

16A(F)

'An expression of the American mind'

BY THE TIME of the Revolution, a majority of the inhabitants had become dissenters from the established church but were still obliged to pay contributions to support the pastors of the minority.

This unrighteous compulsion to maintain teachers of what they deemed religious errors, and without a hope of relief.

But the first republican legislature which met in '76 was crowded with petitions to abolish this spiritual tyranny. These brought on the severest content in which I have ever been engaged.

OUR REVOLUTION presented us an album on which we were free to write what we pleased.

We had no occasion to search into dusty records, to hunt up royal parchments, or to investigate the laws and institutions of a semi-barbarous ancestry. We appealed to those of nature, and found them

engraved in our hearts.

Yet we did not avail ourselves of all the advantages of our position. We had never been permitted to exercise self-government. When forced to assume it, we were novices in its science. Its principles and forms had entered little into our former education.

We established, however, some, although not all, of its important principles.

THE FOLLOWING is an epitome of the first 16 years of (George III's) reign.

The colonies were taxed internally and externally.

Their essential interests sacrificed to individuals in Great Britain.

Their legislatures suspended; charters annulled.

Trials by jury taken away; their persons subjected to transportation across the Atlantic, and to trial before foreign judicatories.

Their supplications for redress thought beneath

answer; themselves published as cowards in the councils of their mother country and courts of Europe.

Armed troops sent among them to enforce submission to these violences.

And actual hostilities committed against them.

No alternative was presented but resistance or unconditional submission. Between these could be no hesitation. They closed in the appeal to arms. They declared themselves independent states. They confederated together into one great republic.

ALL AMERICAN Whigs thought alike on these subjects.

When forced, therefore, to resort to arms for redress, an appeal to the tribunal of the world was deemed proper for our justification. This was the object of the Declaration of Independence.

Not to find out new principles or new arguments never before thought of, nor merely to say things

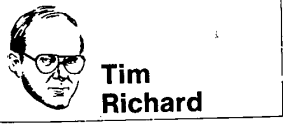
which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we are compelled to take.

Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion.

— Thomas Jefferson

The author, who has held many lofty state and federal offices, prefers to be known as author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and father of the University of Virginia. His guest editorial was constructed from letters, his autobiography and his "Notes on Virginia."

T.R.



Young needs to join gang at SEMCOG

One of the pleasanter organizations I've ever covered is SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

The reason is that when elected leaders from 10 dozen different governments get together, they are civil to one another. They disagree, to be sure, and their well-reasoned debates make good yarns. But always they are civil when they are face to face.

When they get back into their own communities for a long while, it's sometimes not so nice. Then you hear name-calling and charges that the other guy is trying to take over the region.

Sure, they make headlines, but they're not the kinds of headlines you enjoy writing, any more than one enjoys writing headlines about teen-agers getting killed in a car wreck on graduation eve or a company going bankrupt or a woman being raped and bloodied. It's part of the job, but not the pleasant part.

SO IT WAS with great satisfaction that I read where Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, in his first speech as SEMCOG chairman, is calling on Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young to attend SEMCOG meetings.

Detroit has been a member of the seven-county voluntary planning organization since it was formed in 1969, and Young has been an official delegate since he became mayor seven years ago.

In that time, neither I nor anyone I've talked to nor anyone I've sent to cover a meeting can recall seeing Young attend. He sends one of his administrative assistants or a department head in his place.

"We need to hear personally from the mayor," Murphy said. "People don't take it as effectively when some representative is there. . . . He's got a lot to tell us."

Murphy has had his share of telephone calls from reporters asking him to respond to one heated comment or another from Young. It's not the way Murphy likes to do business.

IT WAS PARTICULARLY gratifying to see Murphy take such a position.

When he was running for re-election in 1976, my editorial board colleagues and I praised Murphy as an administrator but asked him to stop the xenophobic rhetoric, the me-against-them-outsiders routine. Murphy did so, and the results have been salutary.

Livonia Mayor Ed McNamara used to have the same problem when he was battling SEMTA, the transportation authority, and Young over the water board. McNamara, bless him, cut it out and now thinks in terms of "us vs. them" instead of "us vs. them."

Young is still in the "us vs. them" stage. As he fought for a city-income-tax increase, he began hurling around the terms "bigot" and "racist" pretty freely. The truth is that suburbanites were fighting a commuter income tax long before Detroit had a black mayor and a black council majority.

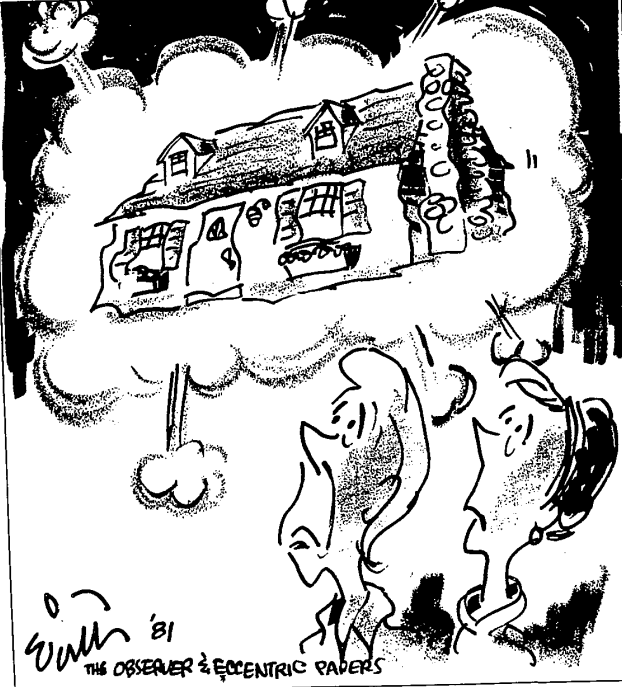
THE POINT is that Young — and any politician — wouldn't hurl around epithets if he were dealing with neighboring politicians face to face at SEMCOG.

Young used to have a friend in the White House; Young used to be a friend in the governor's chair; no more. Young has a friend in the governor's chair who may not be there in another year or so. Young's city is losing seats on the Wayne County Board of Commissioners, the Michigan House, the Michigan Senate and the U.S. Congress.

Young needs all the friends he can get. Conversely, there are many Rochester and Birmingham and Farmington and Garden City and Plymouth and Northville with some of the same problems and Northville with some of the same problems and Detroit has. These cities need him as an ally.

Will Detroit and suburban politicians ever agree totally on rapid transit, water, growth, highways? No, but maybe we can cut some compromise deals. And certainly we can be civil to each other.

The Suburban Home Dream



Atlanta and Woodward Questions about the killings

The arrest of a suspect in the Atlanta murders last week brought back a flood of memories to many people in this area. For Atlanta's investigation has now proceeded further than the much-publicized probe of the Oakland County child killings five years ago.

At the time, it was believed one person had been responsible for five closely-related murders. Most occurred near the Woodward corridor.

In the Oakland County investigation, thousands of persons were questioned, but an arrest was never made. The task force's objective was never fulfilled. The result was a sense of frustration for all involved.

FIVE YEARS AGO, parents were nearly panicky in the thought of letting their children out alone. At the time, I was editor of our newspaper in Birmingham, the site of the abduction of the last victim in the series of murders.

I was flooded endlessly with tips from people about the identity of the killer. Reporters from national publications running the gamut from the National Enquirer to the New York Times combed the Birmingham area, trying to interview people even remotely connected to the case.

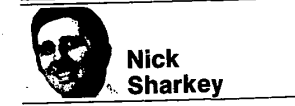
Police officers associated with the investigation told many stories about unsavory characters they turned up on the Woodward corridor. As child killings took place in other parts of the country, task force officials would fly to those cities to interrogate suspects. They found most had spent some time on the Woodward corridor.

I remember asking one task force official during the peak of the investigation: "Would you let your child walk to school?"

"I don't know," was his sad reply.

EVERYONE BECAME a suspect in the Oakland County murders.

The computers used by the task force had thousands of names of suspects. Nearly every suspicious activity was reported to the task force. Neighbors turned in neighbors. Husbands were reported by estranged wives. Disgruntled relatives told the police about the family black sheep.



Nick Sharkey

One day a man came into my office convinced that his former brother-in-law was the killer. He wanted me to put the relative under surveillance in Montreal. He said he couldn't go to the police with this information, which he was sure would solve the mystery.

After awhile it became difficult to take any tip or suspect seriously. It was obvious the task force had no solid leads.

Every few months a child would be reported missing, and it disappeared was supposed to be connected to the Oakland County killings. None proved to be connected with the murders.

As the publicity started to die down, the hysteria calmed. Parents loosened their grips on their children. Neighbors stopped eyeing other neighbors suspiciously.

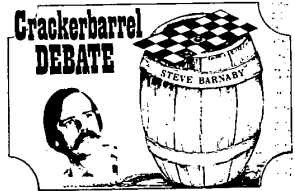
More time passed, and normal activity resumed. Today probably as many children are out on area streets as before the series of child killings.

DON'T BE FOOLED. Deep in the hearts of many parents, there still lurks fear about the child killings.

So many questions were never answered: Has the child killer died, moved or is he or she lying low? Was there only one killer? What motivated the killer or killers? Will the killer strike again some day?

In Atlanta, some of the questions about the killings may soon be answered. But most local police authorities admit that we may never know anything more about the killings that gripped this area in 1976-77.

The fears brought about by the Oakland County child killings are more subdued now, but they live on because the case was never solved.



Atoms: We lack sense of balance

"If the myth that atomic energy is simply a military weapon becomes a fixed thing in our minds, if we accept the error that it can never be anything else, we will never make it anything but a weapon."

Some prophet, that David Lilienthal. Not only has atomic energy become a weapon to many of us, it has become an enemy.

Whenever a public flap erupts over atomic energy, I think back to this forgotten American hero. Just such a brouhaha broke out recently in Michigan when a Canadian firm attempted to transport nuclear waste through Michigan.

The hackles of fear instantly shot up in every corner of the state, and many of Michigan's politicians did their best to exploit the emotional issue.

At such times it is important to remember persons like Lilienthal. The first chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, if remembered at all, is honored for his extemporaneous speech on Americanism after being accused of being a "leftist" during his confirmation hearing.

But Lilienthal was neither a man of the left or right. He was a man who could, in a reasonable manner, think clearly about the future — a rare quality in today's overwrought world.

TODAY'S DEBATE over nuclear energy has removed it from the realm of reality. Just as Lilienthal predicted 30 years ago.

"Our physical safety, our peace of mind, our clarity of thinking, and the conservation and strengthening of our faith in individual freedom require that all of us try to develop a greater sense of balance about atomic energy."

Many of us have really never achieved that balance. We either are all for it or all against it. Atomic energy is the buzzword that spurs vehement reactions and creates endless bogiemans.

We fret over Three Mile Island, the possibility of a nuclear meltdown and what to do with atomic-fuel byproducts. But we seem to pay little heed to the positive aspects of nuclear energy — for medical cures and energy resources.

We worry more over nuclear energy plants than nuclear bombs, yet unjustifiably associate the two. We seem to pass off lightly the fact our bodies are full of poisonous chemicals — PBB, Agent Orange and nicotine.

We raise little fuss because our government subsidizes the cigarette industry whose product is a known killer. We allow the food industry to poison our foods with additives and soy nostry.

"Atomic energy is a force as fundamental to life as the force of the sun, the force of gravity; the forces of magnetism. It is an unfolding of new knowledge that goes to the very heart of all physical things."

BUT SOME persons are continuing in facing the challenge of how to live with this very potent force. Recently, a team of nuclear scientists announced they are close to solving the radioactive-waste-disposal problem.

Let's forget the bomb-shelter hysteria of the 1950s.

"I look forward to atomic development not simply as a search for new energy, but more significantly as a beginning of a period of human history in which this faith in knowledge can restore man's whole life."

Smart fellow, that Lilienthal.