

Daily
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Unnecessary aid

Contra 'relief' results in extravagance

Perhaps President Reagan was on a guilt trip.

Last Friday, Reagan signed a \$47.9 million aid bill to speed food, medicine, clothing and other supplies to the Nicaraguan Contras. Earlier in the week, the House of Representatives approved the bill by a 345-70 vote. Maybe representatives were on a guilt trip, too.

Wait a minute, wasn't this the same U.S. government that shipped millions of dollars to Nicaragua to slaughter thousands of Sandinista troops? Gee, the next time we send the money down there, we better make sure they get the job done once and for all, so the United States doesn't have to back it up with a relief fund.

But better yet, why not just end the aid altogether?

The U.S. government already has shown poor judgment in allocating money and goods to the Contras. According to an Associated Press story, American taxpayers also footed the bill for "non-military" supplies to the Contras. Harper's magazine recently published a list of items and money approved by the U.S. government to be sent to the Contras. The list included:

- \$5,760.53 for deodorant.
- \$1,071 for volleyball equipment.
- Two living-room sets worth \$1,283.63, a dining-room set worth \$654.94 and a \$477.75 sofa.

- 12 domino sets worth \$132.18.

Gee, nothing like a quick game of volleyball before torching a few Sandinista troops, huh? Maybe a game of dominoes when we get back? Don't forget your deodorant, it's going to be a long trip.

But the U.S. government, in all its wisdom, did show some sense of judgment by cutting a few items from the aid packages, including:

- 16 bottles of whiskey worth \$120.
- 32 pounds, or \$8 worth, of meat for dogs.
- \$369.82 in Christmas decorations.
- 25 pounds of jumbo shrimp worth \$235.
- \$226 in guitar strings.

According to the article, the State Department's Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office approved three 19-inch color televisions worth about \$1,000 each, but nixed two other sets. Tough call, guys. It also approved 620 boxes of candy worth \$6,570, but rejected 14 boxes of chocolate and two boxes of candy worth \$381.35, the article said.

The Contras and Sandinistas took a big step toward settling their differences last Friday, when a 60-day cease-fire went into effect. Now it's time for the United States to let the governments settle their differences on their own, without the help of any more "aid packages."



Racism touchy topic in race

Being black could be the best thing Jackson has going for him

The Democratic Party is quivering with fright over what to do about Jesse Jackson. And I can understand how they feel. They can't afford to have Mrs. Thelma Lloyd mad at them.

Who is Mrs. Lloyd? She is a nice lady who lives on 99th Street on the South Side of Chicago.

What makes Mrs. Lloyd politically significant is that she is black. No Democrat can hope to be elected president next November if he doesn't get the votes of the Thelma Lloyds of America.

Mrs. Lloyd tells me that she has been reading my column for many years, going back to when I wrote for another Chicago newspaper.

And she says that in those days she used to like me.

"You were bright and funny," she says.

But now I'm not the same man. As she put it:

"You have changed for the worst. You sound so mean and racist when you write about black people, especially the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"You can't help but let your racism come out plain as day as though you are proud of yourself."

An interesting, if inaccurate, observation.

The fact is, I've been writing about Jesse Jackson since he first burst into prominence in Chicago about the late 1960s.

There were times when I wrote favorably about him and times when I made it clear that I thought he was a double-talking hot dog.

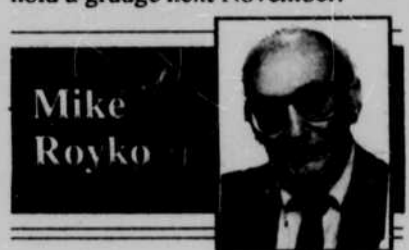
And I haven't said anything about Jackson since he became a presidential candidate that I didn't say when Mrs. Lloyd was reading my column years ago. I still think he has his good points and I still think there are times when he is a double-talking hot dog.

But now, in Mrs. Lloyd's view, if I write unfavorably about Jackson it means that I have become "mean and racist."

That's not merely my problem. It

is the problem of the Democratic Party and the other candidates.

If any of them dare say anything disparaging about Jackson, they run the risk of having the Mrs. Lloyds of America — and there are millions of them — consider them racists and hold a grudge next November.



Robert Dole could take pokes at George Bush, and Bush could poke back. Paul Simon could take smacks at Richard Gephardt. Albert Gore can snipe at Michael Dukakis. Dukakis can take a verbal shot or two at Gore.

But everybody must be nice to Jackson, because if they aren't, Mrs. Lloyd is going to think they are racists.

This puts the other candidates at a considerable disadvantage.

For example, when Albert Gore pointed out the obvious — that Jackson lacks governmental experience — it was promptly interpreted as a grab for right-wing support. And that, to some, translates into racism.

Some of the other candidates would like to point out that Jackson's economic proposals might be whacky and that his foreign policy ideas are out in dream world.

They might like to challenge him to explain who is going to foot the bill for some of his pie-in-the-sky social problems.

But they can't. If they do, Mrs. Lloyd might say that they are racists and withhold her vote.

They might want to ask him about some of the outrageous statements he has made in the past. Not when he was a teen-ager, but when he was a grown man with a national reputation.

They might want to poke around the financial records of Operation Breadbasket, which he once ran, and Operation PUSH, which still exists.

But they can't do that, either. Mrs. Lloyd wouldn't like it.

So there is one set of rules for every other candidate and another set of rules for Jackson. They can say, "Hey, you once said this," or "You once supported that." But only to each other. Not to Jackson.

And this applies to the press and broadcast news. We can poke into Gary Hart's private life or catch Joe Biden lifting someone else's words and tell the world about it. We can poke fun at Bush for being an elitist or ponder the dark side of Dole's personality. We can chortle about how President Reagan's aides write cue cards that tell him how to say "Good morning, how are you" to distinguished guests.

But if we question Jackson's qualifications, we're racists.

For years, I wrote unfavorably about the late Mayor Richard J. Daley and his Machine. His admirers frequently told me I was an S.O.B., but they didn't accuse me of being anti-Irish.

When Bernard Epton ran against Harold Washington for mayor of Chicago, I had some unkind words for Epton's campaign. But I didn't even get one letter accusing me of being anti-Semitic.

It's part of this nation's tradition that the records of politicians have always been fair game, both for their opponents and the press.

But that doesn't apply to Jackson. And Mrs. Lloyd has told us why.

It's an odd turnabout. For years, Jackson has told us how tough it is to have been black.

Now that he's a politician, it turns out that being black is the best thing he has going for him.

1988 The Chicago Tribune.
Royko is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist with The Chicago Tribune.

Letters

Stopping slang promotes intelligent speech

Let's stamp out "you know." As college students, let's eliminate "you know" from our conversation. Let's encourage athletes to become more aware of their excessive use of "you know" during interviews. "You know" adds nothing to speech. Stop

"you know," you know.

Cara K. Smith
Lincoln

Editor's note: You know, that's not a bad idea.

'Herstory' may separate, not unite history

I don't know if women are discriminated against in the presentation of history (Daily Nebraskan editorial, April 1). I imagine that they are. On this, I will accept the word of any non-sexist historian. Undoubtedly, women have been discriminated against through history itself, and this continues up to the present day. This is clearly inappropriate and ought to be remedied. However, in drafting and implementing any corrective plan, we must be careful not to trivialize the issue, defeat our own purposes or overstep the bounds of appropriateness ourselves. It's with this in mind that I raise a number of concerns about Women's History Month and like phenomena.

First, why is use of phrases like "women's history" and "herstory" advocated while the use of "lady doctor" and "women writers" is condemned? The phrase "woman writer," when used as a purely descriptive one, applies perfectly to Virginia Woolf (unless a fraud has been perpetuated and she was really a male). Dr. Ruth is a lady doctor, isn't she?

Of course, the problem is that such phrases carry unflattering evaluative connotations. "Women's basketball" is taken to mean "the closest thing to basketball one could expect to find

with these inferior creatures trying to do what only men can do properly" — not real basketball. Surely, this sense of such phrases is worthy of condemnation, but the attachment of the objectionable connotations is the result of underlying sexist attitudes and will be attached as readily to phrases like "women's history." Why advocate use of this phrase at all? "Herstory" is another matter. To preserve integrity and seriousness, we should refrain from playing games with the language, especially when "history" begins with H-I-S, not "his." There's a difference.

Secondly, and more importantly, we must be wary of the separation of the two goals of introducing women's programs into the immediate one of "raising people's awareness of the treatment of women" and the "more idealistic" one of making history an integrated, non-sexist discipline. It's not clear how furthering the former is supposed to further the latter, and devoting too much energy to the former will only serve to perpetuate the separation of women's history from history proper.

Robert Revock
graduate
philosophy

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Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

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