

American People 'Great,' but Their Government 'Is the Pits': Bishop Tutu

by Chester A. Higgins, Sr.
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Because of seven years of playing footsie through its long discredited "constructive engagement" policy with the terrorist Botha regime of South Africa, America is "the pits" in the eyes of most Black South Africans, South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond D. Tutu said here.

But the American people, on the contrary, he pointed out, "are admired. We have a naive faith in you."

In a tough, impassioned address before an overflow luncheon gathering at the National Press Club, Tutu urged Congress to pass new and more stringent economic sanctions against South Africa, despite President Reagan's opposition. "Nothing changes in South Africa," he said, "without continued economic pressures."

Obviously angered over the governments of America's Ronald Reagan, Britain's Margaret Thatcher, West Germany's Helmut Kohl and that of the Japanese "aiding and abetting" the South African minority terrorist regime, he cried: "While they personally may not be racist, for the victims of racism (this) makes no difference. I think President Reagan, Mrs. Thatcher, Chancellor Kohl and the Japanese government have made a moral decision. They have decided that South African Blacks are expendable; that profits matter more than the lives of Black children. Can you imagine a policy of constructive engagement with Nazism? They are the best recruiters of Communism."

Tutu, who won the Nobel Peace prize in 1984, and despite worsening terrorist oppression against South African Blacks, continues to espouse peaceful approaches towards ending apartheid, declared, "I reluctantly support the (Rep. Ron) Dellums' bill." The California Democrat co-sponsored the sweeping sanctions bill with PA Democrat, Rep. William Gray III.

In an anguished plea, Tutu cried: "Why is the world so indifferent to our freedom fighters? Are we a different breed? Why does the U.S. agitate for the release of a Sakharov and not for a (Nelson) Mandela? Why are you not appalled by all this? Why

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SURE, I'M SENSITIVE

"Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we're free at last." Those words, uttered by the late Dr. Martin Luther King in front of the Lincoln Memorial of Washington, D.C. on the occasion of the 1963 civil rights movement's "March on Washington," has come to epitomize the goals of the civil rights movement.

Between Saturday morning May 14, 1988, and Monday evening, May 23, 1988, without any thought of doing a scientific poll, I asked 366 people the following question: "What is the first thing that occurs to you when you hear 'Free at last'?" The following is a composite of the responses I received.

One man had this to say: "When I hear 'Free at last' the first thing that comes to my mind is something which occurred just over two years ago. My ex-wife re-married and I was finally free at last from paying alimony."

Another fellow who had recently been released from Soledad Prison after having served eight years on an armed robbery conviction associated the phrase with the date of his release.

Someone else was happy to be free of debt for the first time in years. One young man simply said: "TGIF."

A female acquaintance remembered being "free from a creep she had been in an abusive relationship with for almost four years." Another person thought of something that would not happen until November and not go into effect until January of next year. One fellow associated it with an enema freeing him of constipation. One of my students thought of the Civil War and another of being free of trouble and yet another free of exams.

Three hundred fifty-one of the 366, however, like myself, were reminded of the speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King. Some of the respondents reported to have thought of Dr. King with the mention of the word free. Others, without my solicitation, felt compelled to recite portions of the speech. The respondents were of all races.

In conducting my unscientific survey, I realized after the first dozen or so queries that, unconsciously, my tone and phrasing of the three words served as memory exciters. Upon realizing that I was indeed generating or at least prompting the desired response, I began to consciously ask the question in a super monotone. The responses, however, continued as before.

What prompted my poll

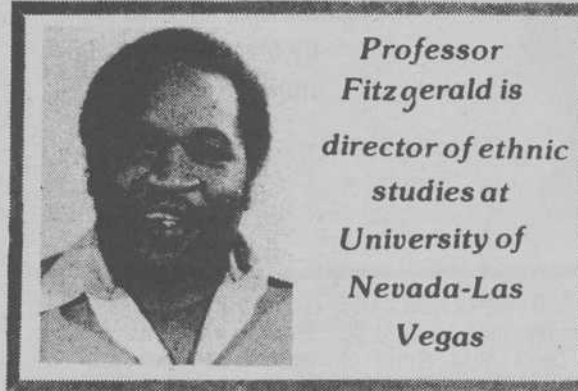
was an Associated Press piece which appeared in a local newspaper having to do with an event in Atlanta, Georgia. The article ran approximately 500 words with a captioned picture. The picture shows a 460 pound gorilla who is at least 27 years old. The caption underneath reads: "FREE AT LAST—after spending 27 years in a small enclosure, the lowland gorilla Willie B. ventures out into a new \$4.5 million simulated rain forest in Zoo Atlanta on Friday." (May 13, 1988—that's Friday the 13th.)

For years, there have been some among us who have chosen to equate black people to monkeys. A standard description has been "jungle bunnies." The historical association of a race of people to primates has been the cause of a great deal of laughter for some and grief for others. All in good fun, of course. The fact that this particular gorilla is named Willie B. becomes significant as it relates to many other factors which individually might appear innocent enough.

Black people have been described as being far too sensitive on these matters. A few years ago when I first heard of the gorilla being named Willie B. I was offended but I said and did nothing because I was certain someone would say, "you're being too sensitive." I kept my mouth shut. Still, why couldn't the gorilla have been named Trixie or Trigger or Fido or Spot or some

other equally innocuous name that could not possibly be offensive to anyone? I knew a fellow who owned a German shepherd that he called Adolph and that offended me. Someone else had a black cocker spaniel that they called "Niq" and

the same racial attitude as that found in Cummings, Georgia today — "we hate negroes." In 1961 when the gorilla was given that name, it was probably given by some nazi-type with an active klan mentality which is pre-neanderthal and



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that definitely offended me. A fellow down the street from where I lived in South Bend, Indiana had a yellow dog that he called "Chink" and that offended me, too. I was more offended when no one else seemed offended but I never doubted the rationality of my own feelings. With Willie B. the gorilla, the only white boys I've ever heard of being named Willie is Willie Nelson, Willie Shoemaker and Willie of "Willie and Joe" World War II comic fame. Willie, like Beulah Mae, Leroy (few Hispanic exceptions) and a few others, are unofficial black names. Ok. Disagree if you want to.

Willie B. the gorilla arrived at the Atlanta Zoo in 1961. Do you remember what it was like in Georgia in 1961? The whole state had pretty much

whose idea of good fun was lynching the first black man who was handy or cutting open some pregnant black woman's stomach and stomping on the fetus. Others who were there and associated with the zoo probably got a good laugh out of it. The gorilla had nothing to do with it. Gorillas, fortunately, have sense enough not to be racists.

After 27 years it's too late

by Roosevelt Fitzgerald

to call the gorilla by any other name. Both it and we are stuck with that. However, even on a slow Wednesday in 1988 in Atlanta, Georgia, the final resting place of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one would think that to use such a caption with such a picture of such a gorilla with such a name — five weeks after the 20 year anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King when the airways had been recently filled with excerpts of his "March on Washington" speech, that the author had to have conscious malicious intent. No doubt about it and I'm not being "too sensitive." In fact, I'm not being sensitive enough.

I don't know how many more of these "little slips" I can accommodate.

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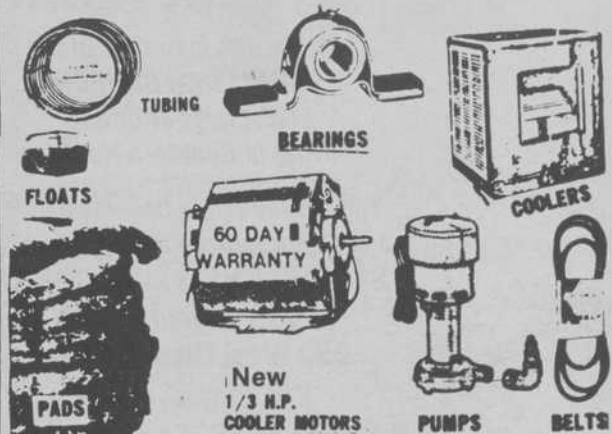
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