

COMMENTARY

# Hillary's election push raises flags among disaffected

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Ever since Daniel Patrick Moynihan announced his retirement, and the politicians and the pundits began to analyze the race for his seat, I have been listening for even one analysis that took seriously millions of New York state Democratic voters, those who are African-American, Latino and Latina.

Maybe I've just missed it, but for sure those who are counting the potential voters seem to have forgotten this significant group, including, it seems, the not-quite candidate Hillary Clinton.

Indeed, her actions of the past few days have raised some real red flags for me and, I suspect, for many in the black and Hispanic communities in New York.

Before Mrs. Clinton's name first surfaced as a possible candidate, the talk shows and columnists were speculating about New York

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's possible run for the seat. But not once did I hear commentary consider the enormous negative legacy of police brutality that has particularly marked his administration.

Nor have I read analyses which take seriously the fact that millions of voters are not only angered by the unchecked harassment of tens of thousands of New Yorkers by the police, but they are frightened by a mayor who so little respects the rights of individuals and is so quick to defend the police even when they shoot unarmed civilians who are mentally ill or not threatening them.

But what I am seeing in the campaign of Mrs. Clinton, the probable Democratic candidate, raises red flags for me as well. As she has made her exploratory treks across the state, raising millions of dollars in wealthy



communities on Long Island and in upstate New York, we have seen little evidence that she is talking to the poor and marginalized communities which she will also be representing.

Mrs. Clinton has spent much of her adult life working on behalf of children, including poor children, but her campaign thus far has not shown any interest in poor parents, whose vote she will need as much as the campaign funds in order to get elected.

And then we come to the issue of the release of the Puerto Rican political

prisoners.

What concerns me the most about this issue is not only Mrs. Clinton's very public announcement that her husband's granting of clemency is wrong, but that she did it without first consulting with Puerto Rican political leaders and elected officials in New York or elsewhere.

Perhaps she even did it without consulting her own husband, who might have pointed out that this matter has been before him for his whole term, as momentum has built in the Puerto Rican

community both in the U.S. and Puerto Rico that the clemency is the right thing to do.

The President's action did not just drop out of the air last month and it was not a political favor for Hillary. It was a long-considered move which was reviewed not only by the White House attorney, but the pardon attorney (actually several of them) and others. It is an action recommended by several Nobel laureates, by many church leaders and by President Jimmy Carter and a number of elected officials in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

The clemency for the Puerto Rican political prisoners was not about Hillary, it is about Puerto Rico and was an act of reconciliation and an admission that their prison terms were unreasonably long for crimes that did not involve death or injury.

If Mrs. Clinton had consulted with the Puerto Rican leaders in New York she might have found out those things. She might have learned that 150,000 people marched in Puerto Rico only a few days ago in support of the release of the political prisoners. She might have come to understand that it is a human rights issue and one that is close to the heart of many Puerto Ricans, no matter what their political beliefs. Instead, she chose to listen to conservative newspapers and the propaganda of the New York police establishment, which recklessly used the word "terrorist" in describing the political prisoners so that the uninformed quickly equated them with Timothy McVeigh or those who blew up the World Trade Center.

Indeed, even more mainstream media did not  
*(See Hillary, Page 16)*

## Carl Rowan's Commentary

### Mix of mental instability, violence, access to guns often proves fatal

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

After the "stock-market rage" murders in Atlanta, I wrote a column about the terrible plight of children who live in fear of being injured or killed by a "crazy" parent. It provoked mail suggesting that the problem is far broader than I imagined or this society has acknowledged.



CARL ROWAN

A midwest woman wrote me to say: "I have an 11-year-old grandson and a 7-year-old granddaughter who are facing the same scenario painted in your article ... life threatened by an abusive, violent, mentally ill (?) step-father.

"Last week their step-father went on one of his rampages and took a hunting knife and stabbed up the walls of their apartment while threatening to kill everyone. My daughter managed to run to a neighbor's place and call 911. He was arrested, kept overnight and released. He has to go to court next week. I plan to go to court and maybe read your column there in an effort to get them to understand the problem.

"Living and dealing with a mentally ill person affects everyone else's mental health. My grandkids are behaving in ways that are not normal for them, and my daughter feels like she is going 'crazy.' It is very hard on all of us. There may not be many physical scars, but the emotional damage is there."

This troubled grandmother asks for her daughter and grandchildren, "Who do they

go to with their problem? Who believes them or listens? So I just wait until someone writes about my family's tragedy. How can I help them besides pray?"

I have no useful answer for that grandmother. It is clear that our criminal-justice and child-welfare systems are not set up to deal adequately with such dilemmas.

It seems that every week I read of some former husband or ex-boyfriend who maims or kills a woman despite a court order that he is not to go within miles of her. Is the cost of following up on such an order so prohibitive that we cannot afford it?

On the related subject of guns. I got a letter from "Gregg" in Southgate, Mich., saying: "I was shocked to learn that you publicly support enacting laws that have roots in America's racist past. Perhaps you are unaware that 'gun control' laws in America were developed first to help slavemasters control their slaves ... and keep free black people 'in their place.'

"Gun control laws work to disarm innocent poor people, immigrants and other minorities."

REPLY: I am shocked, Gregg, that you would attempt to play the race card so irrationally. All of the gun-control proposals that I support would be applied to all groups of Americans without racial or other discriminations. What happened in the Civil War era is irrelevant to the clear and urgent needs of today's society.

## A fitting tribute to America's true soldiers, our teachers

Yolanda Young  
*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Our troops have returned to the trenches. Some kept in shape over the summer by reading and solving equations. Many did not and reported for duty excited about the reunion with their comrades but apprehensive about the work that is to be done.

Their sergeants know this, so they returned to the barracks early in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their program and plan a new assault on the ignorance and apathy that plague our camps.

They are prepared to give instruction, offer encouragement and administer discipline. Some keep one eye on their targeted objectives while others look out for sneak attacks that can come from anywhere — regimented curriculums, unsupportive administrators, or the disinterested troops themselves.

On most occasions only the heart and spirit are wounded, but there are those rare incidents that leave a martyr bloodied in the hall. And, so they must with a degree of fear and uncertainty. Often they wonder if any of it matters. Will their troops be able to survive the coming contest, let alone win the war? And if they do win, will they remember the advisor who showed them everything they needed to know?

The answer of course is yes. I have had the pleasure of receiving instruction from many well-versed experts, but there is one who stands out over them all.

Why? Her subject mastery surpassed that of the others. Her psychology equipped me with an enduring sense of self-confidence and her humanity helped carry me when she knew I needed a lift.

Dessie Adger taught honors civics at Captain Shreve High School. Civics, the study of our government system, can quickly turn

dry and uninteresting, but Miss Adger's enthusiasm and sense of purpose made the subject something great.

Though she was popular among all her students, she was particularly special to Ronny Davis, Rosalind Mosley and me because she was the only Black teacher we would have during our four years at Captain Shreve.

Consciously we didn't realize the impact Miss Adger was having on us. Being kids, we mimicked her shrill voice that rose to a humming screech when she got angry. We giggled when we noticed her auburn wig was on crooked. Subliminally we were loyal and proud of her. We never allowed the White students to joke about Miss Adger the way we did. They didn't really want to anyway. They knew like we knew that Miss Adger was a good teacher who worked hard and was dedicated to her craft.

Miss Adger was the first teacher to class every morning, arriving before 6 a.m. I know this because I was with her on those mornings. She was my ride to school. I was not districted to attend Captain Shreve, so I had to find my own transportation. Without Miss Adger, I would have gotten there, probably on the city bus, which was inconvenient and very unreliable. But, ultimately I didn't have to worry because I had a neighbor who was willing to offer me a hand.

Miss Adger was an anomaly in our community as well at school. Stoner Hills was the kind of neighborhood that people tried to work their way out of. When Adger's colleagues returned with teaching certificates from their Historically Black Colleges and Universities, they opted for communities with names like Acres and Lake.

Conversely, Adger came back to her old neighborhood and offered her presence, her  
*(See Teachers, Page 16)*