

## Racism Distortionism Is A National Poison which Needs to Be Confronted

Unsubstantiated accusations of racism against blacks are now common place. The gadfly philosopher, Voltaire, demanded that people define their terms before discussing them. So let's take his advice and first attempt to define race which is, of course, necessary in order to define racism. Here goes: Race is a population characterized by distinctive physical and cultural traits such as found in whites, Hispanics, blacks and Asians. Racism is when a group considers itself substantially superior to others, particularly in matters of intelligence and culture, and takes significant advantage of and suppresses them. The history of black America, as well as other minority groups such as the Irish and Italians, fits this definition.

For blacks, the Civil Rights movement has more than remedied this situation. Blacks are now given preferences over whites by universities and hiring by business and government sectors. Black politicians, entertainers and professionals are exponentially blossoming. Advertisements on television and newspapers are replete with images of blacks. Blacks have become a dynamic cultural, economic and political marketing force which is very American. So, by definition and operationally, national black racism does not exist. A debate, anyone?

So then, what's fueling such claims? Why does a single local event of a white policeman fatally shooting a black male magically mutate into national racism accusations? It's part of a much broader explosive movement which, interestingly enough unlike diversity and equality, lacks a name and definition, both of which are essential to understand and confront it. So let's do it. The name? How

### NJ Gas Prices Drop

REGION — The national average price of gas has increased for six consecutive days for the first time since early November, though drivers continue to enjoy relatively low prices at the pump. Gas prices have climbed by four cents per gallon versus one week ago and are likely to continue to rise.

In New Jersey, however, the average price of gas has fallen. AAA's February 29 survey of prices in New Jersey finds a gallon of regular gas averaging \$1.56, 19 cents lower than the national average and two cents lower than last week. One year ago, the average price in New Jersey was 65 cents higher at \$2.21. Locally, motorists in Essex, Morris and Union counties are paying an average of \$1.61 for a gallon of regular gas, down one cent from last week, 12 cents from one month ago and 62 cents from one year ago.

about "Distortionism?" It's the broad, pervasive national distortion of truth which runs roughshod over dispassionate, reasonable analysis. Examples of distortionism include the evils of water boarding and bacon.

Its components are multiple, tightly intertwined and dynamically synergistic primarily focusing on a single distorted message such as racism where even many highly intelligent people of good will embrace obvious blatant falsehoods. For example, the Obama administration is hell bent on finding racism where it doesn't exist. In fact, it fuels it by generating legitimate anger and even hatred. And let's not fool ourselves. The major manipulative perpetrators and benefactors of distortionism - they are everywhere - are motivated by the natural human characteristics of power, recognition, money and self-deception, the latter being necessary for a good night's sleep. For example, the media major distortion is it makes tons of money trumpeting the Ferguson story instead of dismissing it as a local random event of little national import, which it is. Politicians also play the race card for personal gain. Hillary Clinton, concerned about the black vote, claims we are a nation of "systemic racism" which is an inflammatory misrepresentation of the truth.

I well remember when Jack Kemp, an unquestionable statesman of goodwill, proposed tax incentives to corporations to locate in the ghettos which would establish jobs and accompanying social benefits. Black leaders remained puzzlingly silent. When Bill Cosby - Stop! We are all Manichean! - urged black parents to bring their young into America's mainstream, he was soundly criticized by black leaders. (The last time we met he was visibly depressed by this vituperative backlash.) Recently, Bill O'Reilly, seconded by the fair-minded black liberal, Juan Williams, courageously gave hell to the major black community leaders to eliminate the ghetto culture. What happened? The black leaders remained silent.

So then; what's the story? Eric Hoffer, the longshoreman philosopher, wrote, "Every great cause begins as movement, becomes a business and eventually deteriorates into a racket."

Racism distortionism is a national poison which needs to be confronted. The question is, "Who will step to the plate?"

Stephen DeFelic  
Westfield

## Letters to the Editor

### Taxes Make Staying In NJ or In Scotch Plains Non-Sustainable

The media has recently had several depressing articles describing the extreme cost of living in New Jersey. It was mentioned that between 2005 and 2014 some two million people packed their bags and bank accounts and departed NJ. The Business and Industry Association indicated that this cost NJ an estimated \$18 billion in income, some 75,000 jobs, and \$11.4 billion in economic activity. This departing of the state was attributed to the estate and inheritance tax. From my experience these are not the taxes people talk about once they leave or are thinking about leaving.

The concern is our sky high property taxes, second in the nation. The County of Union is in the top 10 of highly taxed counties in the nation as well. In addition, Scotch Plains-Fanwood is number 151 out of 565 municipalities which had property tax increases in 2015 (3.41 percent increase).

Nice going freeholders, you could not do any better in making Union County a county that many cannot or want to afford to live in.

There is a small group that is immune to these costs because they are shoveling taxpayer money into their pocketbooks. Here are a few examples:

In Union County, disgraced Assemblywoman Stender, fell out of favor of her party, due to trying to get her shore house rebuilt by Habitat for Humanity after Hurricane Sandy. Then she was given a \$90,000 a year job as deputy director and project manager of the Union County Improvement Authority by the county's Democrat chairman, Assemblyman Green.

Then there was the job created for Fanwood's Mayor Mahr who received an \$81,456 per year as head of Union County Division of Strategic Planning and Intergovernmental Relations.

Our town is not immune to this funding the lifestyle of the politically connected, when our mayor hired a sitting freeholder for \$145,000 as township manager, who had no experience in the position — was done possibly without any interview cycle

of other candidates, which may have included veterans. You decide if this was only to pump more tax dollars into the party's bank.

There appears to be an individual hired to possibly be the assistant to this manager, for \$75,000. We can't seem to find out, since Mayor Glover refused to answer questions regarding the person's salary, position or experience. This means that we pay, and we are not entitled to know what we are paying for.

In the near future, we can expect another county "needy person" to be hired as a new police director and one possibly as a parks and grounds supervisor or the like. One could expect these positions to pay \$150,000 a year or so and be decided behind closed doors with some on the council and the public in the dark. The only thing we will have to do is provide the funding.

In fact, when I questioned the manager's assistant in December, shortly thereafter my family may have been subject to retaliation for my questions.

This all leads to the conclusion that staying in NJ or, in fact Scotch Plains, is a non-sustainable nor a defensible position. This yields, as the father of our country George Washington did many of times during our revolution, to execute a tactical retreat when victory could not be assured.

We are confronted with a situation that cannot be won and will proceed to get worse, once the Democrats in Trenton get to raise the gasoline tax, pay off their public worker/supporter's pension and medical benefits, install a minimum wage and remove of the porous property tax cap. At some point in time, selling one's house may become difficult in finding buyers that can afford tens of thousands of dollars in property taxes. Saying that it is better to retreat early, because if government sees that their revenues may drop with a lot of foreclosed homes, they no doubt will try to get their money from those that they can and that would be the ones still here. Presently only the "exit tax" exists, but I have no doubt that will expand.

Many have decided and many will decide to relocate to avoid NJ taxes, the worst being property taxes. The answer is yes, a tactical retreat is warranted for many.

Albert Muller  
Scotch Plains

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## Reader Is Grateful for Removal Of Signs Along Diamond Hill Road

Every weekday morning hundreds of commuters cross U.S. 22 at Scotch Plains and poke along New Providence/Diamond Hill Road (a.k.a. County Highway 655), which slices through Watchung Reservation on the way to Interstate 78 East. Unlike many other nearby crowded roads, it's a visually pleasant drive. In the fall, the reservation's red, green, yellow and brown leaves offer a late-season fireworks display that helps drivers release some of the tension of their a.m. rush. In winter, scenes of white- and gray-splotted trunks of sycamores, the white-yellow leaves stubbornly clinging to beech trees, and icicle formations or a speeding stream and frothy waterfall offer calming balms for impatient commuters creeping toward I-78.

But throughout last fall and this winter, drivers' views were blocked and marred by clusters of distracting signs nailed to utility poles hawking cash for junky cars, fast loans, Brazilian martial arts, and nearly 20 signs for a self-proclaimed "Handyman." In mid-February, I counted about 40 of those ugly signs littering a mere three-quarter-mile stretch, often three or four to a pole.

Then, around February 22, we were

### Lowering New Jersey's Drinking Age Back to 18 Not A Good Idea

A New Jersey lawmaker made headlines last week by proposing to lower New Jersey's legal age to drink alcohol from 21 to 18. The law has been on the books since 1983.

Assemblyman Michael Carroll introduced his legislation, Assembly bill 3210, on February 22nd. He has reasoned that if a person is old enough to serve in the armed forces as well as marry at 18, he should be able to drink alcohol.

The bill would amend current law which list 18 also as the age when a New Jersey resident can have the "right to contract, sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or authority to engage in a business or profession subject to state regulation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and participate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting (a betting system in which all bets of a particular type are placed together in a pool); taxes ... and other legalized games and gaming... act as an incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit, purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and personal property."

The late U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg from New Jersey authored federal legislation connecting a state's legal age to drink with receipt of federal highway funds. States that lower the age to under 21 will lose millions of dollars in highway funds through a 10 percent reduction of the state's federal highway apportionment. That law was signed in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan.

According to Mr. Carroll's legislation,

blended with visual salvation — almost all the signs vanished! I don't know whom to thank. The Union County Department of Public Works? The utility company that owns the poles? A vigilante? Whoever you are, I appreciate your good deed, and hope you also get rid of the three or four signs remaining along the route.

I also hope that Union County, and/or the utility company, will remove those signs when they inevitably reappear, and prosecute those who post them.

It astonished me that many signs flagrantly displayed the local phone exchanges 908 and 732, making it easy to identify and charge the vandals who posted them. If current laws do not already provide for sufficiently high penalties to make it worthwhile to prosecute these scoundrels, I urge the county to raise fines to levels where the costs of pursuing them will exceed expenses.

Let's not allow one of the most scenic routes in our area degenerate again into something matching the trashy clutter of U.S. 22.

Marc Grobman  
Fanwood

since 1988 all 50 states and DC have had the legal age of 21 to consume and purchase alcoholic beverages.

State Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3rd, Gloucester) has said he does not support the state legislation and, reading between the lines, he will not be posing Mr. Carroll's legislation for a vote.

In our view, this is not good legislation as the number of people killed by drunk drivers was higher when 18-year-olds were able to drink.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), 21 was set as the legal drinking age "based on decades of research proving that young people react differently to alcohol. Teens get drunk twice as fast as adults, but have more trouble knowing when to stop. Teens naturally overdo it and binge more often than adults." A spokesman for MADD told an ABC affiliate that the 21 drinking age saves 800 lives a year nationally.

Reducing the age in New Jersey would likely result in more DWI deaths and impact surrounding states as those under 21 would cross the New York border into New Jersey to buy alcohol thus increasing the risk of DWI deaths on roadways from those headed back to New York.

If there is an injustice on drunk driving laws it is not the legal age, but instead the federal law forcing states to have 21 as the drinking age or lose millions of dollars in highway funds. We have enough information to base state drinking laws on without interference from the Feds.

New Jersey's drinking age was lowered to 18 in 1973 before being raised to 19 in 1980 and to 21 in 1982.

Lowering the age to 18 didn't work in the 1970s and it won't work now.

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