

Orwell And 1984

About this time every year many Americans, as do the citizens of most other nations, begin thinking about their challenges, hopes and dreams for the coming New Year. Likewise, many also reflect on the immediate past in the hope of using that past as a reflection of the future, especially if that past has been good to them.

However, for many, the excitement and the expectations of the coming of 1984 has been tempered with an uneasiness arising from the writings of the late George Orwell in a book appropriately titled "1984." Growing up in a class conscious England in the early 20th century, and following travels and work experiences in London, Paris and a number of large Asian cities, Orwell sensed the potential oppressive power of large institutions - banks, corporations and government.

Orwell reacted to this as a relatively young man by being engulfed with a sense of alienation from his own working class background. This was brought on in part by his quest for a social order or organization that would be in harmony with the ideas and wishes of the people. Orwell feared however that power oriented institutions tended to alienate themselves from the very people they were to serve or deal with.

In essence, Orwell was particularly opposed to political institutions and idealists who tended to diminish the values of individualism and to promote collectivism causes. In "1984" Orwell warns us that in many ways Western democracies may be rushing head-long toward totalitarian institutions. This, he writes, may occur not from some foreign nation's military might but rather from becoming overwhelmed by our own technology and by our indifference or apathy to exercise our taken-for-granted freedoms, and our increasing failure to be willing to accept the responsibilities required of people in a free society.

TV Screens

Orwell writes, "You had to live - did live, from habit that became instinct - in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and except in darkness, every movement scrutinized." This would be done, Orwell tells us, through techniques of surveillance described

in "1984." The television screens in our homes which we can watch and through which we can be watched and can never be turned off. Where the TV screen cannot see us then microphones would be planted for hearing all that we might say.

Now who would be doing the watching and listening? Orwell says the "Big Brother" system of surveillance under orders of the Ruling Party Elite and their Secret Police.

Obviously you are beginning to wonder whether you should waste your time reading further this editorial. But before you even entertain such a thought, let us remind you that the "Ruling Party Elite" is already in our midst and surveillance is an everyday occurrence.

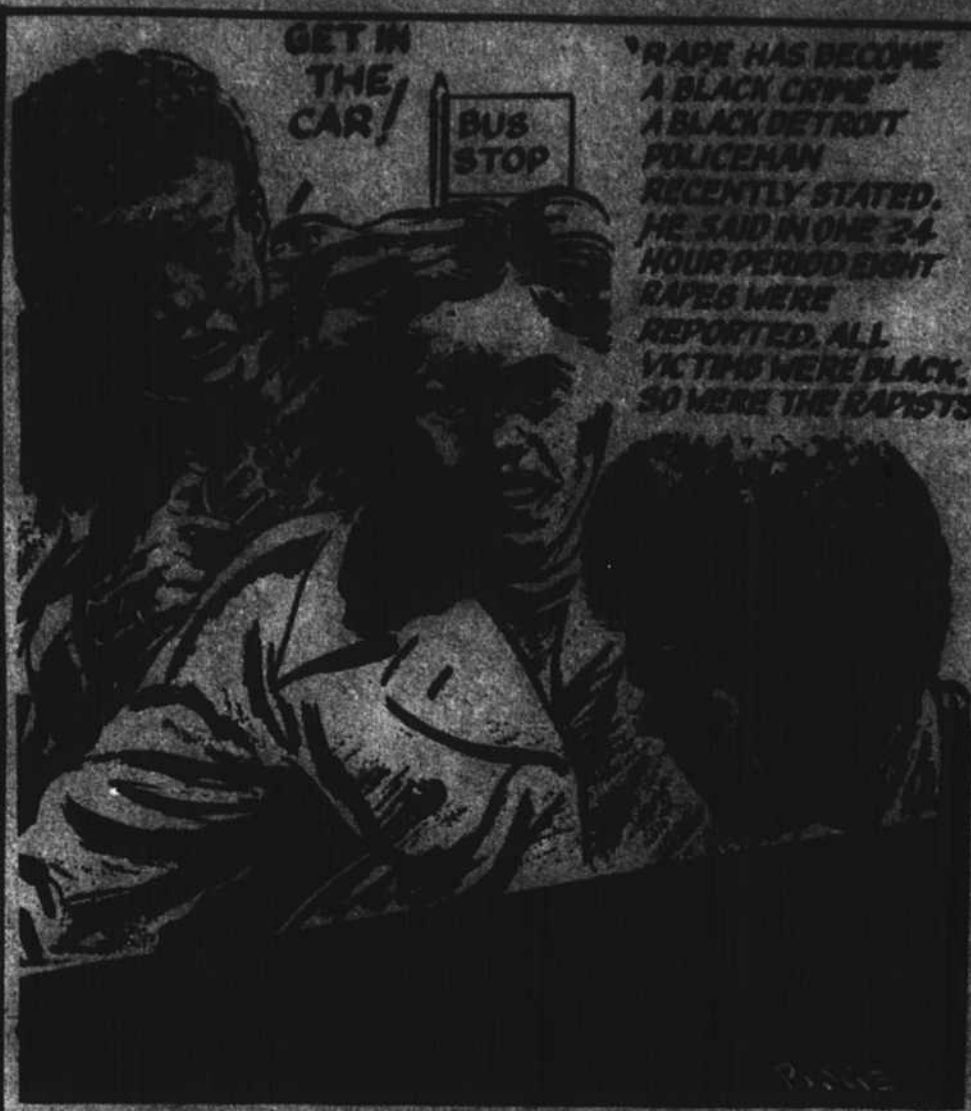
Modern Technology

In a typical election in America today not more than one-half of the eligible voters actually vote. Therefore, a "Ruling Party Elite" of as few as 26 percent of the eligible voters can and do decide who serves and who does not serve in public office. Thus, as most people fail to vote the ruling party elite assumes increasing power and begins to consolidate its position even if it means ending elections to retain their power. This can be the price of political apathy.

Modern technology is such that while we are using certain technological devices to avoid, say, speeding traps on the highway, hi-tech surveillance equipment is being used to monitor our driving speed. Surveillance cameras are common place today in banks, supermarkets, malls and many other public places. The cameras are used to watch both customers and employees. This was begun because too many people lack the responsibility of a citizen in a free society to be honest and not steal or take what is not freely theirs to take.

Our technology progress has far surpassed our moral and ethical skills that are necessary to properly use hi-tech equipment and software.

As we approach 1984, we need to make new pledges, and create new understandings so that Americans can begin to adjust to the demands of a hi-tech society, nationally, educationally and spiritually. This is vital if we want to avoid a movement toward "1984" in 1984.



Pressing Problems In The Black Community

Letters To: The Editor



Strong Grassroots Movement To Improve Schools Encourages Hunt

Dear Sir:

I am very encouraged by a strong, grassroots movement to improve the public schools in North Carolina.

There is a lot about public education in this state to be proud of. And I think people here have always been of the opinion that educating our children should be our highest priority. In recent times, however, the vital importance of this issue has really hit home to people.

The most telling example of this trend is what I see as a historic change in the way education leaders and business leaders view each other. Small businesses and major corporations alike are becoming increasingly aware that their future depends on a well educated work force. School teachers, on the other hand, are looking to the business community as a tremendous resource for ideas and support.

That kind of relationship must endure if we are to train the minds and hands of our young people for

today's world and tomorrow's jobs. It is that relationship that can make North Carolina the economic leader of America, and America the economic and technological leader of the world.

It was with these realities in mind that I appointed the N.C. Commission on Education for Economic Growth. The Commission, which I chair, is in the midst of a series of public hearings. Its members are listening to the people, getting their ideas on the best way to do this job of strengthening our schools.

To date, we have held two hearings - in Raleigh and Asheville - and two more are scheduled for January 5 in Greenville and January 9 in Charlotte.

Contrary to what some news accounts suggest, people have not given up on their schools, despite the many problems confronting them. We are finding in our hearings that the answers to our education problems are not just more

money, we need to do a better job with what we have.

We have heard that the curriculum is too soft. Too much time that should be spent mastering basic skills is being wasted on cotton-candy courses.

Classroom schedules need to be more flexible, so teachers and students can devote more time to tough subjects. We might need to have two-hour science labs, for example.

Standards for performance are not high enough. Whether you can participate in the hearings or not, I hope you will involve yourself in this effort to mobilize public support for the schools. Our Commission will complete its work on March 15 by issuing its final report and recommendations.

Major education reform will not be easy, and it will generate controversy in some quarters. But we owe it to our children and ourselves to make our schools the very best they can be.

By Governor Hunt

From Capitol Hill

American Public Is Awakening!

Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post
President Reagan will announce his presidential candidacy January 29. The Reagan camp and many people around the country seem to feel that the 1984 presidency is his for the asking.

If the American public continues to be lulled to sleep, Mr. Reagan will be handed the Chief Executive position on a silver platter. Yet, some people might realize that all the hoop la about the recession being over and we are in a recovery period, will find that if they are lucky enough to have a job, their salaries have been cut or if they should get a raise, the increase is below the inflation rate. These people will find that rent, energy costs, telephone, transportation and many other items have soared.

Citizens will also awaken to the Administration's constant emphasis on working for a peaceful world, with a policy emanating from the Pentagon, requesting a weapons build-up with power to kill all humanity in the world many times over.

Sleeping through the 1984 election will allow this nation to continue the same foreign policy - one in which our boys are facing eminent danger in the Middle East, and even in the Latin American countries, under guise of national



Alfreda L. Madison
security. None of these countries are attacking us. Our embassies are being bombed by so-called terrorists. An analysis of these attacks are based, in part on our support for repressive regimes, and a fear around the world of our free-wheeling military power.

It would be a mistake to believe that political sentiments will remain at its present seemingly apathetic drowsiness.

The Joint Center for Political Studies published an article on The Shape of Politics to Come. It states that political alliances and animosities are influenced by economic, demography, tradition and current events. Our economy is changing from industry to service and information. Ethnicities of the country are changing, the fastest growing population is made up of Hispanics, and the black population is growing twice as fast as the population as a whole.

The white population is divided over racialism. This was evidenced in the recent Chicago mayoral election, when white nationalities banded together hoping to prevent a black mayor victory. In some Northern and Western cities whites are divided along working class and upper class. Many white nationalities cling to a foreign policy that favors their native lands. "Many Polish-Americans, Hungarian-Americans and others of Eastern European descent tend to be strongly anti-communist. Many Irish-Americans are passionately committed to the Irish Republican Army. American Jews are perhaps the most politically distinctive white ethnic group; their strong support for Israel governs many of their other political actions and opinions," says the article.

Hispanic Americans have a special interest in Latin America and Black Americans have a vested interest in Africa. While all of these groups have some influence on our foreign policy now, they will exert stronger pressure in the future.

Organized labor force is on the decline because of reduced industrialization. In the future there will most likely be a tier of well-paid, highly specialized jobs with the bulk of workers in low-level jobs. The decrease of these

smokestack industries, which were once the economic heart of the large cities, have caused the disappearance of blue-collar jobs, leaving the cities' population dominated by elderly and unemployed minorities, who have to rely on public assistance which results in a shrinking revenue base, that promotes crime, poor schools and inadequate housing. However, the cities still have high rise office buildings, where professionals conduct their business, but Hispanic, black and poor white neighborhoods still exist.

Joint Center reports that scarcity of federal, state and local subsidized housing results in segregation stagnation which leads to hardened racial divisions.

The article predicts that since blacks are elected in locales with a majority black population, a new frontier is certain to arise, jurisdictions with a sizable black population, will cause black politicians to campaign with a dynamic sensibility that will encompass people in a racially mixed environment. The report says, "The current surge of political activism among blacks is primarily a reaction against Reaganism in its manifestations."

Mobilization of the black vote and Republican strategists have targeted the Hispanic vote to counter black political strength.

Year-End Economic Review

By Richard B. Roberts
Group Vice President
Wachovia Bank

The U.S. economy has experienced a good recovery during the last twelve months in the face of still burdensome rates of interest and unemployment. The improvements, however, are more the result of stimulative short-term influences than of better long-term fundamentals. Much work is needed to ensure the restoration of growth and stability on a sustainable basis.

The concern about persistently large federal deficits continues to overshadow the positive news of growth in the areas of employment, real income, consumer spending industrial production and housing starts. For the fiscal year ending September 30, the deficit was \$195.5 billion, an increase from \$110.6 billion in 1982.

The deficit is now projected to ease only to the area of \$185 billion in the current fiscal year despite the higher tax revenues and lower public assistance expenditures expected in the improving business climate. The structural deficit estimated for a fully recovered economy remains well in excess of \$100 billion. This clouds the outlook beyond 1984 and raises the possibility of another inflationary surge, interest rate spiral and economic tailspin.

On the positive side for the near term, the past year brought some encouraging news. The rate of inflation, which averaged just over six percent in 1982, is estimated at around 3.5 percent for 1983. The national unemployment rate dropped from a high of 10.8 percent in December, 1982 to single-digit figures in June and to 8.4 percent in November, 1983. An upswing in home construction early in 1983 leveled off, but housing starts remain good.

Growth in consumer spending has been the key to the recovery. With lower interest rates and higher employment, consumers felt more confident about their financial security and bought more. During 1983, the Gross National Product experienced the best increase in five years - an estimated 3.2 percent - and is projected to grow five percent in 1984. Inventory liquidation was reversed; the industrial production continued an upward trend.

As 1984 gets under way and progresses, the economy should continue to expand. However, the robust annualized quarterly GNP growth rates experienced in 1983 will moderate. Price inflation is likely to creep up, but the rise should be moderate as strength in some areas such as food are offset by softness in others such as energy. Retail prices increases in 1984 should be tempered by modest gains in wage costs.

Interest rates, which declined through the spring of 1983, edged upward during the summer. They are likely to fluctuate on an erratic course over the near term with upward pressure increasing during 1984 as private sector credit demand strengthens and U.S. treasury borrowing remains strong. A reduction or reversal of the heavy foreign capital inflows would also tighten domestic money markets.

The downward movement of the unemployment rate could become sluggish around the eight percent level. A more sustained and broad-based expansion than currently foreseeable will be required to pull the jobless rate down to the low of the last expansion. Also, a shortage of skills needed in a more electronic and technically oriented workplace could leave the structural unemployment rate at a higher threshold than during the previous cycle.

The underlying demand for goods and services appears firm. National surveys paint a positive picture of consumer psychology. Spending should continue to rise during the next six months, but it could begin to slow by mid-1984. Real disposable income showed excellent gains during 1983 because of increases in employment and a longer work week coupled with lower inflation. The potential for further growth in real disposable income appears good for the first half of the coming year.

Favorable demographics suggest that pent-up demand for housing will continue to stimulate new construction. However, the affordability of new houses is dampened by the level of mortgage rates and a jump in the median sales price to \$77,000, up 11.4 percent year over year. Nevertheless, housing and associated industries, such as home furnishings, should experience better business conditions over the next couple of years than during the first part of this decade.

These advances in spending and consumption should further raise industrial capacity utilization, now at an improved rate of 79 percent. As a result, capital expenditures should experience good growth to meet expanded production needs as well as to continue the ongoing process of automation to achieve greater productivity.

One important facet of the outlook which should not be ignored is the U.S. trade deficit and the strength of the dollar in foreign exchange markets. A strong dollar has made domestic goods more expensive to overseas buyers and foreign goods cheaper for domestic consumers.

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