

NATIONAL FORUM

VANTAGE POINT

Articles and Essays by Ron Daniels

Bishop Tutu Backs Palestinian State

During a recent five day Christmas visit to the Holy Land South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu strongly reiterated his support for Palestinian rights. Bishop Tutu asserted that until there is justice for the "native" people of Palestine, there will be no peace in the Middle East. Standing firm in the face of intense criticism from many Israeli leaders and citizens, Bishop Tutu endorsed the recognition of the Palestinian state as the principal ingredient for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Middle East.

In advocating recognition for the Palestinian State, Tutu also was unequivocal regarding the right of Israel to exist within safe and secure boundaries. However, the South African Anti-Apartheid leader assailed the Israeli government for its military and economic axis with South Africa. The Nobel Peace Prize winner also called the Israelis to task for past and present acts of terrorism against the Palestinian people.

Bishop Tutu's stand showed great courage and conviction. All too often debate about Middle East policy has been severely stifled by fierce resistance by many Israelis and American Jews to any suggestion that the Palestinians have a legitimate right to a homeland and a state. Deviations from the official policy of the Israeli government or the position of powerful pro-Israel American Jewish organizations have frequently been characterized as anti-semitic.

Bishop Tutu's position on the Middle East closely parallels the policy recommendations advanced by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson during the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. The historic Gary Black Political Convention in 1972 broke the silence on the subject of Palestinian rights

by calling for self-determination for the Palestinian people. The Organization of African Unity has also been on record in support of Palestinian self-determination.

The Jackson campaigns were major vehicles for the articulation of a more balanced U.S. policy in the Middle East. By 1988, largely due to the strength of the Jackson campaigns and an emerging new consensus on Middle East policy, the subject of Palestinian rights was openly debated at the Democratic National Convention. The subject would have been strictly taboo just a few short years ago.

People like Bishop Tutu who have had the courage to put forth a more truthful and balanced view of the Middle East conflict have often paid a heavy price. Under the Carter Administration, U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young was forced to resign because he dared to have secret contacts with a representative of the Palestine liberation Organization. These contacts were undoubtedly sanctioned by the State Department and the President. However, once the contacts were discovered, the Jewish Lobby went after Andy Young's head and got it.

Bishop Tutu therefore has boldly stepped forth on a course that can be extremely risky. During his Christmas pilgrimage one outraged Israeli called him a "Black Nazi pig." Tutu is not likely to win a popularity contest in Israel or among American Jews from this point on. Fortunately not all Israelis or American Jews are so intransigent. A sizeable minority of Israelis and American Jews now support a two state policy, and the concept of land for peace. Many Jews also have sharply critical of Israel's relations with South Africa.

Civil Rights Journal

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Eyes On The Prize

Far too often television explores our history through programs which are either so poorly conceived that they put you to sleep or so badly revised that they bear no resemblance to the truth. One of the few programs to depart from the norm was EYES ON THE PRIZE, AMERICA'S CIVIL RIGHTS YEARS. When the series first aired on television in 1987, it definitely made its mark. Not only is the series used in schools and churches throughout the country, it has also become one of the most acclaimed documentaries in television history.

Using interviews with participants in Movement events and film footage from that time, the first series covered the years from the murder of young Emmett Till in 1955 to the Selma Montgomery March of 1965. Now Blackside, Inc., the Black-owned film company which produced the first series, has given us a sequel. This next series--8 hours in all--covers the years 1965 to the early 1980s. It promises to be as historically revealing and as dramatically powerful as the first series.

Certainly those segments which focus on Martin Luther King's later years will do much to show the broadening scope of his concerns--and, through him the broadening of the entire Movement. Though some would like to end Dr. King's development with his "I Have a Dream" speech, EYES ON THE PRIZE II explores the activities initiated by Dr. King and the staff of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference through the mid-to-late 1980s. Their organizing becomes much more targeted against economic inequality and the Viet Nam War. Speaking shortly before his assassination, Dr. King pleaded for a greater commitment to the poor, saying, "This is America's

opportunity to help bridge the gulf between the haves and the have-nots . . . There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. But the real question is whether we have the will." Here, as elsewhere in the series, the events presented speak not only to concerns of the past, but to problems which plague our nation even today.

This relevance is obvious in the segment of Malcolm X. Through his speeches we come to understand the brilliance of Malcolm the teacher. But, equally important, through interviews with actor Ossie Davis, poet Sonia Sanchez, author Alex Haley and others we also come to understand the humanity of Malcolm, the man. In fact, the first time we see Malcolm he is smiling. Journalist Peter Bailey tells us that Malcolm he is smiling. Journalist Peter Bailey tells us that Malcolm was "a master teacher. And there is no greater loss to a community than the loss of a master teacher."

In this segment--and through the resonance of his influence throughout the series--we begin to understand the real depth of that loss. However, the impact of his sequel is based on just on one more story, but on the overall effect of the entire series: from the personal courage of Muhammad Ali to the jubilation of Chicago residents who succeed in electing Harold Washington as that city's first African-American Mayor. The theme of community empowerment which runs through EYES ON THE PRIZE II is both uplifting and energizing. As a Puerto Rican mother says, explaining the importance of the struggle for community control of schools in Brooklyn, "Power to the People: I like this because I think that we were going through, what any poor neighborhood, regardless of the ethnic makeup was going through . . . People really needed to have some power."

This second series of EYES ON THE PRIZE couldn't have come at a better time. Now, as many of our communities are organizing to combat the growing problems of unemployment, drugs and homelessness, we all need to be reminded of the power of a united community--whatever its racial composition.

This Way For Black Empowerment

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

The Personal and the Political

Recently I was invited to be on a panel sponsored by the Women's Center of Columbia University in New York City. The topic was "Juggling Multiple Allegiances"--how women balance their personal and professional commitments.

To my way of thinking, the underlying premise of the topic was problematic, because it assumed that "juggling" is the activity women must do when our families and our work collide. But the whole concept of juggling gets women into trouble, because it we're juggling and something goes wrong then we're the ones who end up getting blamed. What I wanted to talk about wasn't juggling, but bringing the personal and the professional--in my case, politics--together. I decided to do it by talking about my children--my daughter Ainka, who is 16, and my 12 year old son Amani--and how I have used my political commitment to shape my relationship with them.

As a young mother I had tried, along with my children's father, to create a positive Black environment for them: they had Black dolls to play with and books about Black people to read. We were trying to recreate Africa in our living room. Then we sent Ainka to a daycare program. One day she came home with a yellow sweater on her head which she refused to take off. She started criticizing all the Black people on TV, calling this one ugly and that one stupid. At first I didn't realize what was happening--and when I did I was horrified. But I was also, suddenly, very liberated. Because I began to realize that I couldn't protect my daughter from racism. Even if I could manage to keep it out of our house, I couldn't keep her out of the world. So if I was going to do something about it in the world.

I had similar experiences with Amani. I believe that anyone who is not a Black, Latina, Asian or Native American working class woman raising a male child in America cannot really know what that experience is like. Every time Amani left the house I was sure he would be shot by a cop. If he was five minutes late coming home from school or from the store, I was sure racial composition.

that some racist had beaten him up or killed him. I wanted to find a way to protect him against the violence and viciousness of racism.

After my husband and I separated, my home and family life centered around the kids. My eventual decision to become active politically provoked a two and half year fight with Ainka and Amani; they insisted that they should "come first."

My independent campaign for the Presidency put me on the road for 18 months. I spoke to Ainka and Amani nearly every day by phone, but I was hardly ever home. When the campaign ended and I got back, it took me several weeks to realize that something in the house was very different. The kids had stopped fighting with each other. I asked Ainka what had happened. She explained that when I went on the road she and her brother had decided that they needed to be supportive of me; since they knew that I always worried about their fighting with each other, they had made a pact to stop in order to support the campaign. I was deeply, deeply moved by that.

You see, I have not practiced politics in such a way as to balance my political life with my responsibilities as a mother, or as a development psychologist. I have struggled to organize the whole of my life--political, professional, personal--around my fundamental commitment to bringing about radical social change in this country. That's one reason I'm so controversial. As a therapist who practices the radically humanistic clinical psychology known as social therapy--created by my very close friend and political mentor Dr. Fred Newman, a Jewish Marxist--I have been accused along with him of "brainwashing" people into becoming active in the New Alliance Party.

But it is our understanding of the relationship between psychology and politics, our struggle to bring the personal and the political together, that is central to our success as a powerful progressive force in American politics. "Juggling" is not the answer, because it leads to women being blamed. And we don't need to be blamed. We need to be powerful.

SPORTS

The Locker Room

by Ulysses Tucker, Jr.



He's here, finally, and early returns indicate David Robinson was well worth the wait.

"David Robinson is a glass-eater," declared Michael Cooper of the Los Angeles Lakers following Robinson's 23-point, 17-rebound NBA debut, a 106-98 San Antonio Spurs victory over the Lakers before a rollicking sellout crowd of 15,868 at the HemisFair Arena Nov. 4.

"He's simply a great player. He's a presence, and they haven't had that," said Lakers Coach Pat Riley.

After winning the 1987 NBA Draft Lottery and picking the 7-foot-1 Robinson, the Spurs endured 31-51 and 21-61 seasons while he fulfilled his Naval commitment. Now he's committed to anchoring the Spurs' defense, sweeping the boards, scoring some points and making the Spurs the most improved team in the NBA. Already he's averaging 24.3 points (15th in the NBA), 14.8 rebounds (third) and 4.0 blocked shots (third).

It's not all Robinson, to be sure. He's one of nine newcomers on the Spurs' 12-man roster, the only holdovers being second-year pros Willie Anderson and Vernon Maxwell and frontcourt reserve Frank Brickowski.

"What we did goes against every principle I've held dear in the 17 years I've been an owner," said Spurs owner Red McCombs.

"I always felt if you added more than a couple players, you were treading on thin ice. But some unusual opportunities came to pass, and we jumped on them."

The Spurs seem to have all the right ingredients--an agile, defensive-minded center and rebounder in Robinson, a savvy floor leader in Maurice Cheeks, a proven "go-to-guy" in Terry Cummings, exciting young talent in Anderson and Sean Elliott and good depth.

"I don't know when it's going to happen, but I know we're going to be a really good team," said Coach Larry Brown. "I don't anticipate it happening overnight, but I know there's going to come a time when we become really good."

"You always dream of playing for a team like this one," said Anderson, runner-up to Mitch Richmond in last year's Minute Maid Orange Soda NBA Rookie of the Year voting. "When I go home at night, I look at the structure of this team and I'm just thankful to be a part of it."

Brown, naturally, remains cautious. "Potential is something that gets you in trouble, because people expect too much," he said. "Our young kids don't know about the bumping and the grinding and the way

you've got to play night in and night out with effort. This league is tough. You don't win just by chance. You've got to have good, competitive guys who get along together. You've got to have leadership and experience on the court."

That leadership and experience is coming from Cheeks, who quarterbacked the 76ers in the 1983 NBA World Championship, and Cummings, a career 22.1 ppg scorer.



Photo Credit: "A Sporting News Magazine" photograph

"Helping them to learn how to win is the first thing," Cheeks said of his role. "Being able to teach them to play the game to win, not just to go out there and play and expect to get beat--I think that's my role."

Added Cummings, "The biggest thing for me is leadership. I try to keep everyone focused and keyed in on what we need to do--and that is win."

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If the Spurs do win, the main man figures to be Robinson, the 1987 NCAA Player of the Year who spent two years in dry dock before joining the Spurs this summer.

"I don't have any individual goals, I just want us to be successful," he said. "I didn't expect to feel this comfortable this quickly. That's what has surprised me the most. I come out and I feel relaxed. In fact, sometimes I'm almost too relaxed. I've got to get out there and be a little more, well, reckless, I guess.

"I'm still adjusting to the pro style of defense. I've got to be more of a factor in the paint. I've got to be more active, block some shots, get in there and dominate that blue area. If I'm anywhere out on the floor, I can't let them drive the lane with impunity."

Not to worry, Robinson's combination of size, agility and quickness already rate him a place among the league's best centers. Brown, for one, is not surprised.

"When David was growing up," said Brown, "he was so good at everything he tried, he didn't know if he wanted to be Mozart, Thomas Edison or Bon Jovi. But he's focusing on basketball now, and he's getting better every day."

"He's a good player," said All-Star center Patrick Ewing of the New York Knicks after his first match-up against Robinson in preseason. "He's quick and agile. He can run and jump. For quickness and size in centers, there are only three--myself, Akeem Olajuwon and Robinson."

"He's definitely going to be an impact player in this league right away," said Boston's Kevin McHale.

Paul Silas, the NBA veteran who is now an assistant coach with New York, was impressed with Robinson's agility and dared to mention him in the same sentence with Bill Russell, the standard when it comes to shot-blocking centers.

"His speed, that's what really impresses me," Silas said of Robinson. "He really gets up and down the court. His timing on shots, his jumping ability, the way he keeps blocked shots in play, reminds me of Russell. He's one of the quickest centers I've ever seen."

Perhaps Magic Johnson put it best in describing Robinson: "It's hard to say he's a rookie, because he's a man. Some rookies are just never rookies, and he's one of them."

Currently 23-10, Robinson and the Spurs will be in town to play the Trailblazers. It should be an excellent contest.

Short Shakes: Special thanks to Ivie R. Lewellen of the Sporting News Magazine in St. Louis, Missouri. I don't know what I would do without your fine publication or without you for that matter. Say hello to your Photo Department for me . . . The Lakers and Knicks are 17-1 at home. You have got to hold down the home fort in this league. David Robinson appears complimentary of N.B.A. News. Cheri White, former Blazer/Golden State PR Director, works on their staff. See you next week.



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