

ALONG THE COLONIAL FRONT

By A. J. SIGGINS, British Journalist

'Midway' Visit To Capetown Insult To Colored Peoples

LONDON—(ANP)—The Manchester Guardian reported recently that the New York Times published a leading article on the USS Midway's visit to Capetown and the enforcement of racial laws. The New York Times was a little late with the news, but its protest was timely and confirms what I wrote for ANP last week. There is, however, one great difference between my report of the incident and my comments and the opinion expressed by the New York Times editor. The editor said that either the Midway should have been kept out of Capetown or the South African government should have agreed to waive its segregation practices in the case of American sailors.

Describing the apartheid laws "as an affront to human decency" and their enforcement in this case "an affront to the United States Navy," the paper declared: "The Navy seems to have taken it lying down and that is not in Navy tradition."

"Our Negro and Philippine and Japanese descended sailors are good enough to die for their country. If they are not good enough to go ashore at Capetown on equal terms, then the Navy should stay out of Capetown. South African law is one thing, but elementary morality is another."

British United Press message published in the Manchester Guardian and the New York Times follows so closely what I wrote some days previously that, in this country, their leading article would have been a breach of copyright. Except, of course, that I would never dream of "supping with Satan" by suggesting that the segregation practices should be waived in the case of American sailors.

For one thing, that might have hidden the sudden burst of indignation from a great newspaper which has at long last decided that segregation in South Africa is an offense against elementary morality and an affront to human decency. But, it appears, only when such laws are the practice in South Africa. Like Nelson at the battle of Copenhagen, the New York Times puts its telescope to its blind eye when peering in the direction of America's domestic segregation laws and illegal practices.

"Physician, first cure thyself!"

Would the white captain, officers and ratings of the USS Midway have accepted a waiving of the segregation laws in the case of the colored members of their company?

If the laws are an affront to human decency, an affront to U. S. Navy and a transgression of the principles and practice of human decency, surely decent men would not accept a favor for 400 sailors when the human family, the U. S. Navy included, is affronted by the laws.

Contrary to what is evidently the opinion of the New York Times, Africans have a sense of honor and pride and this applies to all colored races. While the paper would have forgiven the crime if a favor had been granted some American sailors, the insult to all colored peoples, the affront to human decency and the offense against elemental morality could have been swallowed by it.

What kind of human decency and elemental morality is it that can be bribed by a favor to a few friends? We know the world knows that the United States of America is fighting for survival; but we may well ask for the survival of what? Is the United States, or at least, the New York Times, fighting to win favors for Americans in some parts of the world while oppressing and humiliating

(Continued on Page 12, Col. 1)

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(Continued from Page 4)

them at home or is she fighting for a principle?

To strike a personal note, I am fighting for Human Rights for all mankind, and, in proportion to my means, I have given a great deal more to the fight than the New York Times, or, as far as I can judge, any American, white or black. I believe that we cannot have 100 percent just peace without 100 percent effort. Too many people think they can win 100 percent just peace with a five percent or less effort. That seems to apply to the New York Times.

As the editor has now proclaimed his faith and demanded of others adherence to the dictates of human decency and elementary morality, let him carry on the good work and start belaboring Americans who demand an end to affronts to human decency, to the U. S. Navy and elementary morality. The U. S. Navy is affronted every time a colored sailor, soldier or airman is subjected to segregation in the United States, as well as elsewhere.

We see here in Britain that the Aga Khan or a rich Indian maharajah can get into any society and into any hotel. Their money effectually conceals their color. But they betray their race when they accept these favors, which are not given to them as men or women, but to their money. Let a poor Indian, Arab, or Pakistani try to get a bed or a meal at the Ritz or any other London hotel, and see what would happen.

As I wrote for ANP, the USS Midway did go into Capetown and the U. S. government and Navy and all colored folk in the world were insulted. Now the world wants to know what U. S. A. is going to do about it—eat dirt or fight, or forever be branded by decent men and women with the brand suggested by the New York Times.