

Mr. Les Payne  
Newsday  
Long Island, N.Y. 11747

8/24/84

Dear Les,

In 1941 I was in much the same position as Coleman. I was exposing Nazi cartels for a Jewish editor and managing editor <sup>and</sup> of a national magazine whose owners were Jewish, whose lawyers were Jewish and whose major distributors were Jewish. The editor and managing editor, in fact, and not they alone, had anglicized their names, which I refused to do. I did a story on Schering A.G., of Bloomfield, N.J., a Nazi front set up in 1939 by a Jewish doctor from Berling, Dr. ~~Dr.~~ Julius ~~Weltzien~~ Weltzien. That monster not only fronted for the Nazis, he left his family in Berlin when he could have removed it to this country with him. He then hired as many Jewish doctors as he could in this country, and they tried to persuade me that Weltzien could not be a Nazi if he hired them. I traced the phony ownership in Switzerland, established violation of U.S. law, wrote my piece and there was absolutely no censorship. The piece was published and publicized by all these Jews. I then took my info to a Jewish Secretary of the Treasury, through his Jewish p.r. man who I knew, and instead of covering all this disgusting evil up, they placed charges, vested the Weltzien front for the Nazis, and in addition assessed what for those days was a not inconsiderable fine of more than \$150,000.

Unlike Coleman, if I recall his account correctly, I never hesitated and at no point did any of the people I refer to above raise any questions at all except of proof, to be certain there was no libel.

I have lived longer than you and thus can remember what you cannot remember. This includes publication of remarks that could be taken as racist by presidents and other major figures, political and economic. I mean publication by the major media, and this includes by Republicans of Republicans and of Democrats by Democrats. I'm talking about the very highest levels, too, not occasional nuts. One resulted in a Senate investigation, Hugo Black chairman.

You know very well that I do not consider our major media either honest or fair, and you know that I have had experience with its shibboleths. So, my concern is not defense of it. I am concerned, among other things, because I lived through the most terrible of regimes coming to power and I recall well enough how they came to power. And how they extended and solidified their power. One of the major causes was the inability of those who opposed what these regimes stood for to stop fighting <sup>each</sup> ~~them~~ ~~themselves~~. Another is the inflexible adherence to extreme positions.

There is no doubt at all that Jesse Jackson has done an enormous amount of good in his unsuccessful campaign, which I regard as very successful because of his great accomplishments. This does not in any way alter the opinion I had of him before he was

a candidate. But this does not mean that he did only good, or that after it was clear that he was not going to win and when it was apparent that he was not going to be treated as he wanted to be treated (and I think more than deserved to be treated) he did only good.

You may disagree with me, but I regard Reagan as the greatest threat to any kind of decent society from any president in my lifetime. He is, to me, an Ameriform fascist. And I therefore believe that the most essential political need is to defeat him and those in the Congress who support him. I believe that it is essential to the country, particularly to all minorities, for him not to be the one who appoints new justices of the Supreme Court. There is, then, as I see it at least, a major difference between Reagan and Mondale, and this major difference is of major significance to the country, particularly minorities and those who have greater needs.

When there is so much real cause for deep and lasting passions and anger, so much frustration for so very long, it is possible for any of us to get carried away and to believe in and adopt extreme positions. Defending anything and everything Jackson did is, I believe, such an extreme position, and I believe that one of the results will be serious divisiveness, including among blacks. One of the consequences, I also believe, will be to undermine the influence of those who take such a position or one that can be reasonably interpreted as such a position.

Aside from his cliché anti-Semitism, of which the Hyde stupidity is far from the only example, in my view Jackson was additionally stupid and self-defeating in an undisguised blackmail that only a political infant could have expected to succeed, or do anything other than serious harm, in a presidential election. No candidate and no party could even appear to give in. There was even less possibility in this case because of the serving-special-interests allegations of so many of the unsuccessful Democratic candidates.

Going back to your belief that if something similar had been uttered by Reagan or Mondale it would not have been publicized, there was something comparable during Reagan's first governorship in California and it was reported. By real reactionaries. I refer not to my perception of the matter but to the popular perception. Reagan had appointed a rather high percentage of homosexuals to high position.

Jackson could have become the leader of great influence that he now will not be. By this I mean he will never now have the influence he would have had. And he has done it to himself. Coleman and the Post did not do it to him, and without publication of that particular stupidity, Jackson said similar things that would (and should) have been published. He has assured himself much less influence than he otherwise would have had, now and in the future.



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Despite strong disagreements with many of his positions, going back to what he made himself part of and would not abandon when Dr. King was assassinated, I would much prefer to have a Jesse Jackson with as much influence as possible. So on this basis alone I have real regrets about what happened as well as how it was perpetuated. From what I read and hear perhaps I should say is still perpetuated.

Except when I cast my first vote, for FDR in 1936, I do not recall an election in which I did not vote for what I regarded as a lesser evil. I did not like that, and I think it is a terrible situation. But as I look back on those votes, I believe that in each and every case there was a greater evil, and if there must be a choice of evils, as in the real world there is, I continue not to prefer the greater evil. No matter how much we might prefer a different situation, this is the real condition we have faced and I believe face again. And will still again.

Whether Mondale might have been less of a lesser evil we now may never know. We might have had a chance to know if he had been supported and elected by a unified opposition to what Reagan is and as President has been. Unfortunately Jackson made his own major contributions to this disunity, and more unfortunately still, so did other of the unsuccessful candidates who had so little else to offer.

I remember very well what was one of the most educational experiences of my now fairly long life, your exposition on racism in the cab as we were on the way to the airport in Memphis in April 1976. If you do not, I do. You could not have been more quietly eloquent or any more right. So I know and understand the depth of your feeling. Perhaps I can appreciate it more because of my own experiences. I was beaten up more than once for being what gangs of up to 20 called a Christ-killer. It began before I was in kindergarten. It continued into college.

But there is great danger, in time of crisis or potential crisis, in being dominated by emotion and anger, no matter how justified strong feelings may be. I see no advantage of any kind in helping a dangerous enemy, certainly the most dangerous of possible enemies. And no advantage at all in anything that can in any way be self-defeating.

With undiminished affection and respect,



# Reporter Talks to Black Press on 'Hymie' Remark

By Michel McQueen  
Washington Post Staff Writer

ATLANTA, Aug. 16—Washington Post reporter Milton Coleman appeared before a skeptical audience of black journalists today to defend his decision to report former presidential candidate Jesse L. Jackson's reference to Jews as "Hymie."

Coleman said his integrity has been attacked because of his reporting of the characterization and as a result of the controversy, black journalists have been unfairly asked to choose, "Are you a black first or a journalist first? Which side are you on?"

"It's not my job to avoid controversy for Rev. Jackson—it's his aides' job," said Coleman. "Don't say there are white reporters out there who pull punches to curry favor with the white candidates they cover. They're bad reporters and they can't teach you anything except what you don't want to be."

Earlier, Coleman said, "I never realized and certainly never hoped that reporting Mr. Jackson's remarks would spawn such a furor. [But] I remain convinced that I did the right thing, that I stuck to my principles and my responsibilities as a reporter."

Jackson's remarks to Coleman, in which he referred to Jews as "Hymie" and to New York City as "Hymietown" in an informal conversation, be-

came one of the most widely discussed issues of the presidential campaign. Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, a Jackson supporter, threatened Coleman and his family as a result, and Jackson was pressed to apologize for his and Farrakhan's remarks. Coleman noted that Jackson eventually acknowledged making the comments and apologized.

Coleman said he had refused to be interviewed on television about the controversy because he felt his ability to continue covering the presidential campaign would be impaired if he spoke out. He said he felt "out of place professionally on the other side of the microphone." He decided to speak today, at the National Association of Black Journalists' convention here, "because I think the most appropriate thing is to discuss these issues as black people and as journalists."

Nevertheless, Coleman parried an almost continuous series of hostile questions from the audience of about 400. Many said Coleman should have reported the remarks immediately. Instead, Coleman contributed the comments to a lengthy feature article on the relationship between Jackson and American Jews written by another Post reporter.

"As a good reporter, did you question [Jackson] on his use of the terms at the time? Why not?" demanded Loreta Mouzon, a reporter for WTHR-TV in Indianapolis.

When Coleman said he hadn't, she replied angrily, "Then I question your ability as a journalist."

Les Payne, national editor of Newsday in Long Island, N.Y., also questioned Coleman harshly. He said later, responding to a question by another reporter, that Coleman had used a double standard in his reporting. "If it had been Mondale or Reagan, it wouldn't have been in the paper."

Others, like Randy Daniels, president of a New York-based broadcasting company, said Coleman violated rules of confidentiality. "All of us function under certain ground rules and as far as I'm concerned, Milton, you broke those rules," Daniels later said he was angry because "the man violated a fundamental rule of journalism and an unspoken covenant among his race."

Although not all journalists at the convention were critical of Coleman—many shook his hand afterwards and congratulated him—whether such a "covenant" does or should exist between black journalists and blacks they cover has been a topic of conversation since Jackson's remarks were reported last February.

"I think black journalists for the first time that I can remember have been scrutinized and under fire from both whites and blacks, from our peers and the people we work for," said Merv Anbespin, president of the association. "But overall I think it's been healthy."



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post 8/24/84

## *Damning the Messenger*

Milton Coleman's hostile treatment by an audience of black journalists ["Reporter Talks to Black Press on 'Hymie' Remark," Aug. 17] left my mouth agape.

In a week filled with news reports of Geraldine Ferraro's disclosure woes and Ronald Reagan's asinine bombing joke, Newsday editor Les Payne's assertion that Jesse Jackson was the victim of a double standard ("If it had been Mondale or Reagan, it wouldn't have been in the paper") was particularly astonishing. Has Mr. Payne never heard of Spiro Agnew, Earl Butz or James Watt?

The anger of Mr. Coleman's audience is understandable: no one likes to be told that the emperor has no clothes. Their wrath seems misplaced, however; it should be directed

toward the message and not the messenger.

LEONARD GREENBERG

Reston

Here we go again. Jesse Jackson makes informal, off-the-cuff remarks about "Hymie" and "Hymietown," and the journalist who reports them is roundly condemned, even threatened, by Jackson admirers.

Ronald Reagan makes a joking, off-the-cuff remark about bombing Russia and blames the resulting furor on the press for reporting what he said.

The public gained valuable knowledge about candidate Jackson both from his remarks and from his reaction to the press reports about them. The public is gaining valuable knowledge about the channels in which

President Reagan's mind runs, and about his insensitivity to the overriding issue of our times.

Don't be intimidated, reporters! Very often informal, off-the-cuff remarks reveal more about a public person than his or her carefully crafted and rehearsed utterances. The American people, in whose hands the Election Day decisions rest, have a need to know.

DAVID H. GREEN

Great Falls