Berman, Ronald: News Articles (1976): News Article 28

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overhead in Church schools. They do not have the huge and growing bureaucracies that have become a sour joke in public schools. But just as their service to black people has become most obvious, many Catholic inner-city schools are being shut down for lack of money.

Still nobody protests or helps. Black militants are suspicious of Catholic white ethnics. Liberals are busy busing. Congress worries over church-state tangles. Public educators are apt of cost-benefit comparisons. Researchers are splitting hairs over the effect of different educational philosophies. Since black parents, like Catholic teachers, still lack a national voice, there's nobody to save the parochial schools that are now badly needed to help meet a national need. . . . But I'll make you a bet. In some city, a pair of American ethnics, one black and the other maybe a Pole, are hammering out a bold new tactic to take many of the parochial schools through the money crunch. The entrenched powers will, to their surprise, be forced to help transform these effective schools into lasting institutions controlled by the new citizens of these communities.

Senator Pell's Tidal Basin

The entire matter of federal subsidization of the arts and the humanities raises important questions of both principle and practice. As currently administered by Ronald Berman, a nationally recognized Shakespeare scholar, the National Endowment for the Humanities has dispersed its $90 million per year for the most part carefully and fair-mindedly, assisting libraries, museums, art exhibits, and individual scholars, as well as supporting popular projects of respectable quality, such as the televised Adams Chronicles.

Mr. Berman has sought to maintain high intellectual standards at the Endowment and to remain non-political, but he has had the misfortune—precisely because of those twin aims—to run afoul of Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island. Senator Pell gazed upon the Endowment's $90 million, and found it irresistible. He proposed to siphon off a substantial amount of it and place the cash under the control of local politicians: they would receive the cash as a matter of right and there would be no nonsense about merit. This scheme Berman correctly and successfully resisted.

Dr. Berman's first term as chairman expired last December. After a canvass of pertinent opinion, the White House submitted his name to the Senate for a second term. For six months, Senator Pell, using his strategic position on the education subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, has been blocking a hearing on Berman's confirmation. Many people close to the scene regard Pell as a man driven by eccentric furies, and the Berman case now threatens to be Pell's own Tidal Basin caper. As the Wall Street Journal commented earlier this month in a major editorial: "The sex scandals have had the effect of picking
up the rock of Capitol Hill, and giving the public a glimpse of what scurries underneath. The problem is not so much sex as it is the atmosphere of arrogant pettiness. . . Such arrogance is so much a way of life on Capitol Hill that it takes a sex scandal to get anyone to stop and notice. But by cheapening life on the Hill, the humdrum abuses provide the soil in which the flagrant ones grow. As an example of the normal workaday pettiness so completely tolerated in the Congress, it is worth considering the little vendetta Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island is running against Dr. Ronald S. Betman, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Notes & Asides

Dear Bill:

I watched you and John Kenneth Galbraith on the Today show. As you spoke on the wiretap of Martin Luther King, Galbraith suggested that the tap was authorized by Hoover and thus not chargeable to President Kennedy or Robert Kennedy, as I recall. I thought you might be interested in knowing that on October 7, 1963, Hoover requested permission of Attorney General Robert Kennedy for a wiretap "on King at his current address or at any future address to which he may move" and "on the SCLC office at the current New York address or at any other address to which it may be moved." Robert Kennedy signed the request on October 10 and on October 21 approved the request for coverage of the Atlanta office of the SCLC as well.

The supporting material for these statements is found in the Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book III, Report No. 94-755, which in turn cite the memoranda from J. Edgar Hoover to Attorney General Robert Kennedy dated October 7, 1963, and October 18, 1963.

I thought you might like to have this information for future reference.

Sincerely,

Howard H. Baker Jr.
U.S. Senate

Dear Mr. Buckley:

Actually, the Ninth and Tenth Amendments were misplaced in 1939 when the Supreme Court was redecorated.

No one knows what became of the Tenth. Some law professors swear it never really existed; but the better view is that Justice Douglas gave it to his maid for her children to use as a plaything. By 1948, it had been pecked to death by ducks. (Cf. U.S. v. Sullivan, 332 U.S. 689.)