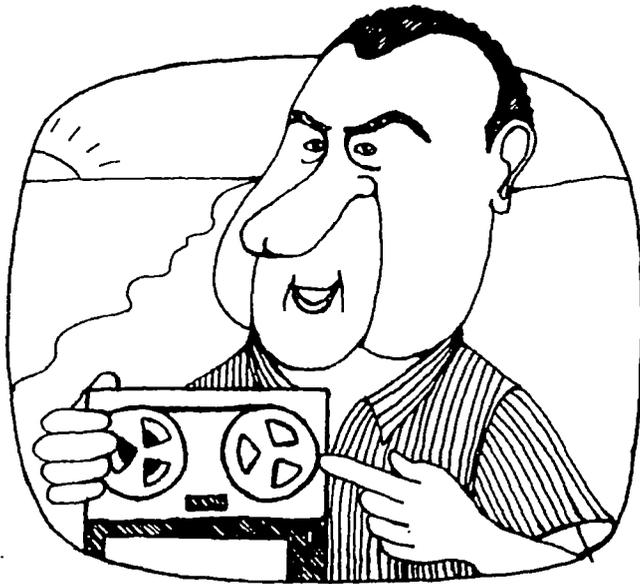


EXCURSUS II

Goldwater Washes Whiter

I'm not prepared to make a case against it, to say that it's like Haldeman's \$50,000 from CBS News or Abbie Hoffman's \$2,500 for an interview on public television. And anyway, when you come right down to it, how many opportunities are there for an election loser without a family fortune or fall-back elective office to make ends meet? Can you picture Harry Truman, had the pollsters been right after all, back in haberdashery in Independence? Prey to every bad mouther, to every postelection pundit in a 34 Short? Of course there are those attenuated \$25-a-plate postcampaign dinners with equally rarefied Cornish hen, snow pudding instead of Baked Alaska. But the regular party coffers are pretty well nailed shut. In fact I'll say this: If this first case indicates any kind of trend, it's not to the courtroom that I'd be heading, but to Madison Avenue, where the giggles are.



Janice Stapleton

This first one appeared on my TV screen late one night, somewhere between the end of the News and Perry Mason. Now that's a special time for us borderline insomniacs, an hour when the unexpected is unwelcome. The TV time-buyers have regularly made it a slot for old faces, where we catch a glimpse of Hoagy Carmichael, Chubby Checkers, Little Richard, all leading the viewer down memory lane and into an offer to buy fifty best-loved favorites, extra for eight-track tapes. But this night it wasn't Hoagy or Chubby, it was the less recollectably named William E. Miller ("You remember me," he began rhetorically, though for

many it was more properly a question). Barry Goldwater's vice-presidential running mate in '64, Miller had a message from American Express, the folks whose credit card is so widely and graciously accepted that, he said—and I think I'm quoting exactly—"they treat me as if I had won."

Shocked wakefulness. And then the dawning of the possibilities of the thing. A new national game! A whole new star system for the Mad. Ave. boys and girls!

(Blackout.)

It's 1944, of a 7:00 P.M., and I'm waiting for the "Lone Ranger" to come on. There's the Rossini theme, and then a soft voice over: "This is Herbert Hoover for Greyhound. Put your car in the garage and leave the driving to us."

Memory lane. Sorry. Plenty of examples today. John Mitchell (a losing campaigner of sorts) for Tide: "It gives your clothes that laundered look." Guess Who for Preparation H. Gene McCarthy for anything one wants to come clean. George McGovern for Krakus hams.

Something to pay expenses. And something to keep names, initials, slogans before the public, someday perhaps to try again....

SW

EXCURSUS III

Problems in African Political Philosophy

Africa is the second largest continent, with an area almost four times that of the United States. It has few major seaports, though with its four great rivers it has the greatest waterpower potential in the world, in addition to tremendous fissionable raw material resources. This already is enough for one of Africa's most maverick leaders, Colonel Qaddafi, to remark: "Soon the atom will have no secrets for anybody. Some years ago we could hardly procure a fighter squadron. Tomorrow we will be able to buy an atom bomb and all its parts. The nuclear monopoly is about to be broken" (*Daily Nation*, Nairobi, January 20, 1975). Africa, furthermore has only about 9 per cent of the world's population with 26 per cent of its land surface. Except for South Africa, there is no real industrial economy on the continent. Yet Africa has 40 per cent of the world's governments. Eighty per cent of Africa lies in the tropics. Its population density is quite low (20 to 22 per square mile), but it has more ethnic and cultural groups and diversities than the other continents. No one really knows how rich Africa potentially is, both because we

have not even begun to think in terms of sun power, of which Africa receives plenty, and because much of Africa is simply unexplored and unanalyzed.

Looking into Africa's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century background, it comes as something of a shock to realize that but for Bismarck and Leopold of Belgium, all Africa could very well have been Islamic. Or conversely, had one strand of British foreign policy been vigorously implemented, Southern Africa could well have been the "America of India." Too, had North and South America not been available, had Jefferson refused the Louisiana Purchase, any significant change in European immigration to the South during the last century could have resulted in a considerably greater percentage of whites in several areas of Southern Africa than in fact they now have. It would not have taken a very great nineteenth-century exodus to Africa to have made it more Islamic, Indian, or white than it is today. For we must remember that, comparatively speaking, there were very few Africans in Africa in the century before our own.

History in Africa, furthermore, has become a kind of selective thing, a search for a culture or a politics that somehow ought to have been there. Yet precolonial Africa has unbearable memories for the modern African. Few write of it as bluntly as Kwame Nkrumah:

The truth remains, however, that before colonization, which became widespread only in the nineteenth century, Africans were prepared to sell, often for no more than thirty pieces of silver, fellow tribesmen and even members of the same "extended" family and clan. Colonialism deserves to be blamed for many evils in Africa, but surely it was not preceded by an African Golden Age or paradise. A return to the precolonial African society is evidently not worthy of the ingenuity and efforts of the people ("African Socialism Revisited," *The African Reader: Independent Africa*, W. Carty and M. Kilson, eds., 1970).

While there has been a good deal of search for authentic African culture or politics that antedated the presence of Europe, still the facts of modernization must be seen in terms pretty much exemplified by the developed countries. It is perfectly legitimate, of course, to want to avoid the errors and mistakes of earlier models of development, but there is no sense in pretending that the existence of development itself is not the cause of its desire in Africa. This can be looked upon as some kind of evil, as many critics persist in doing, but it need not be, and should not be. There is nothing intrinsically antihuman in learning and applying what others have learned. Independence in Africa,

whether defined on a continental, subcontinental, or national basis, does take models and values that were not exclusively African traditions or inventions.

But how does Africa stand to political theory? Can we simply be satisfied intellectually to be told that the dominant one-party state, liberal use of the army, control of the press, quasi-socialism, and bureaucracy, which are the features of so many African states, are to be accepted because this is what Africans do do with their political regimes? There is, I think, something rather pathetic in the way professed Africanists resort to European Marxism or Maoism. There can be little less African than a Marxist explanation of the African predicament. But power talks, so a good deal of Africa can easily become much more Marxist, especially when Suez reopens and southern Europe turns more Marxist, as it seems bent on doing. The fate of Portugal is certainly followed closely in Africa.

Africa also can still become much more Islamic than it is. Christianity is strong in parts of Southern Africa, but it is barely holding its own against Islam. And now many Christians embrace some variety of Marxist solution. The kinds of socialism most of Africa has already officially chosen have begun to exclude the possibility of a more rapid and liberal development. The insistence that international trade be identified with exploitation is surely one of the great failures of social thought in Africa. In a sense, I suspect, the slowness of African development from here on could be directly attributed to a choice of a political philosophy which, combined with certain elements in the African heritage, notably tribalism, makes rapid modernization most problematic. I believe the main failure so far must be attributed to a choice of disguised European philosophies, nationalism and socialism, as the terms in which development must be Africanized rather than to any deficiency in the African land potential.

In reading African newspapers and literature, one sometimes feels that Africans currently have a positive block to being like the rest of us. This, I have come to believe, is one of the major factors that prevents Africans from criticizing themselves and from assimilating those institutions and procedures needed to make Africa a fully modern continent. This attitude, too, is responsible for the loud cries against South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese, and the silence about Burundi, Uganda, Zaire, or the treatment of the Indians. So if it is true that only the African can understand the African, then, of course, we must lapse into a kind of intellectual skepticism about the commonness of human problems. Professor Kariuki has written:

Africa must reflect what it must—an African way

of life. If it chooses to industrialize, such industrialization must enhance African spiritual essence, not wreck it. Africa's real revolution will begin when Africans themselves make the painful decision to capture the power to define who they are, where they are, where they want to go, and how they wish to get there. This will be a true revolution, a revolution of the mind. Only after that can the African quest for national prosperity become relevant to man's progress ("Toward an African Revolution of the Mind," *Pan-African Journal*, Spring, 1973).

Is this kind of ambition really feasible or desirable? Are the roots of human dignity to be grounded in such corporate individualism? It seems to me that this very ambition for autonomy before the rest of humankind is itself a major cause of underdevelopment.

The other side of the illusory intellectual belief that Africans (or anybody else) can or should be unique in this world of men and women can result in a kind of political perfectionism which logically excludes any real politics. This is something that the best and most honorable of the African leaders seem especially prone to. Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's President, makes this not untypical affirmation: "We want to eliminate from the face of Zambia the exploitation of one man by another. We fight to eliminate all forms of evil.... As humanists, we must accept that we are working towards establishing perfection in our society...."

Now if we recognize that these apocalyptic words are not those of a religious leader to his followers but of a nation's president to his people, we see that it is precisely the human political condition as it is experienced and lived by human beings that is avoided. No government is going to eliminate all evil or establish perfection. The usual result of this emphasis on the purity of party or nationalistic ambitions or programs is to force real politics underground, so that its reality is either officially ignored or else is explained as something characteristic of foreigners. Such a presentation of an African ideal seems especially confusing and harmful to the real political life of Africa, which displays little indication that the substance of politics there is free from the toils and sins of the rest of the human race.

J.G. Vaillant has well noted that there is a danger in defining what is African by contrasting it with perfection or with the European tradition:

To the extent that men inevitably perceive what they are by contrast with what they are not, protests against assimilation to European ways of doing things have tended to cast indigenous identity as a mirror image of a European one. The result is a self-image dominated by its anti-Western origins. It is oversimplified, stress-

es contrast rather than similarity between West and non-West, and tends to confuse Africa with preindustrial society as such ("Dilemmas for Anti-Western Patriotism: Slavophilism and Négritude," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, No. 3, 1974).

No one denies that development in Africa will take on characteristics peculiar to the place and the people, but overemphasis on Africanization easily leads thought to reject development because it never existed on that continent or to espouse an idealized system that has no relation to anything men and women might construct. The fact is that a modernized Africa is going to look pretty much like the rest of the world, and this is not such a disastrous fate.

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QUOTE / UNQUOTE

Agrarian Reform

One cannot help but wonder why the idea of agrarian reform has become so popular with leftist governments throughout Latin America, when the program has not been all that successful in Mexico, the country that started it all back in 1915.

Sixty years after the first agrarian reform law was introduced in Mexico, nearly two million farmers are still waiting and asking for their own land. In truth, the Mexican government has distributed 2.2 billion acres to three million families, but Agrarian Reform Secretary Augusto Gomez Villanueva has had to admit that there are 60,000 pending requests....

Another factor—no matter how distasteful to theoretical liberals—is that the few remaining large expanses of land are more productive than the small agrarian reform unit farms, and what confronts the national administration is the certainty of decreasing further agricultural productivity to satisfy the philosophical claims of 1915.

These larger farms continue to exist despite the law because a large family will monopolize several agrarian reform "units" directly or indirectly. The actual sale of these units is strictly forbidden by law, but the government has had to admit it does take place and it does lead to concentration of land in a few hands.

—*Vision Letter*, May 30