplus of more than \$18 billion."

"We must in some way strike a compromise between the needs of efficient government and the demands of the people for services at minimal cost."

Later, Sandra Smoley, one of the few California county officials able to attend the conference, talked about the immediate situation in her state. The Sacramento County supervisor said, "We will use \$4 billion of our state surplus in order to try to maintain California's 8,000 special districts, school districts, counties and cities at a budgetary level that will be approximately 90 percent of what otherwise was expected in 1978-79."

"Our problems, however, are just beginning," she said, "because a year from now we expect to have only \$3 billion in the state surplus available for local government. Schools alone expect to need an additional \$800 million just to maintain their budget and salaries at the level projected for 1978-79."

But tax reform discussions constituted only part of the five-day conference where county officials from 46 states gathered.

Among the highlights of the conference was the election of Commissioner Charlotte Williams of Genesee County, Mich. as the association's 1978-79 president. The election marked the first time a black woman has ever been chosen to head a national public interest group representing state or local government.

TO BE EQUAL
Affirmative Action
Round Two Coming Up

The U.S. Supreme Court, in its decision in the Bakke case, dealt only with the issue of special admissions programs at colleges and universities.

But the basic constitutionality of affirmative action programs that give some preference to minorities in employment has still to be dealt with. A number of court cases brought by whites charging they are victims of "reverse discrimination" are coming up. Those cases will have greater immediate impact on blacks than the Bakke case.

How will the Court rule on them? There's no way to tell. Off its past record, the Court most likely will back affirmative action programs, perhaps even those as rigid as the one it struck down in the Bakke case.

The reason is that the Court has a long record of approving race-conscious efforts to remedy the effects of racial discrimination. There have been several cases decided on the principle that where past discrimination can be shown, affirmative action programs with strict goals and timetables are constitutionally acceptable.

That was missing in the Bakke case, in which evidence of the University's past discrimination was not before the Court. In several major cases, once the Court found evidence of racial discrimination it approved racial factors in framing the remedy. That's why it has approved racially-based teacher and student assignments and racially-based electoral districts in key past cases.

And just days after the Bakke decision, the Court left standing a lower court ruling upholding an affirmative action program at AT&T that had been challenged by the company's union. It also refused to rule in a case involving minority set-asides for public works contracts.

Those actions offer grounds for some optimism on future Court action in employment cases. Another plus is that the lower courts have consistently upheld racially-based goals and timetables to remedy the effects of employment discrimination. The outlook then appears favorable, but some factors are troubling.

For one, the Court's narrow 5-4 ruling in the Bakke case makes it next to impossible to rely with any confidence on just how it may react to a specific case. With such strong feelings current on affirmative action, this politicized court may place even greater restrictions on racially-based programs than it already has.

Another factor is that some of the cases making their way through the lower courts seek not only to overturn racially-based affirmative action programs geared to remedy past discrimination, but also challenge such programs that override seniority. The Court has a mixed record in approving overrides of promotion and seniority systems.

Some pending cases involve special programs in which blacks got training or promotional advantages through affirmative action programs. The rationale for such programs is the fact that since hiring discrimination kept them out of entry jobs until recently, minorities have not accumulated enough seniority to reach higher job levels.

Our New Day Begun The Crusading Black Press

By Benjamin L. Hooks
NAACP Executive Director
Special to the Post

As Black Americans increasingly suffer setbacks in their struggle for equality, such as the vote for Proposition 13 in California, it is well that we seek ever more urgently to expand our strategies for continuing the civil rights struggle. A cornerstone in our mission continues to be the Black Press, which provides an irreplaceable means for us to communicate among ourselves.

This was one of the primary purposes of the Black Press when John Russwurm founded Freedom's Journal back in 1827, thus establishing an institution to which we are still indebted today. Its primary role, as it was recognized then, of course, was protest, arousal and crusading.

For these reasons, I wish to express a special word of tribute to the Black Press for its support of the NAACP and its programs since its founding in 1909. Along with the Black Church, the Black Press joins the NAACP as three of the most enduring institutions in the struggle for full equality.

There are others, of course, such as the black colleges and

fraternal organizations. Notably, all of them came to the NAACP's support - and rescue - during the 1976 Port Gibson, boycott crisis when the Association was required to post a cash bond in Mississippi.

The Black Press, because of its fundamental function of communications, provided the NAACP with yeoman's service during those critical months that began in the summer. With the help of Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, past-president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, black newspapers carried editorials and printed free ads appealing for contributions.

The NAACP's Mississippi crisis has eased. But it has not totally disappeared. The Port Gibson merchants have appealed the decision by U.S. District Court Judge Orma R. Smith setting aside the state court's bonding requirement. Those merchants want the NAACP to cough up that cash, at any cost.

At the same time, the NAACP will proceed to appeal the case on its merits - that is, the judgement of \$1.25 million - in the state courts.



Benjamin L. Hooks, NAACP Executive Director dependent upon the financial support of its members, and friends, the NAACP exists in a continuing financial crisis. There has never been enough funds for us to do as much as we would wish. But, given our very limited resources, the NAACP still continues to be the major civil rights organization in the nation.

struggle, let us reach out for the support of the Black Press to join us in alerting our people to the expanding effort by white Americans to deny us our recent civil rights gains.

These attacks on civil rights are much more subtle than the tactics used by the Ku Klux Klan, the White Citizens Councils and red neck segregationists up through much of the 60s. Our enemies today are now using such tactics as the Bakke challenge to affirmative action programs, Proposition 13, snob zoning in the suburbs, redlining in the urban centers, outright job discrimination and economic

Tuition Tax Credit Threat

By Mel Ravitz
Special to the Post

The Tuition Tax credit bill has finally made it through the U.S. House of Representatives. If it passes the Senate and is signed by the president, it will give a flat \$100 and more credit to cover a portion of the tuition of each student at a private elementary or secondary school or at a college or university.

Though some people view this bill as a major breakthrough in helping hard-pressed families pay for the education of their children, it really doesn't do that effectively. The amount per student is small to begin with and over half the benefits will go to families with incomes over \$25,000.

If helping lower income families educate their children were the principal objective,

it would have been more effective to have adopted President Carter's college assistance and opportunity proposal. It would raise the family income eligibility from the current \$16,000 to \$25,000 to allow students to borrow up to \$1800 at low interest rates and with more money channeled into related education incentive programs.

Unfortunately, helping college students wasn't the whole purpose of the bill. It was amended to give tuition credits to children who go to private elementary and secondary schools. That raises the whole issue of public funds being used to assist private schools and the interrelated issue of the consequent impact on the public school systems of the country, really socking it to all of us, and when people generally are fed up with high taxes, it was

inevitable that such a bill would pass this far. It's good politics to be able to tell constituents that one has just voted to give them a tax credit for each child they send to a college or university or a private school and that's just what the representatives have done, never mind the cost and the consequences to the public schools.

exploitation to continue their ugly deeds of racial oppression. The NAACP therefore urges the Black Press to continue the crusades of the Russwurts, and the Thomas Fortunes and all of the other great black journalists who have lifted the Black Press to its present level of effectiveness.

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