

Point of View

Lincoln's Legacy

By Christy Macy

Most students first learn about Abraham Lincoln in the famous legend of "Honest Abe" who walked for miles to return a few pennies. But looking back, we see that perhaps Lincoln's greatest contribution to this nation was his legacy of tolerance and forgiveness. Even as he prosecuted a war that tore this nation apart, he worked to find a common heritage and experience that would bind it together again.

At his second inaugural address almost 125 years ago, when the cannons of the civil war were still firing, Lincoln took the opportunity to speak out passionately against the injustice of slavery. But he also tried to instill a sense of compassion in his weary fellow citizens. He closed his famous speech with the plea: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, ... let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds."

Lincoln would be saddened today to witness an upsurge in racism and intolerance around the country: a black man beaten and chased to his death in Howard Beach, N.Y.; the hazing of a black student at the Citadel Academy in South Carolina; the rock throwing by Klan members at a "brotherhood march" in the all white county of Forsyth, Georgia; racial incidents in colleges in New England and elsewhere; attacks on Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn and on Cambodian refugees in Philadelphia.

While racial bigotry is making the headlines, a more subtle kind of intolerance is on the rise behind the scenes. Efforts to censor books and curricula in schools are growing, pursued by those who want to eliminate ideas with which they disagree. The notion that public school is a place for students to be exposed to opposing points of view and to learn about the wide spectrum of cultures and religions that make up America is increasingly under attack.

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According to a recent study by People for the American Way, censorship of books and ideas in the classroom has doubled over the past four years. In 1986, there were attempts to remove from the classroom numerous literary classics dealing with minorities, including Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. Alice Walker's prize-winning novel, *The Color Purple*, about growing up poor and black in the South, was the target of censorship efforts in two states.

Textbooks encouraging understanding and tolerance are also the subjects of lawsuits. A witness in a textbook trail in federal court in Mobile, Alabama, objected to a statement in a home economics teaching guide that "people of all races and cultural backgrounds should be shown as having high ideals and goals." In the recent "Scopes II" trial in Hawkins County, Tennessee, objections were raised to stories that portrayed Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, and Japanese and Chinese religions. One of the plaintiffs claimed that a passage from *The Diary of Anne Frank* was objectionable because it encouraged religious tolerance. The series was also criticized because it gave students "a sense of themselves as individuals and participants in a national or world community."

Given the ugly racial incidents of the past few months, it was heartening to see 20,000 people join in the second "march of brotherhood" in Forsyth County a few weeks ago. But more must also be done away from the spotlight to curb the rise of intolerance and bigotry in this country.

Increasingly, we must support and defend our schools and teachers. The public schools are a common meeting place for young people whose beliefs may seem worlds apart, but who live under the same flag. Here children from every racial and ethnic background and from every religious faith come together to become Americans. It is in the schools that children learn to accept each other as equals, to understand beliefs they do not personally share, and to

To Be Equal

by John E. Jacob

Black History Month rolls around every year, but this year it has a special significance, for the message of black accomplishment and the record of struggle against racism have a new relevance in 1987.

The nationwide black efforts to revitalize our depressed communities will take new heart from the focus on black history's role models and from its message of excellence and achievement in the face of oppression.

This is the month to remember the unsung heroes of the black past -- the people who learned to read and write in defiance of the slavemasters, the people who tilled farms, built roads, and fought in America's wars, the people who never allowed discrimination to prevent them from instilling sound values and dignified pride in their children.

Recalling the black past

they built gives impetus to today's struggle to preserve black families and black institutions in the face of social disorders and economic hardship.

And all Americans need to be reminded of the past, especially of the struggles to win elementary rights. That's important to note at a



John E. Jacob

time when some of the headlines in the news could have come from newspapers of twenty years ago, when blacks and their white allies were still trying to topple entrenched segregation.

INDEPENDENCE 150th Anniversary 1862-1986 Leaders' Digest

How very true ...and timely!

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help small men by tearing down big men. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.

You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatreds. You cannot establish security on borrowed money. You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do themselves.

Paraphrased from the inspired words of Abraham Lincoln

appreciate and celebrate the rich mosaic of American history and culture. In a word, they learn tolerance.

If we fail to pass on to each generation the American tradition of pluralism and tolerance, then we will fail to teach them the lesson of Lincoln. In that failure as a nation we will lose our most precious heritage -- our compassion and sense of justice.

Black History Month

For example, as the nation celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, national attention was being focused on Forsyth County, Georgia, a place whose sole claim to fame appears to be its refusal to allow blacks to live there.

As in the 1960s, whites and blacks marched together for brotherhood. And they were once again met by stone-throwing mobs and vicious Klansmen. This

edged segregation that time has passed by and which warn us that the bitter past can return unless we are vigilant.

The problems black people overcome in the past have their counterparts in today's struggles -- whether they relate to bringing the Forsyth Counties into this pluralistic nation or whether they relate to the continuing struggle to overcome disadvantage.

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wasn't an old newsreel -- it is happening in 1987.

This month, in schools across the country, Black History Month programs will be held. In some of them, the civil rights drives of the 1950s will be highlighted.

I hope those responsible for the presentations talk about the Forsyth Counties of America -- the places where blacks are not welcome, where housing and job discrimination flourish, and where violence in defense of racial supremacy is still in fashion.

Today's young people -- black and white -- need to be made aware of the persistence of racism and of the need to constantly combat it.

They need to be taught that segregation was not destroyed and racism made unfashionable because a few laws were passed from above. Those welcome developments came about because masses of people -- black and white -- stood up for what they believed in and marched and demonstrated and fought until the laws had to be passed.

And because of that mass coalition of concern and conscience, America is now much closer to its national aspirations than it was before the civil rights movement began.

But the job of securing equal rights is far from over; the Forsyth Counties still remain -- pockets of hard-

So this is no time for tameness in celebrating Black History Month. The series problems confronting the black community today make it necessary to establish connections between the struggles of our forebears and those of today's black citizens.

Oliver Tambo's Washington Visit

By Rhoda McKinney
NNPA National Correspondent

At the tail end of Oliver Tambo's four day visit to the nation's Capitol, the titular head of the outlawed African National Congress said he hopes to address the American people's concerns about the ANC's association with the Soviet Union, their use of violent tactics to end South Africa's apartheid system and to urge U.S. secretary of state George P.

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