

N B U F

I was touched and moved by the tv drama, King. My heart and my soul were totally consumed by the re-enactment of the trials and tribulations that characterized the turbulent sixties, the most pivotal years of our life and time.

The day after the final showing of King while my emotions were still pitched and my mind dwelled backwards in time and place, I settled before my television again. This time to watch Muhammad Ali defend his heavy-weight championship.

The two television presentations were miles apart in my mind at first. They came together profoundly as I saw the crown lifted from Ali's head and placed on the youthful head of Spinks. I wish the young warrior, Spinks, well. I trust the future will be bright and rewarding for him. Still I was saddened. The fall of Ali was the fall of our last legacy of the sixties.

It is rumored that there will be a rematch soon. Ali might well win and retain his title for the third time. If so, it will be a farfetched and hollow consolation. The magic is gone. Beating Spinks would be anticlimatic now. We all know the final chapter even before it is written.

We remember starting the sixties amid the glitter and glory of the New Frontier. We had a young, exciting President who spoke in high sounding terms of a coming new day. We were all buoyed with hope and anticipation. Little did we know that the flames and deaths of those days would stand out as one of the most exciting, the most profound of all times.

One by one we watched the gallant warriors of the sixties rise. One by one we watched them fall.

Martin, Malcolm, Medger, Whitney, Adam, Angela, Huey, Eldridge, Rap, Stokely, Julian Bond, Ali and others rose to the occasion of the times. They were our fighters. They were our legacy of the era.

The sixties blazed with a speed and tension of great intensity, draining the substance of many. Feelings and impulses festered and fermented. Then they exploded, magnifying the lives and roles of many.

The sixties reached their peak and subsided. Many of those above were dead before the tide ebbed and foamed to a standstill. Others were incarcerated or on the run. Some just played out.

Though the stage was stilled, though the roar and shouts were mute, though the legions withdrew, Ali maintained the vigil, watching over the last lingering threads of those magnificent years; that most dynamic epoch thus far in our years on these shores. One by one as the others faded with the diminishing tide or succumbed to the final resting place, the weight of the mantel, the thrust of the times rested on his shoulders.

Muhammad Ali became a legacy larger than life because he symbolized the struggles and suffering; the lives and sacrifices of a noble people in trying times.

We have all matured beyond the act of making those who fight Muhammad Ali villains. Again I say we wish young Mr. Spinks the best. But Ali's defeat was more than a losing fight. It was the end of an era. An era that will be long remembered.

Ali represents more than nostalgia. He represents the bridge to the new day. He bears the mantel of the great people who gave themselves so completely to the cause in the sixties, times when many of those who adore him, who idolize him were mere toddlers or unborn. But still others, many others were there during the times of defeat. For them, he is the last lingering chords of one legacy and the source of renewal for the next.

Community Affairs

by Kenyon C. Burke

Every once in a while a set of statistics appears that sheds new light on the uniqueness of racism in America and how it specifically impacts blacks and other disadvantaged minorities in their struggle toward freedom and equality.

An examination of how our local schools are governed and current proposed "reforms" falls into that category. During a meeting with Dr. Bruce E. Williams, assistant director of the Rockefeller Foundation, the following enlightening information surfaced.

The state of Illinois currently has 1,177 school districts of various types. All are governed by elected boards, except for the Chicago School District, whose board is appointed; Connecticut has 169 school districts, all with elected boards except the city of New Haven; Delaware has 26 school districts which are independent units of government, all are elected except for the city of Wilmington; while Pennsylvania has approximately 503 elected boards of education, two of which are appointed, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Additionally New York state has 749 independent school districts, of various types, which are governed by 5,097 board members, with 5,064 whom are elected.

We also observe that Mayor Edward Koch of NYC is pushing hard to dissolve the New York City Board of Education with an annual budget of \$2.5 billion and replace it with a commissioner who would be responsible to the mayor.

Only a cursory knowledge of census data would cause most eyebrows to raise and recognize a familiar pattern of institutional behavior that continues to be part of the black experience in the American society.

Its no secret that blacks and Hispanics are heavily concentrated in Chicago, New Haven, Wilmington, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New York. Its also no secret that the 1960s produced a dramatic increase in political activity and awareness via voter registration campaigns, that resulted in the highest number of black councilmen, mayors, state representatives and congresspersons in history.

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger alerted us to the importance of local citizen control over local schools in writing the majority opinion in the historic Detroit School Desegregation case on July 25, 1974.

"No single tradition in public education is more deeply rooted than local control over the operation of schools; local autonomy has long been thought essential both to the maintenance of community concern and support for public schools and to quality of the educational process."

The emerging pattern of changing the manner in which our schools are governed would be watched very closely. Indeed our history is crammed full of examples of changing the rules when it's our turn to step into the batters box.

We would also like to thank the perceptive and thoughtful Dr. Bruce E. Williams, for calling our attention to another, not so subtle, form of institutional racism.

Inasmuch as public education has and continues to play such a vital role in improving the quality of our lives in our quest for true equal opportunity we had better serve notice on the mobbers and shakers of this country that these discriminatory practices are no longer fashionable or acceptable from this moment on.

More Energy

More Jobs

by Mark Hyman

Before Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, there had been an urgency for jobs. Free men of color lived on or under the poverty line. After "freedom" with millions of former slaves seeking employment, the job crisis was overwhelming. Since then the mass migrations of Blacks from south to north, from south to west did, indeed, have social justice motivations, but the search for jobs and a resultant better way of life equalled the first.

Black unemployment and underemployment have fashioned a depressing lifestyle as Blacks have clamored over the years for work. Obstacle after obstacle, the least of which was race and color, with unions, transportation and lack of marketable skills doing a collective share of frustrating and defeating.

Politicians with glowing promises of work and a better life have gone to city halls, statehouses, to congress and the White House on the prayerful tide of Black votes. Much has been overcome. Now we have a new problem. We have ENERGY.

What about energy, anyway?

The simplest definition is that energy and jobs are two sides of the same coin. The fact that the energy question has become far more political does not help the job situation in the Black community, for now. The facts that oil will run out, gas will become scarce, with solar energy being many light years away are academic.

Where are the jobs?

Like everybody else, Blacks need the guaranteed energy supply which can take care of creature comforts, which can encourage growth of industry and increase employment. Energy which can remain in sufficient supply to save the jobs already held. But, again, Blacks must also get into the fight getting information about energy, getting with others, and becoming a part of a united force to impress Washington to deliver guaranteed energy sources. In this particular battle, Blacks are in the same boat with whites, unemployed whites.

What is special in this crisis is the woefully out-of-balance unemployment picture of whites over Blacks: Thirteen percent of the Black labor force is out of work compared with 6.2% of the white. During the 1977 February energy shortage, out of the 1.2 million jobs lost, one fourth were Black. That was a gas shortage last year. This past February, the shortage was coal. No matter, Blacks suffered most.

Benjamin Hooks, the new executive director of the NAACP, has told this nation:

"Our major concern is jobs. And there can be no jobs if there is no energy to run the plants. They will close down and our people will be out of jobs. Because we are still the last hired and the first fired."

Even though all Americans are affected by the shortage of energy, the future of Blacks will be determined by the outcome of the national energy program. That's the reason Blacks must learn about the problem, organize, and let Washington hear their voices. Blacks should find out more about two major fuels, coal and nuclear. Blacks should have something to say about where this country is headed. This is one time they cannot afford to remain on the sidelines and watch somebody else doom them or save them.

As a last thrust, the mailman can be a lot of help. He will take a letter from an individual, or an organization, or from a list of individuals, and he will take it, or them, to the President at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. He will take letters to the governors, congressmen, senators, or anybody Blacks direct.

Each Black in America, like each white, has the right and the power to change the directions of his country. Each must demand more energy for survival.

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