



Community Affairs

by Kenyon C. Burke

Did you see "Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry" last weekend on ABC television? There was this young black boy, named T.J., who was supposed to have been a friend of the Logan family which the story was about. Mrs Logan was the school teacher for the black school and attempted to give the students a more complete picture of Blacks in American History, which as we all know the history textbooks have generally ignored. Because T.J. wasn't studying, he was getting failing marks. Instead of looking inward to determine how he could begin to get good grades and learn to really listen to what was being said about the historical plight that Blacks in America have experienced time and time again, he went to the White School Board and reported that Mrs. Logan wasn't teaching strictly from the text-book. As a result, Mrs. Logan was fired, and a more suitable teacher replaced her, suitable, that is, to the ideas that the white community wished to perpetuate. Meanwhile, T.J. became friends, he thought with a couple of white juvenile delinquents. They used him and he was eventually framed by them for murder of a white man. In all likelihood he was hanged.

How many naive, egotistical back-stabbing T.J.'s do we have in our black community? The T.J.s are willing to jeopardize any permanent progress, no matter how small because they cannot totally control it. In the end, not only are the people hurt that the T.J.s intended to hurt but the innocent suffer as well. There are many, many task that are necessary to complete in our community to insure a strong economy. Each organization and Church has a role to play. No one person or organization can handle it all, but it takes just one "So-called" leader playing the T.J. role to stymie any progress for several years. It is absolutely necessary that each person and organization does its job well. Close those ranks, even if the ideologies and methods are different; The goals are the same!

We've heard people criticize an organization that is actively attempting to bring in business enterprise in order to strengthen the economic structure and base of our community and enable the community to build and insure the success of private businesses. Unless the economic structure is there, opening up of small businesses will fail. In other words, 200 small black-owned businesses will not succeed unless there are customers with money to spend in those establishments. Without jobs, there is no money.

The T.J.s of the community have not offered any realistic alternatives, Why? The Community must be progressive in thought or continue to be left in the backwash of society. Remember, a little more than 100 years ago, slavery was abolished and a reconstruction period began. Blacks held high office and owned businesses, but the ranks were never strong enough to prevent the fall of that reconstruction era. Segregation and lynchings became more pronounced than before the period. It was not until the mid-1900s that another war was fought to gain civil rights of minorities. The second reconstruction period has begun now Blacks can insure the same plight as before or can learn a lesson from other minorities who have and are now succeeding. It's up to you. While you're being jealous of what your neighbor has or is doing, the elephants are stampeding you.

Are black elected officials under attack? Is it true that they are the object of a disproportionate amount of harassment? Although these rumors have been circulating throughout the country for the past several months, we have never really been able to get a firm handle on them.

However, a disturbing report just crossed my desk entitled, "The Dilemma of Black Politics: A report on Harassment of Black Elected Officials" shed some light on this subject upon the completion of a two year study by the National Association of Human Rights Workers.

The report documents what appears to be systematic and nationwide harassment of black elected officials along with those who have been appointed to high level local, state and federal positions.

Indeed over 100 black officials have been victims of the U.S. and are from both rural and urban areas. This research study advised that "the higher the level of office, or more outspoken the official, or the greater the influence and power, the higher the incidence of harassment.

The list of those black officials identified as having been victims of such abuse include the late U. S. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, U. S. Rep. William Clay, Lt. Gov. George Brown, Lt. Gov. Mervyn Dymally, and Secretary of State C. DeLores Tucker, Mayors Maynard Jackson, Richard Hatcher, Coleman Young, "Jay" Cooper and Charles Evers, former Mayor Carl Stokes, Clarence Lightner and Charles Joseph, State Senators Julian Bond and Clarence Mitchell, former State Senator Leroy Johnson, State Rep. Alvin Holmes, Thomas Reed and Hosea Williams, and Sheriff Lucius Amerson.

These attacks on black elected officials have been spearheaded by: "1) the white press; 2) the intelligence community and enforcement agencies; 3) the corporate structure and 4) representatives and allies of the corporate structure positioned in executive and legislative branches of the U. S. government."

Although the research did not confirm the existence of a single national or international conspiracy it documented a distinct pattern of harassment.

The most prevalent tactics employed to discredit black officials are lack of coverage, biased coverage, investigations, and unfounded criminal accusations by the white dominated media, audits and investigations by IRA, surveillance, bugging, burglaries and convert disruptive activity by intelligence agencies, and inquiries, grand jury investigations and allegations by law enforcement agencies.

These activities frequently take the form of vicious, vindictive witchhunts which aim at damaging or destroying the credibility of the officials involved, though the accusations of wrong-doing are never proven.

The rough and tumble nature of political life in this country is marked many of these unpleasantnesses. However, the character, volume and intensity of these tactics is far in excess of what might be normally and reasonably expected by virtue of being candidate for or holder of a public office.

The report concludes that "in nearly every respect, black officials are judged by a double standard. They are required to be more scrupulous, more above reproach, more competent, more effective than their white counterparts."

As we enter the political arena in larger numbers we had better prepare our people to expect this uneven kind of treatment and develop counter action strategies that will defuse such assaults.



Library Notes

by Bill Ludwig

Guest Writer Ralph Baldwin

Summer is about to begin, many of us are going to be confronted with the problem of not having enough activities. This has been one of our problems for a long time, which has resulted in unrest community relationships, ranging from burglary, arson, fights, and drug abuse. In dealing with these problems we should consider activities for our children so that we may become proud parents. Some of the things that we as parents and concerned citizens can do is to survey our community for recreational sources and make our young people aware of them. We as adults should become involved in the summer programs ourselves, in an effort to influence our children's interests. You will find that the "West Las Vegas Library" will have continuous programming throughout the summer. The summer schedule for the "West Las Vegas Library" is as follows:

The Illustrious Illuminator

Shoot Off: June 19--Aug. 14
 Registration: June 12--17 (ages 9--13)
 Mondays Games
 Tuesdays Crafts
 Wednesdays Space Shutter 'Strips
 Movies'
 Thursdays Beginner's Flight (Judo)

Reel Thing- (Movies)

June 17
 July 01
 July 15
 Aug. 05
 Aug. 19

Spacey Spectaculars

The Rainbow Company, Ransom of Red Chief
 August 9, 2:00 pm

A fantastic encounter with the verse kind. Spend a day with a real live post. July 18, Tuesday.

Check with the library staff for time.

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