

# 'Kerns Falsifies, Evades Question At Issue,' Says Horton

## URBAN LEAGUE SECRETARY'S POOR LOGIC 'REMINISCENT OF A FIFTH GRADE RURAL ALABAMAN RATHER THAN A SCHOLARLY URBANITE'

BY JOHN BENJ. HORTON, Jr.

In the Jan. 19th, issue of "The Omaha Guide", there appeared one of the most illogical, debasing, falsifying and antagonistic attempts at a sensible answer to several facts expounded by this writer against one J. Harvey Kerns and "The Petersen's Bakery". Kern's answer mostly delved into personalities and not facts in this writer's accusations which dealt, principally, with the part this "gentleman" played in the celebrated "Petersen's Dinner for the Colored Old Folks". It seemed that in Mr. Kerns' sensational reply, he falsified by setting up a FALSE ALIBI to clear himself! Kerns forgot to stick to the points at issue.

This writer has tried to imagine, but has been sadly disappointed, that Mr. Kerns was even a semi-civilized person, and has finally discovered that the Urban League Secretary's reactions or responses to certain stimuli are more reminiscent of the 5th grade rural Alabaman rather than that of the suave and scholarly Urbanite. Kerns finds no competent arguments to rebut the facts which were written in the Jan. 4th, issue of "The Omaha Chronicle", so he chose the alternative of what we employ in scholastic debate as REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM, which means (to reduce to the lowest degree of absurdity).

This writer's opponent finds time, also, even in the beginning of his flimsy "answer", to jest by calling "The Omaha Chronicle" "the little sheet which appears occasionally", but though he erred not in so designating its actual size, he failed to realize that its not the size of a Journal that counts, but on the contrary its the quality of material used which makes for either its progress or failure.

The Urban League Secretary, when "hit", did the thing that most FOOLS do when the truth is told about them; they seek to cover up behind a smoke-screen of FALSE ALIBIS and fight back in their mental feeble manner. Men of Kerns' calibre, when under fire, CHIDE THE TRUTH!

This individual tells us that "The Urban League" assisted the Petersen's Bakery in the dinner service for the "Old Folks". True enough, but in the beginning, it was another party who, it is said, was asked to assist the bakery in said service—a Mrs. Borders living at 2622 N. 25th St., Omaha, and NOT Kerns! But somehow, Kerns "STOLE THE SHOW" from Mrs. Borders and her associates!

We frown upon Kerns' statement in the second paragraph of his grotesque "answer" when he said that "Mrs. Petersen did so because it has always been the policy of this organization to assist in a worthwhile effort". Such "tommy-rot" from Kerns is unbelievable! Mrs. Petersen has NEVER done this type of charity for Negroes before our knowledge; she gave this dinner because she was losing Negro business and desired to gain goodwill, so she used Mr. "Judas" to pull her "chestnuts out of the fire".

The egotistic "gentleman" speaks indulgently and "deplores the poorly written and burlesque articles" from the pen of this writer. Incidentally, Kerns has forgotten how he has, upon numerous occasions, praised the "Chronicle" on its fine brand and progressive piece of Journalism. If the "gentleman" has forgotten so soon, we admonish him to think back on the occasion of the "birthday banquet" of "The Omaha Chronicle" on Sept. 8th, 1934 when he made quite an impressive talk on the program with eminent journalists such as Ballard Dunn, Editor of The Omaha Journal and Dwight Griswold, Editor of The Gordon Journal on behalf of this paper's progress. This writer remembers, verbatim, the above quoted portion of this certain "tool of the classes". We are not sure that the public takes our articles as a "joke" as kerns infers, for they continue to call our office when there's the least doubt in their minds that our paper would issue upon the regular date; the business-men also, continue to advertise in same, and Kerns, evidently, is kidding himself for if he considered the paper as a "joke", he would have refrained from answering this writer's attack!

Kerns makes "much ado about nothing", and goes so far as to call this writer "ignorant". To this, we reply that if Mr. Kerns were truly intelligent, he would never have "lost his head" when he was criticized by this writer. To the contrary, he would have read with imperturbable suavity, kept his mouth closed and deemed the aforementioned "burlesque" unworthy of a reply.

We agree with Kerns "that the Negroes efforts at more jobs must be waged intelligently and consistently, but let me expound in simple language so simple that even "Mr." Kerns would understand, namely: That WE

MUST IN MOST CASES, ALSO FIGHT AND FIGHT HARD FOR SAME! Can the readers of this paper think of any other Negro in Omaha, aside from Kerns, who might possibly condone Discrimination against the Proletariat or any other class of our people on the ground that fighting them ANNOYS THE DISCRIMINATORS? Such a man is of no value to his race.

Mr. Kerns says he's "never been dictated to as to how he should or should not do on matters of racial interest". We say: that it would be proper for "The Chronicle" to make an attempt at dictation if we believed that Kerns was honestly helping the race; but he's doing just the opposite in his underhanded way. We would demonstrate to Kerns just how we could and would dictate to him and make him like it, if it were not for the fact of his leaving our city. A very militant and prejudiced Southern Senator once said upon the floor of the National Congress, at a time when Woodrow Wilson's enemies were criticizing him after he had died, on Wilson's part in establishing "A League of Nations", in defense of a man who had not the chance to speak, (and we might nicely quote Sen. Bleuse to better serve our purpose), namely: "When Prometheus (a Greek God) was slain, the vultures tore out his vitals". By the above, this writer infers that since Kerns is a "dead issue" here in Omaha, we see no good reason to "devour his flesh" after his "death" just because we wield the "whip-hand" over him.

We do not engage in 'cheap publicity' as Kerns charges, and "The Chronicle's" criticism of Mr. Kerns surely is Big Publicity and Important Publicity, and it certainly concerns the Negroes in Omaha.

Yes, our present methods "antagonize some employers" as the "gentleman" charges in his "answer", and our methods have antagonized Kerns. Nothing ununderstandable about that, is there?

We, perhaps, have been even more so instrumental in molding public opinion through our "poorly edited and burlesque articles" than another of our professed but chicken-hearted leaders; and the truth made known about him will mould public opinion against him.

We, perhaps, know even better than Kerns where our place is in this com-

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munity, for "the press" supercedes every other civic agency.

This writer claims, not, to be a politician; but he appears to be in the position to assist even more so in the gaining of public employment than even Mr. Kerns.

It is probably good for Kerns to know that this writer has been interested in modern journalism for 10 years, has written for a number of substantial race papers, and claims to know his business even better than Kerns knows his. Though Kerns exposes this writer's "primitive methods in Journalism", we answer with pride that it is sometimes wise to employ same if in so doing, it can enlighten its readers on the chicanery of a certain would-be leader.

This article would be incomplete if it failed to relate a few of the many truths on the administration of J. Harvey Kerns' office as Secretary of the Omaha Urban League.

First, when Kerns came to Omaha, there were 23 colored women employed at "The Medical Arts Bldg.", those jobs having been secured through Mr. Ray L. Williams who at that time was Executive Secretary of the "Colored Commercial Club" and who maintained in his set-up a "Labor Board" whose object it was to secure employment for Negroes. It

might be said with a great degree of certainty that Mr. Williams, when Secretary of the Colored Commercial Club, made more placements in a given period for Negroes in Industrial employment than Kerns would ever hope to make, for Mr. Williams made no distinction as to whether one Negro was either LIGHT or DARK in complexion—Williams cared not, only that the person or persons so making applications for employment were competent to hold the prospective job.

It is further alleged that Kerns claimed the glory for colored elevator girl operators in the Brandeis Stores, but he falsified in this claim for it was largely through the efforts of "The Omaha Guide" that we today have Negro women operating those elevators.

I'm informed that whenever the selection of members of his own race comes up for membership to the Urban League Board of Directors, Kerns does the selecting; he selects those of his own group whom he can use to his best advantage.

The Urban League, through Kerns, formed an "Advisory Board" which has never called a meeting to advise him on matters of import to his organization. Kerns didn't want that because he probably felt that such a board was not competent to advise him. Such a man as Kerns probably knew far too much to be advised by his "inferiors". Just a sham, perhaps, for convenient purposes.

Kerns says that he organized 2 or 3 Boy Scout Troops in Omaha in one of his Annual reports to his superiors; but, I invite any of our readers to call Scout Hdqtrs., 300 Aquilla Court, and you'll be told that Kerns didn't organize same. This man Kerns simply wanted to take credit for doing

something that he knew deep down in his heart that he didn't do, and besides, who would ever find out what he placed in that report, knowing well enough that he could easily fool his white superiors—provided the Negroes wouldn't "kick"? Mr. T. P. Mahamit was the man who is largely due the credit for organizing those Scouts.

A year or so ago, the Colored Hotel Waiters Assn. was formed, and a Mr. M. L. Harris was asked to head the same; and Harris accepted the Presidency after his election. This writer witnessed that election as a member of same; Kerns injected himself into the picture, and he used his influence to keep those waiters from demanding a larger salary. Kerns led the fight against Mr. Harris in the above direction. Kerns' business as a member was, it is generally agreed, to placate the Negro and keep him subservient to the wishes of the white Hotel owners and Managers. This reasoning is correct, for Kerns has always catered to Capitalistic interests in order that he maintain an exorbitant income for work that an ordinary high school freshman could have done. If Kerns had been working for the best interests of the waiters Assn., as its President M. L. Harris had been doing, then WHY IN THE NAME OF COMMON SENSE WAS KERNS ACCEPTABLE TO THE HOTEL PROPRIETORS AND HARRIS WAS NOT? WHY DID THE HOTEL OWNERS RECEIVE KERNS AND REJECT HARRIS on matters pertinent to the Assn's future? The answer is clear; the Hotel proprietors knew that Kerns could be used and that he would probably, sell out his race to keep within their good graces!

Believe me if you may that this man Kerns has been inimical to the best interests of our group and that his departure should NOT BE MOURNED nor DEPLORED; its a God-sent blessing!

Kerns falsified when he said that he resigned his post here to accept the Kansas City Urban League post. Glaring headlines were published in another of our local race papers to that effect; but a Mr. Webster, Industrial

Secretary of the Kansas City League was elected recently as its Executive Secretary. If you doubt this writer's veracity, read the Jan. 18th, issue of "The Kansas City Call". Kansas Cityans were too intelligent to accept such an unfit and unscrupulous person as Kerns.

It's alleged that Kerns has falsified also, in arranging his resignation for the position which he now holds with the Omaha Urban League. It is common rumor that he was requested to resign!!!

Finally, Kerns must know and realize that he can't cope with the press and expect to win. He must know that his position in our community is that of just another social worker; ours is that of leadership, and that leadership is NOT "FALSE" as he would have you believe; and that leadership is vested in the masses and NOT in the Editor of any paper—even "The Omaha Chronicle".

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