Editorial Page

Boycott Not Answer

We were disappointed to learn the leaders of the Negro civil rights revolt in the South planned a boycott of the State of Alabama.

With the headway the Negro leaders had made in making the nation conscious of their brothers' plight down in Dixie, it is a shame they now have threatened:

1. To ask labor union members not to haul shipments through Alabama.

2. To ask the Treasury Dept. to withdraw deposits in Alabama banks.

3. To implore that people around the nation not purchase items made or grown in Alabama.

4. To ask federal agencies to "withdraw support of a society that refuses to protect life and the right to vote."

This would seem to be vindictiveness beyond that necessary to illustrate the major issue today—the Negro's right to vote.

We are convinced the people of the nation believe the Negro should not be deprived of citizenship's greatest privilege.

These same people were full of sympathy as the sad march from Selma to Montgomery was in progress and they felt that when Dr. King led his throng to the steps of the capitol, he had accomplished a great deal.

Citizens throughout the nation are bitter over the most recent atrocity of the ill-advised Ku Klux Klan, the hooded vigilantes who have struck fear into the hearts of the colored population and white sympathizers for decades. And we hope President Johnson will not waste precious time in discussing anything—not anything with this infamous organization.

We admire, too, the attitude of the Birmingham News, the state's largest newspaper, which said Sunday in a Page One editorial, "it is time for Alabama to stop blaming outside agitators for the state's racial problems."

Instead it pointed the finger of guilt at several groups, including "political leaders of all levels, and that includes the Alabama delegation in Washington."

Now it seems to us the time has arrived when Negro leaders should capitalize on the ground they have now won and begin to send capable Negro educators and medical people into the rural areas where, according to a Southern Baptist minister, there is a tremendous need for them to learn something about basic personal hygiene, the terrible consequences of illegitimate children and venereal diseases, the responsibilities which go with the right to vote and the concessions all of us must make every day in getting along with our neighbors. This is not the time for boycotts.

Mission To Jakarta

Scant optimism attends Ambassador Bunker's quest for a means of salvaging Washington's deteriorating relations with Indonesia. Mr. Bunker was the special envoy who negotiated the settlement whereby Indonesia took over West New Guinea from the Dutch.

This may have produced some fair-weather friendships in high Indonesian circles but it did nothing to abate Sukarno's territorial lust. He's now after the eastern half of New Guinea and, for the better part of a year, has been infiltrating the Federation of Malaysia.

Joint support pledged to the new federation by Britain and the United States has been Sukarno's excuse for a campaign of vilification that has led to book burnings, confiscated information centers and seizure of the management of Western commercial enterprises. Pressure by Indonesia's Communist party, largest in Asia outside Red China, continues to push Sukarno closer to Peking's line.

Accordingly, there is little to indicate Sukarno is in any position to improve relations with the West. Whatever leverage Mr. Bunker may be able to apply appears to be through the Indonesian army, some of whose leaders are said to be Western-oriented.

BRUCE BIOSSAT . . .

The Era Of Protests

WASHINGTON (NEA) — We are deep in the Era of Protest. And many thoughtful figures, in or close to government, are at once cheered and troubled by that fact.

They are cheered to see that countless Americans have turned on their adrenalin and gone out to do battle for a cause, whether it be civil rights, campus freedom, the southern way of life or whatever.

As they march and demonstrate and exhaust their lungs, they shatter the charge that Americans generally are being suffocated by a lethal combination of their own indifference and the vast impersonality of today's over-organized industrial society.

The right to protest is one of the great rights assured to a free people. No one who scans the newspapers can doubt it is being exercised today as seldom before in our history.

The stirrings are nearly constant. As the complainants intend, the camera and the printed word rivet the country's attention on this calculated turbulence.

Yet numerous sympathetic observers here are wondering when the shortcomings of protest will begin to be grasped by aroused Negroes, white supremacists, college students, ministers and others who have taken to the public forum.

For there is a clear danger that the ways of protest will be mistaken for a constructive course of action. Marching, demonstrating, shouting and singing have the comforting look of "something positive." In a true sense, however, these are the easiest things complainants can do.

To people who do these things at the risk of bodily harm, of arrest, of taunt and jeer, of rain and snow, the word "easy" may seem not to apply.

Nevertheless it does apply. Protest calls attention to problems—legitimately—but it cannot solve them.

The good will, the energy and the resourcefulness of millions of Americans are needed for the incredibly difficult, unglamatic labor of lifting up the Negro and solving a host of other growing problems which cling tenaciously to our new-found affluence.

When the attention-getting shout dies away, the real work begins. And this is truly where we separate the men from the boys who are merely playing at "getting involved."

It is time for many (not all) of the marchers and shouters to put away their badge of courage, however proudly earned, to move off the sit-in line and away from the campus soapbox and sink their teeth into the dilemmas they deplore.

Thousands upon thousands of three-year-old tots need to be pulled from culturally deprived home settings which cripple them educationally before they ever reach school. They need to be taught the difference between a tree and a lamp post, to find meaning amid a chaos of sounds they have learned to ignore, to feel the guidelines of sensible discipline and discover hope within a framework of order.

The sick, the disabled, the neglected, the delinquent, all these and more need not just sustenance through money but understanding attention from capable activists concerned with their problems. The list of chores crying to be done is nearly endless.

The promoters of protest argue, with good case, that without their prod no action would occur. But protest cannot be an exhilarating end in itself. It cannot be a substitute for constructive labors or a way of assuaging guilt over inaction.

It cannot be allowed to degenerate into war — racial or whatever—by making permanent enemies of the constituted authorities (including the police) and the power wielders whose accommodation and assistance are indispensable to the proper goals of all citizens in any workable free society.

BERRY'S WORLD

"Do like I always do—act like nothin's wrong an' hope it goes away!"

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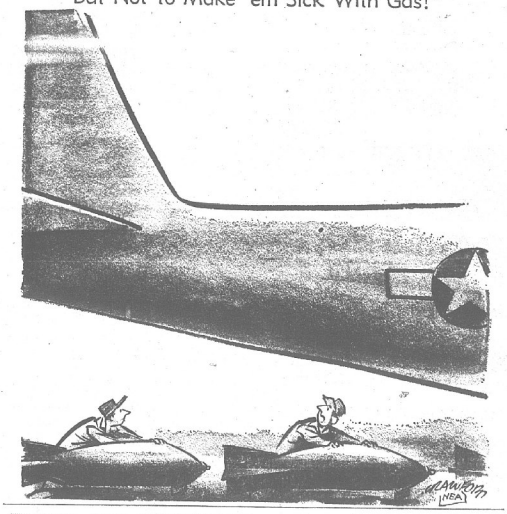
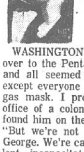
"It Seems It's O.K. to Kill 'em But Not to Make 'em Sick With Gas!"





ART BUCHWALD...

A Gassy Interview

WASHINGTON — I dropped over to the Pentagon last week and all seemed to be normal except everyone was wearing a gas mask. I proceeded to the office of a colonel I knew and found him on the phone saying, "But we're not calling it gas, George. We're calling it benevolent incapacitators. How the hell do I know how to spell it?"

He hung up. "I guess you want to know about the gas, too."

I nodded my head.

"Well, it's quite harmless. Every country has it, and it's been used in riots in some of the most civilized places on the globe."

"The publicity's been very bad on it," I said.

"I tell you it's harmless. Look, I'll take some myself." He picked up an aerosol can and sprayed some in the room.

"There, you see!" But in a minute tears were rolling down his cheeks. "Nobody understands us," he sobbed. "All we're trying to do is prevent casualties and be as humane as possible and everyone criticizes."

"Would you like my handkerchief?" I asked.

"Thank you," he said, trying to get control of himself. But the tears wouldn't stop. "This is a tough war," he cried, dabbing his eyes, "and we have to use whatever we can to win it. Isn't it better than strafing villages and dropping napalm on the natives?"

"Control yourself, Colonel," I said, as a few tears started rolling down my cheeks. "I'm not criticizing anybody. You guys know more than we do about the situation, but there's only one thing I've got to ask you."

"What's that?" he sniffled.

"Can I have my handkerchief back?"

I started blubbering in earnest.

The colonel's secretary, hearing the noise, came into the office and immediately burst into tears. "Oh, Colonel, I'm so unhappy."

"It's all right, Elaine," the colonel said, his shoulders shaking. "Everything's going to be all right."

I placed the handkerchief in my mouth and then I said, "Was Washington aware that you were going to use the gas out in South Viet Nam on the Viet Cong?"

The colonel was about to answer when his face went green and he reached for the wastepaper basket.

"The colonel's sick," the secretary cried hysterically. "Oh, somebody give the colonel some water."

I was about to get some water when the nausea hit me.

"I think I'm getting sick, too," I cried and grabbed the colonel's hat.

When the colonel saw what I was doing, he started crying again. "My new hat, my new hat, my new hat."

The secretary rushed out of the office to get water for both of us. By this time the colonel had his head hanging out the window and I was rolling on the floor holding my stomach.

The commotion caused a general to walk in. "Dammit, Colonel," he shouted. "Can't you brief these reporters without all this noise?"

But in 30 seconds the general was also crying and his aide came in and helped him out of the room as he said softly, "It's all right, General, it's going to be all right."

In about a half-hour everything was back to normal. The colonel was sitting behind his desk and I was sitting in a chair. "As I was saying," he said briskly, "this is a non-lethal type of gas and we have no reason to apologize for using it."

RALPH de TOLEDANO . . .

FBI Under Fire Again

The pen-brandishing and typewriter-pounding contingent of the radical left is once more leading an assault against the FBI. For these illustrious members of the Fourth Estate, this is a kind of isometric exercise for the sluggish colon. Without at least one good jab at the FBI and its director, J. Edgar Hoover, the pundits of the radical left believe that the day, week, or month has been wasted.

To read some of the public prints, democracy and the right to sneer at patriotism are being threatened. And by what? A TV series based on the work of the FBI, which the Ford Motor Company is sponsoring. For some reason, those who feel that it is highly laudable when Xerox makes love to the United Nations on network television are horrified by the consequences of this dastardly series.

Looking over some of the pieces being written about what must be a crime against nature, I am struck by the fact that those who show the most anguish are precisely the same people who did such fine work in reopening the doors of the movie and television studios to Communists, their supporters, and their dupes. The battle they did to win the West Coast for organized subversion and disorganized political foolishness was waged in the name of the First Amendment. The battle to suppress the FBI television series is also being fought under the same banner.

If this be contradictory, make the most of it.

Behind the furor, as one columnar pundit was indiscreet enough to note, is the fact that Mr. Hoover has affronted the One Vote, One Lobby forces by saying some unkind things about the Reverend M. L. King. In these feverish days, this is roughly equivalent to what spitting on the American flag was in more primitive days. That the FBI has been under attack in certain parts of the country for its investigation of Civil Rights Act violations makes no difference to our journalistic Barbara Prietchies.

What is being said by the indignant pundits is something else again. They are justifying their campaign by arguing that it is improper for the FBI to be "commercialized" by television. The same FBI they have tried for years to drag in the mud is now too sacrosanct to permit itself to be portrayed for the benefit of the video audience. The taxpayer's money is being wasted, they claim, because FBI officials will have to clear the scripts — therefore taking up the government's time.

BARBS

Seems the only conversational gambit in hospital recreation rooms is over who's sicker than whom.

Why do dentists wait until you "open wide" to ask a question you'd like to answer?

I would venture that the FBI spends more time ducking false and malicious charges than it would reviewing the scripts of the TV series. But this is not the point. What is far more pertinent is the record of government participation in the film and television industry. There was no outcry when a commercial movie, "The House on 92nd Street," showing the work of FBI and of our intelligence agencies against the Nazis, was produced. This was great stuff.

There have been movies and television series showing the work of virtually every government agency, if there was any dramatic potential in the stories. The United States Secret Service, the T-men of the Treasury, the very hush-hush wartime Office of Strategic Services, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, the State Department, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marines—you name it. All of these have had film scrutiny turned on them. In the days of radio, it was considered hardly a violation of due process or an attack on motherhood to feature the activities of the investigative agencies of the nation.

The outcry is even more ridiculous when you consider that the Johnson Administration has made no bones of the fact that it would like commercial television to bring its cameras into the departments of the Executive Branch — just so long as the treatment was favorable.

FULTON LEWIS JR. . . .

Administration Deals Merchant Marine Blow

WASHINGTON — Administration officials have dealt a cruel blow to the owners and seamen of America's merchant marine.

Earlier this year, the Export-Import Bank granted the government of Spain long-term credits of $68.2 million to purchase goods in this country. A "sense of the Congress" resolution adopted in 1934 requires that all government-financed cargoes "be carried exclusively" in American ships if they are available at reasonable rates.

Spanish officials asked for a waiver of the resolution that would permit their own vessels to carry 50 per cent of the cargo. And the Administration, on Feb. 12, agreed.

Officials of the various maritime unions lodged a vigorous dissent. So did leading American shippers. They quoted Florida Rep. Paul Rogers, an influential member of the House Merchant Marine Commitiee:

"The U.S. Government has spent some $350 million in the past year in direct subsidies to the American shipping industry. This sum shows the stake which the U.S. taxpayers have in this nation's shipping industry. The subsidy is of limited help, and surely the cargoes moving through our ports would be of greater help if the majority of them were carried in American ships."

The U.S. shipping industry has slipped to the point where it carries less than 10 per cent of the nation's sea trade.

"The least we can do in this country is deprive those foreign flag interests which ship to our enemies the profits taken from U.S. shipping," says Representative Rogers.

Spanish ships have carried great quantities of economic and technological materials into the ports of Castro Cuba. Numerous Spanish ships have been placed on an American blacklist and denied the right to carry government-financed cargoes.

Earlier this year, however, the State Department quietly removed all Spanish vessels from the government's official blacklist. Department spokesmen say they acted after receiving assurances from the Spanish government that its ships would no longer visit Cuban ports.

But on the very day, Feb. 9, that Washington removed the Spanish vessels from its blacklist, the Franco Government inked a $100 million commercial agreement with Castro representatives in Madrid.

Radio Havana announced that under terms of the pact, Spain would soon deliver cargo vessels, refrigerator ships and fishing boats to Cuba, thereby removing the necessity of using Spanish ships in its trade. The American Maritime Association is bitter:

"Thus ends another chapter in the brilliant conduct of our foreign policy and the administration of our cargo preference laws."

Note: A Cuban diplomat, Odon Alvarez de la Campa, defected to the Free World earlier this month in Madrid. He told newsmen that Spain last month concluded an agreement to buy 740,000 tons of sugar from Cuba over the next five years at roughly three times the current world price.

Radio Hanoi, voice of the North Vietnamese Communists, is now urging American GIs to throw down their arms. A broadcast beamed to U.S. soldiers in South Viet Nam on March 19 is typical

"American servicemen, besides suffering from being away from your loved ones, what you are being forced to do in South Viet Nam is bringing no credit to the American people or yourself. It only smears the U.S. flag and infringes upon the lofty ideals of the American revolution. If you love your country as an honest American citizen, you should refuse to act perversely and try to save your own life. Be useful to your people on American soil rather than die in a foreign land which has no relation whatsoever with your country's security. Just think it over."

The Red broadcasts quote U.S. Sens. Wayne Morse (D.-Ore.) and Ernest Gruening (D. - Alaska) as saying that American servicemen have no right to be in South Viet Nam. Morse is reported to have said: "We say we (are in South Viet Nam) at the government's request but that government is rigged up by ourselves."

The Red broadcasts are often aimed at Negro soldiers. A March 17 message is typical:

"In these days, your Negro compatriots, including some of your own relatives, are being savagely suppressed by the authorities of the state of Alabama for demanding voting rights. U.S. Negro leader Malcolm X, a tireless fighter for the freedom of Negroes, was assassinated on Feb. 21 while addressing a Negro rally in Harlem. Rev. James Reeb, a white minister who supported the Negro struggle, was brutally murdered in Selma.

"Meanwhile your government has dispatched 3,000 more Marines to South Viet Nam and ordered its aircraft to repeatedly bomb and strafe North Viet Nam in an attempt to intensify and expand its aggressive war. . . . Be courageous in refusing to participate in firing at and killing the South Vietnamese people, because that is a completely contradiction of the ideal of freedom cherished by your people."

LYLE C. WILSON . . .

Illiteracy No Bar In Vote Right Bill

President Johnson was unable to say at his latest news conference whether his hurry-up voting rights bill would enfranchise all illiterates in the states in which it is designed to apply.

The text of the Johnson bill seems to guarantee, however, that no U.S. citizen's right to vote will be denied or abridged merely because he cannot read or write—or because he is of bad moral character — or because of absolute lack of education.

In the areas where it is the purpose of the federal government to apply the voting rights bill, there can be no challenge to registration on the basis of any of the foregoing conditions. The controlling language of the bill in this respect appears in Section 3B which defines the tests or devices which are prohibited in determining eligibility to vote in areas where there has been discrimination. Section 3B is as follows:

"The phrase test or device shall mean any requirement that a person, as a prerequisite for voting or registration for voting demonstrate the ability to read, write, understand or interpret any matter, demonstrate any educational achievement or his knowledge of any particular subject, possess good moral character, or prove his qualifications by the voucher of registered voters or of any other class."

All of the foregoing means have been used in southern states to disenfranchise Negroes by confronting them with tortured versions of the tests and devices. It scarcely could be argued that these tests and devices fail to establish desirable standards by which to qualify voters when they are fairly and honestly applied. The standards are, indeed, high. But so is the right to vote a high right.

When unfairly and dishonestly applied, Negroes were denied registration and the vote despite qualifications equal to or surpassing the qualifications of white men and women who sought registration. This is the situation the hurry-up Johnson bill seeks to correct. This correction apparently is to be had by abandoning all standards, however reasonable and desirable, by which the fitness of a citizen to vote might properly be determined.

Whereas the existing system prevents registration of Negro citizens who are fit and qualified to vote, the pending Johnson plan must insure the registration of citizens, white and non-white alike, who obviously are unfit and unqualified.

Illiteracy is not an imaginary disability. An illiterate is a person who is unable to read and to write in any language. The current statistical abstract of the United States estimates that 2.5 per cent of the 1959 civilian, non-institutional population was illiterate. This was among males 14 years old and over. Applied to females, the percentage was 1.8 per cent.

Whites comprised 1.7 per cent of the illiteracy in the male age group, nonwhites 8.3 per cent. Females: White illiteracy, 1.4 per cent, nonwhite 5.4 per cent. It is evident, therefore, that an all-out registration of illiterates could considerably dilute the electorate.

Under the Johnson plan, the illiterates are home free, although the President could not quite bring himself to say so in his news conference discussion of the voting rights bill.