

CARTON 137

WRITINGS

MOREHOUSE COLLEGE / SPELMAN COLLEGE
COALITION OF THE SOCIETY OF COLLEGIATE JOURNALISTS,
SPEECH DRAFTS

CIRCA 1983

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c

I GOT MY INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM AS A REPORTER FOR THE MAROON TIGER, IN MY FRESHMAN OR SOPHOMORE YEAR AT MOREHOUSE. I DON'T KNOW IF MY EXPERIENCE WAS TYPICAL WELL FOR ONE THING, I USED A PEN NAME VICIOUS LEE. THAT'S RIGHT VICIOUS LEE. I THOUGHT ABOUT IT AND DECIDED THAT WITH A PEN NAME LIKE THAT, IF SOMEONE DIDN'T LIKE ONE OF MY STORIES THEY WOULD THINK TWICE ABOUT MESSING WITH ME. AND I WAS RIGHT. ONCE I WROTE A STORY THAT FOR SOME REASON ANGERED THIS FELLOW, A BIG FOOTBALL PLAYER. WELL HE THOUGH TWICE ABOUT IT AND THEN HE CHASED MY BEHIND ALL THE WAY TO TREVOR ARNETT LIBRARY. BUT I GOT AWAY FROM HIM. YOU SEE, I HAD A STACK PERMIT AND HE DIDN'T. SO WHILE HE WAS COOLING OFF IN THE READING ROOM, I WAS BUSY RESEARCHING MY NEXT STORY.

THAT TAUGHT ME A LESSON THOUGH. SINCE THEN I'VE ALWAYS CARRIED A LIBRARY CARD FOR SELF DEFENSE. NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU MIGHT HAVE TO POP SOMEBODY UPSIDE THE HEAD WITH THE DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM.

I DIDN'T REALLY COME HERE THIS EVENING TO REMINISCE ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES AS A STUDENT JOURNALIST ___ ALTHOUGH THAT IS LOTS OF FUN. THERE ARE SOME MORE SERIOUS MATTERS I WANT TO DISCUSS THIS EVENING BECAUSE WE FIND OURSELVES IN A SERIOUS AND DIFFICULT SITUATION. HERE IN ATLANTS OUR CHILDREN ARE BEING KILLED AND THE MURDERER IS STILL ON THE LOOSE. BUT ATLANTA IS NOT AN ISOLATED CASE. THERE HAS BEEN AN ALARMING INCREASE OF ~~KILLINGS~~ ^{affects on} OF BLACK PEOPLE IN CITIES SUCH AS NEW YORK, BUFFALO, OAKLAND, DETROIT, NEW ORLENAS AND OTHER CITIES. THERE IS A WAR GOING ON AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IS THE POLITICAL COMMAND POST OF THIS WAR AND THE KLAN, THE NAZIS AND OTHER RACIST GROUPS ARE THE NEW STORM TROOPERS. IT ALMOST LOOKS AS THOUGH 1984 HAS ARRIVED EARLY.

WHAT WE NEED TO KEEP IN MIND, THOUGH, IS THAT BLACK PEOPLE ^{And what is more important} HAVE SURVIVED EVEN WORSE TIMES THAN WE NOW FACE. ^a OUR FOREPARENTS NEVER SUBMITTED TO OPPRESSION WITHOUT A STRUGGLE, THEY NEVER ALLOWED THEMSELVES THE LUXURY OF APATHY AND COMPLACENCY. WE HAVE AN INCREDIBLE HERITAGE OF RESISTANCE AND STRUGGLE WHICH ~~EA~~ WE CAN DRAW UPON TO GIVE US STRENGTH TO MEET TODAYS PROBLEMS. INDEED, THIS EVENING I WANT TO SUGGEST THAT THE SPIRIT OF STRUGGLE WAS THE FOUNDATION OF BLACK JOURNALISM. I WANT TO COMMEMORATE THE MILITANT, CRUSADING SPIRIT OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE BLACK PRESS. IT WAS THIS SPIRIT OF STRUGGLE THAT NOURISHED THE EARLY BLACK PRESS, AND IT IS ^{that} A SPIRIT WHICH CAN NOURISH US TODAY.

I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO THIS BANQUET BY THE MOREHOUSE SPELMAN COALITION OF THE SOCIETY OF COLLEGIATE JOURNALISTS. OF COURSE AS A MOREHOUSE MAN, I AM WELL AWARE THAT FOR AT LEAST A CENTURY MOREHOUSE MEN AND SPELMAN WOMEN HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO FORM COALITIONS, ALLIANCES AND MISALLIANCES OF VARIOUS SORTS -- SOMETIMES WITH MIXED AND COMPLETELY UNINTENDED RESULTS -- AND THAT'S PUTTING IT MIDDLY. WELL, I'M GLAD TO SEE THAT THIS GROUP IS HAVING NO SUCH PROBLEMS -- AT LEAST NONE THAT ARE APPARENT TO THE NAKED EYE.

I'm glad my ~~mother~~^{sister} is
here to see that introduction.

If I come home and told
her all the things you said
she'd make me go with my
mouth out because she'd know
I was ~~trying~~ fibbing

SHORT TIME

commemorate

Militant fighting
IN THE ~~KEYXXXXXXXX~~ THAT I HAVE THIS EVENING I WANT TO ~~CELEBRATE~~
THE CRUSADING SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT OF STRUGGLE, WHICH WAS THE WELL SPRING
PAY TRIBUTE TO
OF BLACK JOURNALISM. I WANT TO ~~CELEBRATE~~ THE SPIRIT OF SELF EXPRESSION
AND SELF DETERMINATION THAT MOTIVATED THE FOUNDERS OF THE BLACK PRESS IN
CELEBRATE
THIS COUNTRY. I WANT TO ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND
INDEPENDENCE WHICH LIES AT THE HEART OF BLACK AMERICAN HISTORY, AND
WHICH HAS NOURISHED AND BEEN NOURISHED BY BLACK JOURNALISM FOR OVER
A CENTURY AND A HALF.

today
~~TODAY~~ WHEN WE TURN ON THE TV WE ARE SO USED TO SEEING A BLACK
REPORTER COVERING A MAJOR STORY OR ANCHORING A NATIONAL NEWS PROGRAM
THAT WE FORGET THAT IT IS ONLY WITHIN THE PAST TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS
THAT BLACK JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BREAK INTO THE NATIONAL
NEWS NETWORKS, AND THE MAJOR WHITE METROPOLITAN DAILIES. BEFORE THAT
TIME BLACK JOURNALISTS COULD FIND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT ONLY IN THE
BLACK PRESS, WITH ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF SMALL WEEKLY PAPERS SCATTERED
IN BLACK COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM FLORIDA TO ~~XXXXXXXX~~ WASHINGTON STATE.
WITH ALL OF THEIR PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS, THESE PAPERS, ALONG WITH
A HANDFUL OF BLACK MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS, WERE THE TRAINING GROUNDS
FOR GENERATIONS OF BLACK WRITERS AND THE REPOSITORY ~~XX~~ OF THE TRADITION
OF MILITANT BLACK JOURNALISM.

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS TRADITION IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED TODAY BECAUSE THE
BLACK PRESS ITSELF HAS SOMETIMES ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ FAILED TO HONOR ITS OWN HERITAGE.
THE FAMOUS BLACK SOCIOLOGIST, E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER, MADE THIS POINT IN
HIS BOOK, BLACK BOURGEOISIE, WHICH WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1957. FRAZIER
ACCUSED THE BLACK PRESS OF INDULGING IN WISH FULFILLMENT, ~~OF~~ ~~XXX~~ CREATING
AND PERPETUATING A WORLD OF MAKE BELIEVE FOR THE BLACK MIDDLE CLASS.
IN FRAZIER'S OPINION THE BLACK PRESS HAD LOST ITS CRUSADING MISSION AND
INSTEAD WAS SHAMELESSLY PANDERING TO THE FANTASIES OF THE NEW BLACK BOURGEOISIE.

2/2/2/2

STATUS +

THE SEARCH FOR SUCCESS HAD REPLACED THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOME AND DIGNITY IN THE PAGES OF THE BLACK PRESS. HUNDREDS OF COLUMN INCHES WERE DEVOTED TO RECORDING THE ACHIEVEMENTS, REAL OR IMAGINED, OF BLACKS IN BUSINESS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, AND SO ON AND SO ON. EXAGERATION BECAME THE RULE RATHER THAN THE EXCEPTION. FRAZIER TELLS THE STORY OF ONE NEWSPAPER THAT REPORTED THE CASE OF A NEGRO WHO KNEW SO MUCH ABOUT HIS SUBJECT THAT NO UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD HAD A FACULTY WITH SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE TO AWARD HIM A DEGREE (Now that I think about it, I believe I knew that guy. He was my roommate at Morehouse.) *(I guess he knew so much that he refused to answer questions or found out all answers were oversimplifications.)*

FRAZIER'S CRITICISM WAS HARSH BUT IT WAS NOT WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION. IN FACT MANY BLACK NEWSPAPERS, SEEKING TO INCREASE THEIR CIRCULATIONS, HAD ABANDONED THEIR HISTORIC MISSION AND HAD REDUCED THEMSELVES TO SIMPLE MINDED SENSATIONALISM OR OPPORTUNISTIC EGO MASSAGING. IN EFFECT, THE MESSAGE BECAME THE MESSAGE, AND THE MEDIUM BECAME A MESS.

I DON'T THINK FRAZIER WAS KNOCKING THE IDEA OF ACHIEVEMENT, NOR WAS HE SAYING THAT THE PRESS SHOULD NOT RECORD THE SUCCESSES OF THE RACE. BUT HE WAS TELLING US THAT STATUS WITHOUT SUBSTANCE IS A SHAM, AND IF OUR OWN PRESS PROMOTES MYTHS AND FANTASIES THEN IT IS SUBVERTING OUR STRUGGLE, NOT ADVANCING IT.

WHAT THEN DO I ~~MEAN~~ ^{MEAN} WHEN I TALK ABOUT THE CRUSADING SPIRIT OF BLACK JOURNALISM? HOW HAS THIS SPIRIT MANIFESTED ITSELF AND WHAT HAS BEEN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OUR STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND DIGNITY? LET ME TRY TO EXPLAIN.

TO PUT IT SUCCINCTLY, BLACK JOURNALISM, SPECIFICALLY THE BLACK PRESS, ORIGINATED AS A WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RACIAL OPPRESSION. THIS BECOMES APPARENT FROM ONLY A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF THE EARLY BLACK NEWSPAPERS AND THE JOURNALISTS WHO OPERATED THEM, OFTEN AT THE COST OF GREAT PERSONAL SACRIFICE.

3/3/3/3

FREEDOMS JOURNAL -- THAT WAS THE NAME OF THE FIRST BLACK NEWSPAPER IN THIS COUNTRY. IT BEGAN PUBLICATION IN 1827 UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF SAMUEL CORNISH AND JOHN RUSSWURM. WHAT PROMPTED THE ORGANIZATION OF FREEDOMS JOURNAL WERE THE UNCEASING SLANDERS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY BY THE WHITE NEWSPAPERS OF NEW YORK CITY. A GROUP OF BLACK MEN GOT TOGETHER AND DECIDED THAT AN INDEPENDENT BLACK NEWSPAPER ~~WAS THE ONLY~~ ^{could be an effective} WAY TO ANSWER THESE ATTACKS AND GIVE THE BLACK COMMUNITY A VOICE OF ITS OWN.

IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF FREEDOM'S JOURNAL, THE EDITORS WROTE: "WE WISH TO PLEAD OUR OWN CAUSE. TOO LONG HAVE OTHERS SPOKEN FOR US. TOO LONG HAS THE PUBLIC BEEN DECEIVED BY MISREPRESENTATIONS, IN THINGS WHICH CONCERN US DEARLY."... WE INTEND TO LAY OUR CASE BEFORE THE PUBLIC WITH A VIEW TO ARREST THE PROGRESS OF PREJUDICE AND TO SHIELD OURSELVES AGAINST ITS CONSEQUENT EVILS."

THESE FEW WORDS ELOQUENTLY SUM UP THE MOTIVE AND MISSION OF ~~THEX~~ ^{XX} FREEDOMS JOURNAL ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~. ^{indeed} AND ALL OF THE EARLY BLACK PRESS. ADVOCACY OF THE DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY -- SELF-DETERMINED ADVOCACY, THIS WAS THE KEY. WE WISH TO PLEAD OUR OWN CAUSE, THE EDITORS WROTE, TOO LONG HAVE OTHERS SPOKEN FOR US, AND DISTORTED OUR LIVES AND STRUGGLES.

ONE OF THE CORRESPONDENTS FOR FREEDOM'S JOURNAL WAS A BROTHER NAMED DAVID WALKER. WALKER IS KNOWN TO US TODAY AS THE MAN WHO AUTHORED A FAMOUS ~~PAMPHLET~~ ^{manifesto} CALLING FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE SLAVER SYSTEM AND ADVOCATING THE HUMANITY AND DIGNITY OF THE SLAVES. WALKER'S ~~PAMPHLET~~ ^{article} AND FREEDOMS JOURNAL WERE CIRCULATED SURREPTITIOUSLY THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH. SOUTHERN SLAVEHOLDERS WERE INCENSED BY THESE ANTI-SLAVERY PUBLICATIONS AND A BOUNTY OF \$3,000 WAS OFFERED TO ANYONE WHO WOULD KILL DAVID WALKER. HIS DEATH IN 1830 UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES REMAINS UNEXPLAINED TO THIS DAY. HE WAS THE FIRST BLACK JOURNALIST TO GIVE HIS LIFE IN THE ^{become a martyr} CAUSE OF FREEDOM.

ITS INTERESTING TO NOTE HERE THAT SOUTHERN LEGISLATURES AT THIS TIME ALSO PASSED LAWS ~~XXXX~~ TO STOP THE CIRCULATION OF ANTI-SLAVERY LITERATURE AND PROHIBIT~~ED~~ THE TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING TO SLAVES. CLEARLY, SOME OF IF THE SLAVES WERE READING THIS MATERIAL THEN THE SLAVES WERE NOT SO IGNORANT OR ILLITERATE AS THEY ARE COMMONLY PICTURED IN TEXTBOOKS AND THE MASS MEDIA. INDEED THE STRUGGLE TO LEARN TO READ AND WRITE, FOR BOTH SLAVES AND FREE BLACKS, WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION. THE SLAVEMASTERS TRIED TO KEEP THE SLAVES IN^{THE} DARKNESS AND ISOLATION OF IGNORANCE, FOR THEY KNEW THAT KNOWLEDGE WAS A DANGEROUS THREAT TO THE SLAVE SYSTEM. THEY KNEW THAT A TATTERED NEWSPAPER NOT ONLY BROUGHT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ANTI-SLAVERY STRUGGLE, BUT IT ALSO COULD BE USED TO TEACH OTHER SLAVES TO READ AND WRITE. THE WRITTEN WORD CONVEYED KNOWLEDGE, BUT UNLIKE THE SPOKEN WORD IT ALSO ENDURED AND COULD BE USED AS A TEACHING TOOL. THE EARLY BLACK NEWSPAPERS WERE THEREFORE LIKE A DOUBLE BARRELLED SHOTGUN AIMED AT THE HEART OF THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY.

FREEDOMS JOURNAL WAS FOLLOWED BY A HOST OF OTHER BLACK PUBLICATIONS. BY 1861 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT SOME ~~4~~ 40 BLACK NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES HAD BEEN FOUNDED. AMONG THE MOST FAMOUS OF THESE WAS FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER, THE NORTH STAR, WHICH WAS FOUNDED IN 1847 AND CO-EDITED BY MARTIN DELANEY. DOUGLASS AND DELANEY SPELLED OUT THEIR EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVE IN LANGUAGE THAT ECHOED FREEDOMS JOURNAL. IN AN ISSUE OF THE NORTH STAR THEY WROTE: "IT IS EVIDENT THAT WE MUST BE OUR OWN REPRESENTATIVES AND ADVOCATES, NOT EXCLUSIVELY, BUT PECULIARLY ** NOT DISTINCT FROM BUT IN CONNECTION WITH OUR WHITE FRIENDS. IN THE GRAND STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY AND EQUALITY NOW WAGING, IT IS MEET, RIGHT AND ESSENTIAL THAT THERE SHOULD ARISE IN OUR RANKS AUTHORS AND EDITORS, AS WELL AS ORATORS, FOR IT IS IN THESE CAPACITIES THAT THE MOST PERMANENT GOOD CAN BE RENDERED TO OUR CAUSE."

5/5/5/5

THE NORTH STAR HAD A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT. IT HAD AN AVERAGE CIRCULATION OF 3,000, AND WAS PUBLISHED ON A WEEKLY BASIS AT A COST OF ABOUT \$80.00 per issue. (OBVIOUSLY THERE'S BEEN ~~SOME~~ A CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN PRINTING COSTS SINCE FREDERICK DOUGLASS WAS IN BUSINESS.)

^{Soon}
~~AFTER THE CIVIL WAR~~ THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS PROLIFERATION OF BLACK PUBLICATIONS. BLACK PEOPLE WERE ANXIOUS TO READ AND LEARN AND THEY SUPPORTED MORE THAN ~~XXX~~ 500 NEWSPAPERS. PAPERS WITH SUCH WONDERFUL ^{and revealing} NAMES AS THE MIRROR OF LIBERTY, THE ELVATOR, THE GENIUS OF FREEDOM, THE RISING SUN, THE PALLADIUM OF LIBERTY, AND THE PACIFIC APPEAL. MOST OF THESE PAPERS SURVIVED ONLY A SHORT WHILE, BUT THEY PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE LIFE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY -- CONSTANTLY AGITATING AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION, AND PROMOTING EDUCATION, THRIFT AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

BLACK EDITORS ^{also} NEVER HESITATED TO LET THEIR READERS KNOW HOW THEY FELT ABOUT THE STATE OF THE RACE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ST. LUKES HERALD, PUBLISHED IN RICHMOND VIRGINIA ONCE RAN AN EDITORIAL THAT WENT AS FOLLOWS:

"THE THING THAT WE NEED MOST IS TO GET OURSELVES STRAIGHT. WE HAVE AMONG US FOUR KINDS OF NEGROES: WISHBONE NEGROES, JAWBONE NEGROES, FUNNYBONE NEGROES AND BACKBONE NEGROES. THE WISHBONE MEMBERS OF OUR RACE ARE THOSE WHO SIT DOWN WITH SIGHS AND WISHES FOR THINGS TO GO BETTER WITH US. THEY FEEL DISCOURAGED OVER THE CONDITIONS AND PRAY OR PRATE ABOUT THE DOWNTRODDEN RACE. THE JAWBONE NEGROES SPATTERATE, FROTH AND FOAM AT THE MOUTH AND JAWBONE, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO A SHOWDOWN THAT CLASS OF THE RACE IS NEVER PRESENT. THE FUNNYBONE NEGROES ARE THOSE WHO GRIN AND CRINGE AT EVERY INSULT THAT THE WHITE MAN CHOOSES TO POKE AT THEM OR THE RACE. THE BACKBONE NEGROES ARE THOSE WHO RESENT SILENTLY OR VOCALLY EVERY INSULT OR AFFRONT THAT IS PERPETRATED UPON THEM AND THEIR RACE" (Det, 108)

^{Now characterization}
If any of ~~this~~ seems familiar perhaps things haven't changed all that much. ^{after} all

6/6/6/6/6

ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE RECOGNITION THEY DESERVE, BLACK WOMEN HAVE ~~PLAYED A VERY INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF~~ ^{been part of the backbone of} BLACK JOURNALISM. OFTEN THE WIVES OF BLACK MALE EDITORS WORKED JUST AS HARD ON THE NEWSPAPER AS THEIR HUSBANDS DID, BUT THEIR NAMES SELDOM APPEARED ON THE MASTHEAD. NEVERTHELESS, THE NAMES OF MORE AND MORE BLACK WOMEN JOURNALISTS ARE BECOMING KNOWN, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS CAN NO LONGER BE DENIED. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE OF THE FIRST NEWSPAPERS FOR BLACK REFUGEES IN CANADA WAS FOUNDED AND EDITED BY A BLACK WOMAN, ~~MARY~~ ^{in the 1850s} ~~XXX~~ HER NAME WAS MARY ANN SHAD CARY. BY THE 1880s more than A DOZEN WOMEN WERE WRITING FOR THE BLACK PRESS, AMONG THEM SUCH OUTSTANDING JOURNALISTS AS VICTORIA MATHEWS AND JOSEPHINE TURPIN. PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS OF ALL WOMEN JOURNALISTS OF THE 19th CENTURY IS IDA B. WELLS. BORN IN MISSISSIPPI IN 1862, THE DAUGHTER OF SLAVE PARENTS, IDA WELLS QUICKLY CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE HARSH REALITIES OF LIFE. HER PARENTS DIED IN A YELLOW FEVER EPIDEMIC, AND AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN IDA WELLS HAD TO SUPPORT FIVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS. EVENTUALLY SHE MOVED TO TENNESSEE WHERE SHE STUDIED AT FISK UNIVERSITY AND BECAME A TEACHER. THE FIRST ARTICLE SHE EVER WROTE WAS ABOUT HER SUCCESSFUL LAWSUIT AGAINST A RAILROAD COMPANY WHICH HAD THROWN HER OUT OF THE FIRST CLASS CAR BECAUSE SHE WAS BLACK. IDA WELLS WAS NEVER A WOMAN TO TAKE AN INSULT LIGHTLY. AS A RESULT OF THIS ARTICLE SHE BEGAN WRITING FOR VARIOUS BLACK NEWSPAPERS AND SOON SHE BECAME EDITOR OF A ~~XXXX~~ PAPER IN MEMPHIS CALLED THE FREE SPEECH AND HEADLIGHT. IN 1892 WHEN THREE OF HER FRIENDS WERE LYNCH~~ed~~ ^{ed} SHE WROTE SCATHING EDITORIALS DENOUNCING LYNCHING AND ~~URGING~~ ^{Urging} BLACK PEOPLE TO LEAVE A CITY THAT WOULD NOT PROTECT THEM AGAINST MOB VIOLENCE. WHEN SHE HERSELF WAS THREATENED WITH LYNCHING SHE BOUGHT A GUN, STRAPPED IT TO HER WAIST AND ANNOUNCED THAT SHE WAS READY TO DIE FIGHTING RATHER THAN TO PASSIVELY SUBMIT. THE RACISTS KNEW THAT SHE MEANT BUSINESS, SO, LIKE THE COWARDS THAT THEY WERE,

~~XXXXXX~~ 7/7/7/7

THEY WAITED UNTIL SHE WAS OUT OF TOWN AND THEN THEY RANSACKED AND BURNED HER NEWSPAPER OFFICE. BUT THIS DID NOT STOP IDA WELLS. SHE TEAMED UP WITH THOMAS FORTUNE AND BEGAN WRITING FOR HIS PAPER, THE NEW YORK AGE. MOREOVER, SHE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY INVESTIGATING LYNCHINGS AND WRITING ARTICLES ON WHAT SHE FOUND. SINGLE-HANDEDLY SHE EXPOSED THE RACIST MYTH THAT BLACK MEN WERE ~~BEING~~ LYNCHED BECAUSE THEY HAD RAPED WHITE WOMEN. SHE PROVED THAT IN 2/3 OF THE ^{LYNCH} CASES BLACK MEN WERE NEVER CHARGED WITH ASSAULTING WHITE WOMEN, AND IN MANY OF THE OTHER CASES THE VICTIMS WERE ^{in fact} BLACK WOMEN AND CHILDREN. SHE EXPOSED LYNCHING FOR WHAT IT WAS: MURDER A CAMPAIGN OF ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ AIMED AT TERRORIZING AND INTIMIDATING THE ENTIRE BLACK COMMUNITY. ~~KKKK~~ AND SHE DIDN'T STOP THERE. LONG BEFORE THE NAACP WAS ^{came into existence} ~~XXXXXXXX FORCED~~ SHE ORGANIZED AND MOBILIZED BLACK COMMUNITY GROUPS TO DEMAND THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAKE ACTION TO ~~SKK~~ PUT A HALT TO LYNCHINGS. PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, IDA WELLS EPITOMIZES THE UNCOMPROMISING MILITANCY AND ACTIVISM OF THE BLACK JOURNALISTS OF THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. SHE WAS INDEED A CRUSADER FOR JUSTICE.

WITH THE OPENING OF THE NEW CENTURY NEW VOICES WERE HEARD. ONE OF THE STRONGEST OF THE NEW EDITORIAL VOICES WAS THAT OF WILLIAM MONROE TROTTER, WHO IN 1901 BEGAN PUBLISHING THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER IN BOSTON, MASS. ALONG WITH IDA WELLS, THOMAS FORTUNE AND W.E.B. DUBOIS, TROTTER WAS PART OF A GROUP OF YOUNG BLACK RADICALS WHO WERE FIRMLY OPPOSED TO THE ACCOMMODATIONIST POLICY OF BOOKER T. WASHINGTON. ALARMED BY THE INCREASE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE, TROTTER ASSERTED THAT THE POLICY OF COMPROMISE HAD FAILED AND, IN HIS WORDS, "THE POLICY OF RESISTANCE AND AGGRESSION DESERVES A TRIAL." WHERE WASHINGTON SPOKE OF DUTIES, TROTTER SPOKE OF RIGHTS. WHERE WASHINGTON CALLED FOR ACCOMMODATION, TROTTER CALLED FOR POLITICAL AGITATION TO ^{gain} ~~DEMAND~~ EQUALITY. WHERE WASHINGTON EXTOLLED THE VIRTUES OF INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION, TROTTER CALLED UPON BLACK YOUTH TO PROVE THEMSELVES BY SUCCEEDING AT THE HIGHEST FORMS OF EDUCATION.

8/8/8/8/8

~~WHEN WASHINGTON WAS SILENT~~

WHEN WASHINGTON WAS SILENT, TROTTER STRONGLY DENOUNCED DISFRANCHISEMENT, SEGREGATION AND LYNCHING.

SIGNIFICANTLY, IT WAS THE EXAMPLE OF TROTTERS MILITANCY THAT FINALLY BROUGHT W.E.B. DUBOIS INTO THE CENTER OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM. AT THE TIME DU BOIS WAS TEACHING HERE AT ATLANTA UNIVERSITY AND CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON BLACK COMMUNITY LIFE. DUBOIS BELIEVED THAT CAREFUL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DISPASSIONATE DISCOURSE WERE SUFFICIENT MEANS TO ALTER WHITE PREJUDICES AND RACIST BEHAVIOR. BUT TROTTERS URGENT APPEALS, COMBINED WITH THE OBVIOUSLY WORSENING SITUATION OF BLACK PEOPLE, PERSUADED DUBOIS TO BECOME MORE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT. IN 1905 DU BOIS, TROTTER AND A SMALL GROUP OF BLACK MEN FORMED THE NIAGARA MOVEMENT. IN A RINGING STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES THE NIAGARA ACTIVISTS DECLARED THAT BLACK PEOPLE WOULD ~~no longer~~ ^{not} PASSIVELY ACCEPT ABUSE. "WE REFUSE TO ALLOW THE IMPRESSION TO REMAIN," THEY ANNOUNCED, "THAT THE NEGRO AMERICAN ASSENTS TO INFERIORITY, IS SUBMISSIVE UNDER OPPRESSION AND APOLOGETIC BEFORE INSULTS. THROUGH HELPLESSNESS WE MAY SUBMIT, BUT THE VOICE OF PROTEST OF TEN MILLION AMERICANS MUST NEVER CEASE TO ASSAIL THE EARS OF THEIR FELLOWS SO LONG AS AMERICA IS UNJUST."

THE NIAGARA MOVEMENT WAS THE DIRECT FORERUNNER OF THE NAACP, WHICH WAS ORGANIZED IN 1910. TROTTER, IDA WELLS AND DU BOIS WERE ACTIVE IN THE FORMATION OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION AND, OF COURSE, DU BOIS WENT ON TO BECOME THE EDITOR OF THE CRISIS, THE NAACP'S OFFICIAL PUBLICATION. ~~DUBOIS'~~ ^{influential} DUBOIS' BRILLIANT EDITING AND POWERFUL WRITING MADE THE CRISIS ENORMOUSLY ~~appealing~~, ^{appealing} AND BY 1919 IT HAD A CIRCULATION OF 100,000. THE CRISIS WAS A BRIGHT BEACON IN THE LONG NIGHT OF REPRESSION.

BUT THE CRISIS WAS NOT ALONE. OTHER ^{militant} ~~CRUSADING~~ BLACK JOURNALS WERE ALSO MAKING AN IMPACT. ON THE LEFT, REPRESENTING THE SOCIALIST ^{and labor} CAUSE, THERE WAS THE MESSENGER. FOUNDED IN 1917 BY CHANDLER OWEN AND BLACK LABOR LEADER A. PHILLIP RANDOLPH, THE MESSENGER SOON ACHIEVED A CIRCULATION OF 60,000.

9/9/9/9/9/9

AMONG BLACK NATIONALISTS AND PAN AFRICANISTS THE MOST IMPORTANT PAPER WAS THE NEGRO WORLD, FOUNDED BY MARCUS GARVEY. *Also the Crusade founded by Cyril Briggs, which had circulation of 36,000*

DURING THIS SAME PERIOD ~~MORE~~ COMMERCIAL BLACK NEWSPAPERS WERE ALSO BEING ESTABLISHED. NEWSPAPERS SUCH AS THE CHICAGO DEFENDER, THE AMSTERDAM NEWS, THE PITTSBURGH COURIER, THE AFRO AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS, AND OF COURSE, ~~OUR OWN BELOVED~~, *the* ATLANTA DAILY WORLD. ~~THESE~~ THESE PAPERS SOUGHT COMMERCIAL SUCCESS BY EMPHASIZING ADVERTISING AND TRYIN TO BUILD A MASS CIRCULATION, ~~WITH SENSATIONALISTIC HEADLINES.~~ ~~STORIES~~

THE COMMERCIAL BLACK PRESS HAD ITS HEYDAY IN THE 1940s and 1950s. WITH THE ADVENT OF THE BLACK FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN THE 1960s WE SAW THE RE-EMERGENCE OF A MILITANT, ~~CRUSADING~~ *committed* BLACK PRESS. THE BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT GAVE BIRTH TO A NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING THE ATLANTA INQUIRER, WHICH WAS ORGANIZED IN 1960. THE BLACK PANTHER NEWSPAPER, MUHAMMAD SPEAKS, THE BURNING SPEAR, FREEDOMWAYS, THE BLACK SCHOLAR ** *and many others* ALL THESE PUBLICATIONS WERE THE OFFSPRING OF THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF THE 1960s. *and they deflected the continuing vitality* ALL OF THEM REPRESENTED THE CONTINUATION OF THE TRADITION OF MILITANT BLACK JOURNALISM.

IRONICALLY, HOWEVER, THE SUCCESS OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION, LIMITED THOUGH IT WAS, CREATED SEVERE PROBLEMS FOR THE BLACK PRESS. THE WHITE NEWSPAPERS CAME UNDER PRESSURE TO HIRE BLACK JOURNALISTS, AND THEIR EDITORS ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT THE BLACK COMMUNITY WAS A HUGE AND LARGELY UNTAPPED MARKET FOR THEIR PAPERS AND THE PRODUCTS OF THEIR ADVERTISERS. FOR THE FIRST TIME THE MASS MEDIA BEGAN ACTIVELY COMPETING WITH THE BLACK PRESS FOR ~~SUBSCRIBERS~~ *circulation* IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY. THIS NEW ~~OPPORTUNITY~~ *competition may have* CREATED A DILEMMA FOR THE BLACK PRESS, BUT IT ALSO OPENED NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK JOURNALISM.

L)10/10/10/10

SUDDENLY PAPERS LIKE THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE WASHINGTON POST, AND THE LOS ANGELES TIMES WERE ~~XXX~~ HIRING BLACK REPORTERS. AND THROUGH THE ~~THE~~ *effort* OF THESE REPORTERS, FOR THE FIRST TIME ~~THE~~ *Many* METROPOLITAN DAILIES BEGAN TO GIVE MORE THAN TOKEN ATTENTION TO THE LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY. FOR A TIME IT SEEMED AS THOUGH AMERICA MIGHT REALLY UNDERGO A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE.

BUT WE WERE OVER OPTIMISTIC. TODAY WHEN WE LOOK AROUND WE SEE THAT WE MUST FIGHT LIKE HELL JUST TO KEEP FROM BEING PUSHED BACKWARD. THE SOCIAL PROGRAMS OF THE 1960s ARE BEING DISMANTLED BY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, THE KLAN IS ON THE RISE, OUR CHILDREN ARE BEING MURDERED, AND OUR ELDERS NO LONGER FIND THEIR LIVES SECURE. CLEARLY WE CAN NO LONGER IGNORE THE MESSAGE OF DAVID WALKER, IDA WELLS, THOMAS FORTUNE, WILLIAM MONROE TROTTER, W.E.B. DUBOIS AND ~~THE HUNDREDS OF~~ OTHER BLACK JOURNALISTS WHO THROUGH THE YEARS HAVE TOLD US THAT ~~WE CAN WIN IN THE END WE MUST~~ *Commitment to the struggle* ~~ON~~ *and self-reliance are our best defenses* ~~OURSELVES~~. *against our enemies*

~~INDEED~~ THE STRUGGLE IS FAR FROM OVER, AND IN FACT SOME NEW TWISTS HAVE BEEN ADDED, SOME NEW TRICKS. NOT ONLY IS THERE A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL WAR AGAINST OUR COMMUNITIES, BUT IN RECENT YEARS THE ~~MASS~~ *establishment* MEDIA HAVE COME OUT WITH A BARRAGE OF STORIES DESIGNED TO CONVINCe THE PUBLIC THAT WHATEVER BAD IS HAPPENING IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY, ITS ENTIRELY THE FAULT OF BLACK PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO THIS NEW PROPAGANDA THE PROBLEMS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY ARE NOT DUE TO RACISM BUT ARE DUE TO THE WEAKNESSES AND FAILURES, *deficiencies* OF BLACK PEOPLE. HOW MANY ARTICLES HAVE WE SEEN LATELY CLAIMING THAT EDUCATED, QUALIFIED BLACKS HAVE NO PROBLEMS SUCCEEDING IN AMERICAN SOCIETY TODAY: WHEREAS THOSE BLACKS WHO REMAIN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LADDERS ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO RESPECT FOR WORK, NO RESPECT FOR THRIFTINESS, NO RESPECT FOR EDUCATION, OR ~~THESE~~ *They come from* FAMILIES ARE BROKEN AND PATHOLOGICAL. *That*

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THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN ^{aptly} DESCRIBED AS BLAMING THE VICTIMS FOR THEIR OWN VICTIMIZATION. NOW WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY, AND THESE MUST BE CONFRONTED, BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT IT IS NOT THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY THAT ARE THE MAIN SOURCE OF THE OPPRESSION OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY. RACISM STILL CONTINUES TO BE THE NUMBER ONE THREAT TO THE WELL BEING OF BLACK AMERICA. ^{IN THIS ERA OF REACTION AND RACIST UPSURGE} BUT THE ESTABLISHMENT MEDIA ARE DETERMINED TO CONVINCING THE PUBLIC THAT ~~XXXXX~~ PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL PROGRAMS ARE NO LONGER VIABLE OR NECESSARY BECAUSE THE BLACK COMMUNITY IS ITS OWN WORST ENEMY. AND IF THEY CAN, THE ESTABLISHMENT MEDIA WILL EVEN FRONT OFF A BLACK REPORTER TO DO ~~THEIR~~ THEIR DIRTY WORK. FOR EXAMPLE, WE NEED ONLY THINK OF THE RECENT CASE OF JANET COOKE, A BLACK WOMAN REPORTER ON THE STAFF OF THE WASHINGTON POST. SHE WROTE A SHOCKING STORY ABOUT AN EIGHT YEAR OLD BLACK CHILD WHO WAS SUPPOSEDLY TURNED INTO A DRUG ADDICT BY HIS MOTHER AND HER PUSHER BOYFRIEND. THE STORY WAS RUN ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE POST AND WAS NOMINATED FOR A PULITZER PRIZE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT WASHINGTON S MAYOR, MARION BARRY, DENOUNCED THE STORY AS A FABRICATION. AFTER THE STORY WON THE PULITZER PRIZE, JANET COOKE ALLEGEDLY CONFESSED THAT IT WAS NOT TRUE. NOW I DONT KNOW WHAT HER MOTIVES WERE OR WHETHER SHE WAS PUT UP TO ANY OF THIS, BUT WHAT I FIND SO REVEALING IS THAT THE WASHINGTON POST CHOSE TO HYPE AND PROMOTE A STORY WHOSE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE IS THAT BLACK MOTHERS ARE DESTROYING THEIR OWN CHILDREN..... THIS IS THE STORY THAT IS NOMINATED FOR A PULITZER PRIZE WHEN BLACK CHILDREN ARE ~~XXXX~~ BEING MURDERED IN ATLANTA. NOW THAT TELLS YOU SOMETHING. THERE HAVE EVEN BEEN STORIES IN THE PRESS SUGGESTING THAT THE MOTHERS ARE TO BLAME FOR THE DEATHS OF THE CHILDREN HERE ~~BECAUSE THE MOTHERS ARE IRRESPONSIBLE AND~~ ~~UNCARING.~~

BLAMING THE VICTIMS FOR THEIR OWN VICTIMIZATION. THATS THE WAY

RACISM IS CAMOUFLAGED AND RATIONALIZED TODAY.

There is a war against Black men, women and children in this society, and

IF WE WANT TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY WE CAN DO IT,

AND THAT IS BY ORGANIZING OURSELVES, ORGANIZE OUR COMMUNITIES, ORGANIZE

OUR WORKPLACES.

organize to challenge and confront those institutions that would slander and oppress us.

12/12/12

WHEN SAMUEL CORNISH AND JOHN RUSSWURM WROTE IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF FREEDOMS JOURNAL THAT "WE WISH TO PLEAD OUR OWN CAUSE. TOO LONG HAVE OTHERS SPOKEN FOR US," THEY WERE NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT FOUNDING A NEWSPAPER, THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT ORGANIZING THE BLACK COMMUNITY, WHEN FREDERICK DOUGLASS SAID THAT "WE MUST BE OUR OWN REPRESENTATIVES AND ADVOCATES" HE WAS TALKING *about* ORGANIZATION. WHEN IDA WELLS LAUNCHED HER CAMPAIGN AGAINST LYNCHING SHE NOT ONLY INVESTIGATED AND WROTE ARTICLES, SHE ALSO ORGANIZED THE COMMUNITY. THIS, *I* ~~IT~~ THINK, IS THE HERITAGE OF BLACK JOURNALISM WHICH WE MUST RECALL AND RE AFFIRM TODAY. BLACK JOURNALISM HAS BEEN AN ACTIVIST, COMMITTED JOURNALISM. IN ITS BEST TRADITION ~~BLACK~~ JOURNALISM HAS BEEN A VOICE OF AND AN ORGANIZER OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

NOT ALL OF US ARE GOING TO PURSUE CAREERS IN JOURNALISM, BUT ALL OF US ARE CERTAINLY GOING TO PURSUE CAREERS IN BLACKNESS. AND TO BE BLACK IN AMERICA MEANS TO BE ENGAGED IN STRUGGLE. THE ONLY REAL CHOICE IS WHETHER WE WILL STRUGGLE AS ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS, OR WHETHER WE WILL HEED THE MESSAGE OF *our* A FOREPARENTS AND UNITE OUR VOICES IN A POWERFUL, COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE THAT WILL NOT BE TURNED BACK. *Let us remember that if we do not become the masters of our own fate, we will always be the servant of someone else's.*

LET ME CONCLUDE BY RECALLING THE WORDS OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS WHO, IN 1857, IN THE MIDST OF THE STRUGGLE TO ABOLISH SLAVERY, *made* SAID THE FOLLOWING: *declaration*
~~POWER CONCEDES~~ "THE STRUGGLE MAY BE A MORAL ONE: OR IT MAY BE A PHYSICAL ONE: OR IT MAY BE BOTH MORAL AND PHYSICAL: BUT IT MUST BE A STRUGGLE. POWER CONCEDES NOTHING WITHOUT A DEMAND. IT NEVER DID AND IT NEVER WILL. FIND OUT JUST WHAT PEOPLE WILL SUBMIT TO, AND YOU HAVE FOUND OUT THE EXACT AMOUNT OF INJUSTICE AND WRONG WHICH WILL BE IMPOSED UPON THEM; AND THESE WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THEY ARE RESISTED WITH EITHER WORDS OR BLOWS, OR WITH BOTH. THE LIMITS OF TYRANTS ARE PRESCRIBED BY THE ENDURANCE OF THOSE WHOM THEY OPPRESS."