

KEEP OUTRAGE ALIVE

If a modern Rip Van Winkle had awakened from a few years' sleep to watch the college football games last week, he would have been amazed.

He would have seen the teams of Alabama, Georgia, Clemson and Texas, among other, *with black football players*! Of course, people who are under thirty years of age would not have understood Van Winkle's shock; they were under 10 years old when the Governor of Alabama put his body, and the National Guard, in front of the University door and said that no black student would ever enter, the courts to the contrary notwithstanding. As a matter of fact, few of us TV watchers would have noted the signals of substantial black attendance at colleges which were white-only two decades ago; we have come to take it for granted.

So, when we wander through the halls of the Emporium, or of Macy's or of the Bank of America, do we take for granted the number of black employees working in such places, in up-front positions. They were not there two decades ago.

Things *do* change. Things *can* be changed. Then, as progress moves up a notch, we tend to take it for granted. That's as it should be, as long as we keep working on more notches of progress and don't let the old ones unreel. That's why it's good that young people don't even remember the progress that was made -- they won't be satisfied with it, and will be even more shocked when it is betrayed.

Some of us, for example, remember serious housing discrimination against Jews. In 1950, about a third of the American people said they would object to Jewish neighbors. Now only about 5 per cent of the American people say they object to Jewish neighbors -- about the same percentage as those who say they would object to Italian-American neighbors. (The percentage of Americans who would object to black neighbors is about the same now as it was for Jews in 1950.) Some of us even remember that, in the late 1930s, over half of the American people said they would not vote for a presidential candidate if he was Jewish. Today, less than 10 per cent of Americans hold the same view, about the same as for Italian-Americans.

However, such progress is nothing to be *grateful* about; that's the way it should be. We *should* take it for granted and go on from there -- as long as we remember two verities: progress *can* be made; and progress *can* be reversed.

The Oliphant cartoon in the San Francisco *Chronicle* a couple of weeks ago, and State Senator Schmitz's comments a few days later can be fit into this perspective. The Oliphant cartoon, in case *you* have been asleep for a few weeks, showed the traditional Christmas manger scene, with a sign that it had been annexed by Israel. It was a low inflammatory infusion of religious conflict into a political subject. Schmitz, of course, made reference, in an official report, to the "hard, Jewish faces" he encountered in opposition audiences.

Now, in the 1930s, those kinds of low blows against the Jews were found regularly all over the place, in the newspapers, on radio and in the halls of Congress. Jewish organizations, notably the Anti-Defamation League, took them on regularly -- but they still continued to appear. But, after the war against Hitler, there were a couple of relatively "sanitary" decades with respect to public anti-semitic comments. We began to take it for granted that such public anti-semitism, from presumably respectable sources, would remain minimal.

We *should* have taken it for granted. And we were therefore properly shocked by Oliphant and Schmitz. Oliphant is a nationally syndicated cartoonist, out of Washington, D.C. The top management at the *Chronicle*, when vigorous community protest was made, mumbled that no one had really looked at the cartoon and they would try to be more careful in the future.

The Jewish community demanded that Schmitz be stripped of his chairmanship posts in the State Senate, and the State Senate promptly did that. The important thing is not that there is a Schmitz around -- there always is -- but that the official organs of society react immediately to indicate their rejection of his anti-semitism (something we did not always get in the 1930s). Californians of good will would like the State Senate to go even further now and censure Schmitz.

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It is important that we don't lose our sense of immediate shock and outrage in the face of such depravities, however few they may be.

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