

C O M M E N T A R Y

South: Battleground or fiscal common ground?

By Jesse L. Jackson Sr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

On November 5 at Stratford High School, the largest school in Berkeley County, South Carolina, police launched a raid with their guns drawn. They handcuffed a dozen or more of some 100 students while unleashing dogs to sniff the students' backpacks. They found no drugs; they made no arrests. Parents across the city were, not surprisingly, outraged and terrified for their children. On November 7, the North Charleston police shot and killed Ashberry Wylder. Wylder, a mentally ill man, was arrested for stealing sliced ham from a local store. He swung a knife at the policeman who arrested him. He was then shot to death, with witnesses saying that the final shot came after he was handcuffed.

We will march again in Charleston, a moral witness, calling on the officials of the school, the city and the state to act to remedy a pattern of excessive police violence against African-Americans. Police need better training and better pay. Action is needed to stop the violence.

These outrages that feed racial fears distract us from finding the economic common ground so vital to the New South. In the New South, we have learned to play ball together and to fight wars together. In the football stands, we cheer for teams based on their color of their jerseys, not the color of their skins. In the wars, we march together under one flag.

Yet, too often racial fears can still be used to frustrate the ability of working and poor people to find economic common

ground. In South Carolina, one in eight people have no health insurance (and one out of every four goes without insurance at some point in the year). In South Carolina, more than 60,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last three years, and now Georgetown Steel is closing. The textile jobs are going to China. Unemployment hit a nine-year high this summer. Wages are down; benefits are down.

In South Carolina, the budget crisis is forcing cuts in police and schools and vital services.

The economy of the New South was a direct product of the Civil Rights Movement. For decades, segregation not only locked out Blacks, it helped impoverish the South. When you focus on keeping someone down in a ditch, you have to stay down there with him. It was only after Dr. King and the end of segregation that the New South was possible. German investors built auto plants; northern capital invested in high tech work. Textiles were modernized.

But the limits of that change are apparent. South Carolina has too many workers who work for low wages, with no benefits, and no security. Its "right-to-work" laws frustrate the ability of workers to organize. Economic inequality grows worse, even as good jobs head abroad.

South Carolina, like much of the South, is still dominated by racial politics. The Republican Party built itself as the party of white sanctuary, playing the race card, embracing the Confederate flag, offering protection against pushy minorities.

But working families in South Carolina
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Hussein's capture fails to address larger issues

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Catching the brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein in Iraq is portrayed by the Bush administration as a big deal right. And that's not surprising because it fits with the changing rationale for why Bush went into Iraq. Initially, it was the urgent need to find and neutralize



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weapons of mass destruction. Later, it was that Saddam Hussein had committed monstrous crimes for which he deserved to be removed. While it is easy to agree with Bush about Saddam Hussein, it is also important to note that this is all beside the point.

While it could be a short-term victory for Bush, it also has the potential to change the tenor of the elections here. With the backdrop of Saddam's capture, there are heightened demonstrations and violence throughout Iraq, an indication that the militant opposition is attempting to send a signal that they still intend to resist American occupation. American troops were fired on and pro-Saddam demonstrations were held in a wave of anti-Americanism that is not being widely reported and acknowledged in the U.S.

A more troubling possibility is that if Saddam wasn't in charge of the Iraqi resistance, it means there will be ongoing attacks on American troops and that, unfortunately, more of our boys will die in a needless sacrifice. This is almost guaranteed because of the embarrassment and shame felt by some Sunnis at the treatment

of Saddam Hussein, who was in many quarters reviled because of his opposition to the United States.

Almost unnoticed the middle of this, the leader of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai barely escaped assassination from a bomb, the day after Saddam Hussein was found. He was traveling over a bridge that his security de-

tail normally used when he left the seat of government. Despite the fact that they will have to be more careful, there will be repeated attempts on his life and the life of the premier of Pakistan and perhaps even Turkey as well. In any of these three countries, if the resistance succeeds in changing the government support of the United States, the new dispensation could provide a real basis of support outside of Iraq, for the resistance activities in that country to continue.

Then, if the transition from the United States occupation of Iraq to a moderate Iraqi Governing Council fails and a militant Shiite government is established in its place, the U. S. stands to lose control of the situation on the ground and an Iranian-like situation could develop. In this case, the oil resources of the U. S. would certainly not be in the hands of Bush cronies and the long-term management of these resources not at all assuredly favorable to the U.S. As such, I can envision people raising the question: What was gained by the invasion?

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Like what you're getting? Then keep doing what you're doing

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Once again (sounds like a broken record) Cincinnati is in the national and international news for being the city where a Black man cannot stand on the street, sit in his car, hold a brick, or go to the store for a soft drink without getting killed by police officers. Of course I am generalizing only because, unless you have been in a "spider hole" for the past couple of years, you know what I am talking about.

Cincinnati and many of its citizens, both Black and white, continue to amaze me. I am amazed at the apathy; I am amazed at the lukewarm resistance; I am amazed at the lack of righteous indignation at what has to be one of the worst cities in America for police/community relations and economic disparity.

Cincinnati is ground zero, and the world awaits our de-

cision on how we will deal with the latest in a long line of debacles that plague this town. No need to recap the things of the past; you already know our history. Suffice to say that just eight years ago Cincinnati was named the Nation's "Most Livable" city. What that term "most livable" means is certainly open for debate, but imagine what people around the world think as they look at Cincinnati now and see that yet another Black man has been killed by the police.

What happened to Cincinnati? I say nothing happened. Things have been this way for quite some time; it's just that the cover was finally pulled off Cincinnati when Timothy Thomas was killed. Just read some of the writings of Carter G. Woodson and you will see what I mean. In one article titled, "Negroes of Cincinnati Prior to [the] Civil War," Woodson wrote, "In 1807 ... the legislature

enacted another measure providing that no Negro should be permitted to settle in Ohio unless he could within twenty days give bonds to the amount of \$500.00, guaranteeing his good behavior and support." Woodson went on to write, "They (Black people) were not wanted in this city but were tolerated as a negligible factor."

Wendell P. Dabney, a newspaper publisher and entrepreneur who lived in Cincinnati, wrote a book in 1926 titled, Cincinnati's Colored Citizens." Read what he said about his hometown. In describing what took place in 1862 during "The Siege of Cincinnati," Dabney wrote, "The colored men were roughly handled by the Irish police. From hotels and barber shops, in the midst of their labors, these helpless people were pounced upon and often bareheaded and in shirtsleeves ... at the point of the bayonet, and gathered in

vacant yards and guarded." Dabney also described several "riots" in Cincinnati during which thousands of Black people were run out of town and others were killed by "angry white folks."

Here's the real kicker, and this supports what Mumia Abu-Jamal called in his editorial on the Nathaniel Jones death at the hands of White police officers, the "Big Nigger Defense" or the "BND." In Dabney's book there is an excerpt from an article titled, "The Negro in Cincinnati," written by Frank Quillan, who was working on his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in 1910. The Quillan document was the result of a study of the status of the Negro in the life of Cincinnati, prepared under the direction of the Department of History at the University of Michigan.

The article begins with a quote from Samuel J. Tilden, Democratic candidate for

presidency in 1876, who called the entire state of Ohio a "dead nigger state." After citing several discriminatory practices against Blacks in Cincinnati, Quillan poses the question, "What are the causes for this strong prejudice in Cincinnati? Among the seven reasons he gives is this one: "When a Negro commits a crime the newspapers always emphasize his race connection by such headlines as 'A Big Black Burley Brute of a Negro' does such and such, and the whole race gets a share of the blame; while if the crime is committed by a white man the race is not mentioned, and the individual gets the blame."

Nathaniel Jones has been demonized and described in the same manner, even being called a "deadly weapon" by the mayor of Cincinnati simply because of his weight. Mumia's BND scenario is not so outlandish now, is it?

So it's plain to see that

very little has changed in Cincinnati when it comes to how Black folks are treated and mistreated by some police officers. Why haven't things changed? Because we, Black folks, have not changed our response to these kinds of acts. We have marched, demonstrated, gone to jail, and we have had too many "race commissions" and "race dialogues" to list in this article. What should we do now, now after 40 years of marching and protesting, now after 250 years of the same mistreatment? Do you think there may just be an economic answer somewhere out there that we could use?

One thing I do know. We will keep on getting what we've always gotten if we keep on doing what we've always done.

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