



**A
FLORIDA
WOKE
READER**

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A Florida Woke Reader

first edition

Williston Highlands, Florida, USA

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SELECTED EXCERPTS
from Speeches, Essays, & Culture

- I. "They Cannot Be Free
While We Are Not"
- II. "Tentacles Like a Mighty Octopus"
- III. "Shall We Be Disappointed Again?"
- IV. "We Witness Strivings"
- V. "What We Know She Can Be"
- VI. "Nothing Human is Foreign to It"
- VII. "A Hot Mixture of All the Types"
- VIII. "The Jerks Who Go for That
One Hundred Percent American Rot"
- IX. "Its Tarnished Investigation"
- X. "Weapons of the Mind"
- XI. "His Tongue Was Forked,
He Lied and Stung Us"
- XII. "We Have No Need
for Such Solutions"
- XIII. "What is Indifference?"
- XIV. "Our Bright Star is Cast"

*To be woke is to be aware.
It's the opposite of ignorance.*

There was a time when the state of Florida brought strength of moral character to our national discourse. This was particularly evident when its brightest and most creative minds reflected upon the essential question of human freedom within the constitutional institutions of a representative democracy.

What sort of wisdom did these wide-awake voices from Florida's complex history leave behind for us? Let's read together, and perhaps we can discuss how their words might help illuminate a path forward.

Pastorialis Publius

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Williston Highlands

I. “They Cannot be Free While We Are Not”

Jacksonville native, Asa Philip Randolph (1889-1979), was director and lead organizer for the August 28, 1963 Great March on Washington, where civil rights leader Martin Luther King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. As founding leader of the powerful labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Randolph advocated for economic, as well as civil, justice. The following excerpt is from his opening speech, as he inaugurated that historic event.

We’re gathered here for the longest demonstration in the history of this nation. Let the nation and the world know the meaning of our numbers.

We are not a pressure group, we are not an organization or a group of organizations, we are not a mob. We are the advanced guard of a massive, moral

revolution for jobs and freedom. This revolution reverberates throughout the land touching every city, every town, every village where black men are segregated, oppressed and exploited. But this civil rights revolution is not confined to the Negro, nor is it confined to civil rights for our white allies know that they cannot be free while we are not.

And we know that we have no future in a society in which six million black and white people are unemployed and millions more live in poverty. Nor is the goal of our civil rights revolution merely the passage of civil rights legislation. Yes, we want all public accommodations open to all citizens, but those accommodations will mean little to those who cannot afford to use them. Yes, we want a Fair Employment Practice Act, but what good will it do if profit-g geared automation destroys the jobs of millions of workers black and white?

We want integrated public schools, but that means we also want federal aid to education, all forms of education. We want a free, democratic society dedicated to the political, economic and social advancement of man along moral lines. Now we know that real freedom will require many changes in the nation's political and social philosophies and institutions. For one thing we must destroy the notion that Mrs. Murphy's property rights include the right to humiliate me because of the color of my skin.

The sanctity of private property takes second place to the sanctity of the human personality. It falls to the Negro to reassert this proper priority of values, because our ancestors were transformed from human personalities into private property. It falls to us to demand new forms of social planning, to create full employment, and to put automation at the service of human needs, not at the

service of profits – for we are the worst victims of unemployment.

Negroes are in the forefront of today's movement for social and racial justice, because we know we cannot expect the realization of our aspirations through the same old anti-democratic social institutions and philosophies that have all along frustrated our aspirations...

II. “Tentacles, Like a Mighty Octopus”

Florida led the nation in per-capita lynchings. In 1917, Randolph published “The Truth About Lynching: Its Causes and Effects,” in which he offered a detailed analysis of the structural nature of the state’s deeply-rooted political and economic inequality, which all-too frequently expressed itself in deadly acts of violent mob terrorism. It’s important to note

that Randolph wrote the following passages just prior to the horrifying crimes that would be directed against the citizens of the towns of Newbury, Ocoee, Perry, and Rosewood.

...We come now to the political cause of lynching. The "black code" and vagrancy laws, whose purpose I have aforementioned, were enacted by white men who, through political activities, gained their places in the legislative halls of the state. The laws which make the non-performance of labor contracts a crime are placed on the statute books by certain anti-labor and incidentally anti-Negro politicians. The sheriffs of the counties into whose custody Negroes charged with criminal acts are placed, are nominated and elected by political parties. The parties are controlled by certain financial forces which lend money to poor white and black farmers at extortionate rates of interest. The lumber mills, cotton and turpentine

interests, big depositors of the banks, shape and control the policy of those financial institutions. The political parties respond to the pressure of finance; the representatives of the parties (not the people) in the legislative bodies respond to the parties, and hence we have our anti-Negro, anti-labor legislation in the South. Political parties in the South, as in the North, are extra-legal organizations composed of citizens who are controlled by moneyed interests.

So that when a mob demands a Negro in the custody of a sheriff nominated and elected by a political machine whose campaign funds are made up by the banks and loan agencies which lend money to poor whites and Negroes at usurious rates of interest, you can realize and appreciate the result, the manner in which the said sheriff will act. Self-interest is the controlling principle of an individual's or a community's action, unless the actor in

question is either ignorant or insane. Thus a sheriff can always be expected to act in the interest of those who have the power to remove him from his place. Not until you shift the seat of political control can you depend upon those in authority to act differently. No sane man can be expected to act against his own interest. We can no longer depend upon the "good man" theory. It has long since been exploded. We have got to adopt a system which will make it unprofitable to be otherwise. Now, the Republican and Democratic parties in the South are controlled by the same money forces. They are a bi-partisan machine which reflect the policies and interests of the paramount economic forces there—cotton, railroads, turpentine, lumber, and the bourgeoisie merchants. In the East and West these parties reflect the policies and interests of oil, steel, coal, railroads and manufacturing.

Another political cause of lynching stated negatively is, disfran-

chisement, whose tentacles, like a mighty octopus, strangle the voice of protest in the throats of the common people. Intelligent Negroes are without voice, notwithstanding the fact that they pay taxes. Moreover, but one-third of the whites of voting age vote in the South. Evidently the uncrowned financial kings of the South find it more advantageous to rule by an electoral minority because it can be more easily bribed and handled than a large mass of voters. Again, too often, has a young white man's political promotion depended upon his scurrilous harangues against the Negro...

III. "Shall We Be Disappointed Again?"

Lawyer and civil rights pioneer Harry T. Moore (1905-1951) was former chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People for the state of Florida. His extremely effective voter registration campaigns helped enfranchise thousands of Floridians, in spite of the chilling effect of existing Jim Crow laws.

In the following letter, dated December 2, 1951, Moore speaks out against the judicial corruption, police brutality, and mob violence that characterized the infamous Groveland Four incident, in which four young men were wrongly convicted of rape. A legal team headed by future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall successfully appealed for a retrial. Unfortunately, by the new trial date, all but one of the surviving defendants had been killed, the last while being transported back to Lake County by the local sheriff.

On Christmas Day, just three weeks after writing these words, Moore and his wife Harriet were murdered, when a bomb exploded and completely destroyed their home in Mims. No one

was held responsible at the time, but a 2006 investigation implicated members of the Ku Klux Klan, marking it as one of the first high-profile assassinations of the modern civil rights era.

Governor Fuller Warren
State Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Governor:

Sane-minded Florida citizens of all classes, creeds and colors must be shocked over recent developments in the famous Groveland Case. Despite the report of the coroner's jury that Sheriff McCall acted "in line of duty" when he shot Shepherd and Irvin, those fateful shots fired near Weirsdale on the night of Nov. 6th are still echoing around the world.

Thinking people naturally ask these questions; (1) In view of the mob action directed against those prisoners in 1949, was it safe to transport them

into Lake County again with a guard of only two officers? (2) did Sheriff McCall use sound judgment in attempting to drive his car and guard two prisoners at the same time? (3) Why did the officers follow a “blind” clay road after leaving Weirsdale? (4) If the prisoners did try to escape (which is extremely doubtful), was it necessary to shoot them four times in order to stop them, especially when they were handcuffed together? (5) Since the three Groveland Boys had complained of severe beatings and inhumane treatment by Lake County officers in 1949, why were they permitted to leave Raiford again in custody of those same officers? (6) Is it true that in Florida the word of a Negro means nothing when weighed against that of a white person (as indicated by the three prisoners’ complaints in 1949 and by Irvin’s sworn statement last month)? (7) In the face of such strong evidence of gross neglect or willful intent to murder the prisoners,

why have those officers not been suspended?

Yes, those questions are too important to be ignored. We need not try to “whitewash” this one or bury our heads in the sand, like an ostrich. Florida is on trial before the rest of the world. Only prompt and courageous action by you in removing those officers can save the good name of our fair state. We also repeat our request for ample and constant State guard for Irvin in future hearings on this case.

Florida Negro citizens are still mindful of the fact that our votes proved to be your margin of victory in the 2nd primary of 1948. We seek no special favors, but certainly we have the right to expect justice and equal protection of the laws even for the humblest Negro. Shall we be disappointed again?

Respectfully yours,
Harry T. Moore, Executive Secretary
Progressive Voters' League of Florida

IV. “We Witness Strivings”

As a manifestation of restorative justice, equality in education became a beacon. Immediately after arriving in Daytona Beach, Mary Mcleod Bethune (1875-1955) founded the Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls, which later became Bethune-Cookman College. She served for many years as the institution’s president, where her rigorous focus on self-sufficiency, her fully immersive pedagogy, and her “faith in a loving God,” helped sustain the school through many years of intense scarcity.

Through her work as president of the National Association of Colored Women, and many other organizations, she advanced the fight for women’s suffrage and advocated for civil rights throughout her life. She later served as a member of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Federal Council of Negro Affairs, the “Black Cabinet.” Her

sculpture stands in the United States Capitol's National Statuary Hall representing Florida.

The following passages are from her report, "A Philosophy of Education for Negro Girls," published in 1920.

Very early in my life, I saw the vision of what our women might contribute to the growth and development of the race, –if they were given a certain type of intellectual training. I longed to see women, –Negro women, hold in their hands, diplomas which bespoke achievement; I longed to see them trained to be inspirational wives and mothers; I longed to see their accomplishments recognized side by side with any woman, anywhere. With this vision before me, my life has been spent...

...In the rank of average training we witness strivings of Negro women in the school rooms of counties and cities pouring out their own ambition to see

them achieved in the lives of the next generation. The educated Negro girl has lifted the standard of the Negro home so that the present generation is better born and therefore has the promise of a better future.

If there is to be any distinctive difference between the education of the Negro girl and the Negro boy, it should be that of consideration for the unique responsibility of this girl in the world today. The challenge to the Negro home is one which dares the Negro to develop initiative to solve his own problem, to work out his own problems, to work out his difficulties in a superior fashion, and to finally come into his right as an American Citizen, because he is tolerated. This is the moral responsibility of the education of the Negro girl; it must become a part of her thinking; her activities must lead her into such endeavors early in her educational life; this training must be inculcated into the school curricula so

that the result may be a natural expression –born into her children. Such is the natural endowment which her education must make it possible for her to bequeath to the future of the Negro race...

V. “What We Know She Can Be”

The following excerpt is from Bethune’s November 23, 1939 radio broadcast, entitled “What Democracy Means to Me.” While noting some progress during those years prior to the Supreme Court’s Brown v. Board of Education decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, she makes a powerful case that the nation was still characterized by a marked and measurable degree of inequality. Ever optimistic, she visualizes a more perfect union through a shared commitment to its founding proposition.

...The democratic doors of equal opportunity have not been opened wide to Negroes. In the Deep South, Negro youth is offered only one-fifteenth of the educational opportunity of the average American child. The great masses of Negro workers are depressed and unprotected in the lowest levels of agriculture and domestic service, while the black workers in industry are barred from certain unions and generally assigned to the more laborious and poorly paid work. Their housing and living conditions are sordid and unhealthy. They live too often in terror of the lynch mob; are deprived too often of the Constitutional right of suffrage; and are humiliated too often by the denial of civil liberties. We do not believe that justice and common decency will allow these conditions to continue.

Our faith envisions a fundamental change as mutual respect and understanding between our races come in the

path of spiritual awakening. Certainly there have been times when we may have delayed this mutual understanding by being slow to assume a fuller share of our national responsibility because of the denial of full equality. And yet, we have always been loyal when the ideals of American democracy have been attacked. We have given our blood in its defense—from Crispus Attucks on Boston Commons to the battlefields of France. We have fought for the democratic principles of equality under the law, equality of opportunity, equality at the ballot box, for the guarantees of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We have fought to preserve one nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Yes, we have fought for America with all her imperfections, not so much for what she is, but for what we know she can be...

VI. "Nothing Human is Foreign to It."

Former "Miami Herald" columnist, Marjorie Stoneman Douglas (1890-1998), gained international fame as an influential environmentalist through her acclaimed 1947 bestseller, "Everglades: River of Grass." The following text is her "Foreword to A Guide to Miami," which was published under the auspices of the Federal Writer's Project of the depression-era Works Progress Administration in 1941. Her piquant and poetic observations regarding the diverse range of human endeavor that constituted the city of Miami might still just as aptly apply to the modern state of Florida, in its entirety.

Nobody can tell now, exactly, why Rome and Paris and London began, or what made them endure and grow great. It is as if there were places and times in which human activity becomes a whirlpool and which gathers force not

only from man's courage and ambitions and high hopes but from the very tides of disaster and human foolishness, which otherwise disperse them.

Such cities seem to grow in spite of people, by some power of the whirlpool itself, which puts to work good and bad, fineness and cheapness, everything, so long as it has fibre and force and the quality of aliveness that makes life. Something like that, it seems to me, has happened here in south Florida, under the sun and the hurricane, on sand and pineland between the changeless Everglades and the unchanging sea.

Miami has been building itself with all the tough thrust and vigor of a tropic organism. I doubt if it will be complete or the whirlpool slack in a long time, because its strength is that nothing human is foreign to it, or will be.

VII. "A Hot Mixture of All the Types"

The town of Eatonville was home to Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) and provided the setting for her celebrated 1937 novel, "Their Eyes Were Watching God." Hurston's childhood experiences, along with her studies at Howard University, and anthropological work at Barnard College and Columbia University uniquely prepared her to produce richly crafted and uniquely analytical ethnographies of her home state of Florida.

The following sketch is from her May 1939 Federal Writer's Project field-work proposal, designed to preserve Florida's vast diversity of cultural expression through the medium of sound recordings.

Expedition into the Floridas: So far as material worthy of preservation by recordings, Florida stands out from

the other forty-eight states culturally
as it does geographically.

Area I.

*Got my knap-sack on my back
My rifle on my shoulder
Kill me a n***** 'fore Saturday Night
If I have to hunt Flordy over.*
(Sung by Waldo Wishart,
Ocala, Florida)

West Florida extends from the Perdido River on the west to Lake City on the east, from the Alabama-Georgia State lines on the north to as far south as Gilchrist County on the south. This is the Florida so well known to Spanish-French-English-Indian fighting tradition. The material is plentiful. There are men and women still alive who know and can tell of the struggles of four different groups of people to control this area. There are the Creole songs and customs of Pensacola and surrounding area. There are the African-

American Negro folk tales in abundance and the religious and secular songs in plenty. This is a sort of culture pocket that is not being drained off so rapidly as other sections of the State. The reason for this is that this section of Florida is the cotton-corn-tobacco region. Here people live under the patriarchal agrarian system. The old rules of life hold here. Down on the Gulf Coast of this section are large fishing and oyster settlements with their songs and traditions. West Florida is a very rich and little touched area. It is worth an expedition in itself. In addition to the purely cultural material to be found it is possible to make recordings that bear on the economic and sociological set-up of the area. The new is hurling itself, not so effectually, against the old and the feudal life. The interviews should be particularly interesting. The shipyards and the like are the culture beds of other maritime folk creations. A serious study of blank

verse in the form of traditional sermons and prayers.

Area II.

*De Cap'n cant read, de Cap'n cant write
How does he know that the time is right?
I asked my Cap'n what de time of day
He got mad and throwed his watch away.*

(Sung by Willie Joe Roberts,
Jacksonville, Fla.)

From the St. Mary's River, which is the Georgia-Florida boundary line, to Gainesville on the south, and from Lake City to the Atlantic Ocean is Northeast Florida. In this area we have a conglomerate of many cultures. There is the Georgia-Alabama "Cracker" with his farms and cows, his old-English traditions and ways. But here also are the descendants of the great old English, French and Spanish families and their monuments and culture. And occupation, the matrix of culture creation among peoples is in this area in a lavish

way. In addition to the vast number of songs and the like handed down from England, there is a lavish of the stuff created by both black and white around their works. From Fernandina, Mayport and St. Augustine there is the lusty material of the sea folk, Jacksonville is a great port with its hustling, chanting stevedores and roustabouts. The Jacksonville-Callahan area is full of railroad songs, chants and stories.

*Ah Mobile! Hauh! Ah in Alabama!
Hauh! Ah Fort Myers! Hauh! Ah in
Florida! Hauh! Ah lets shake it! Hauh!
Ah lets break it! Hauh! Ah lets shake it!
Hauh! Ah just a hair! Hauh!*

Sung by Fred James Watson,

1225 W. Duval St.

(Jacksonville, Florida)

In this same area there are men like old "Pap" Drummond of Fernandina who tell tales of the Pirates who roamed the Spanish Main and tell of

buried treasures. Pap Drummond lives in his shack on the outskirts of Fernandina with his "family" of rattlesnakes rustling now and then in their dugout near at hand, and draws a long bow on the lawless men of the skull and crossbones of yesteryear. He claims to have aided in the last recovery of pirate treasure.

Interviews with the Turpentine-Timber workers of this area would be extremely interesting. There has seeped in some impulse to change the old for the new and the comments of the laborers are very interesting from a sociological viewpoint.

There are rivermen in this area who have plied the St. John's River for more than one generation with their songs, stories and observations. Some have seen the last of the Indian fighters go. Look for the roots of traditional sermons and prayers.

Area III.

*I got a woman, she shake like jelly all
over I got a woman she shake like jelly
all over Her hips so broad
Lawd, Lawd her hips so broad.*

(Sung by Richard Jenkins,
Mulberry, Fla.)

*And they found him, found him in
between two mountains, And they found
him, found him in between two
mountains With head hung down,
Lawd, Lawd with head hung down.*

(Sung by Richard Jenkins,
Mulberry, Fla.)

From the Palatka-Gainesville line south to Tarpon Springs on the West Coast and Fort Pierce on the East Coast is a section of Peninsular Florida devoted to citrus fruits, turpentine, lumber, phosphate, celery and tourists. This area includes the justly famous Polk County, so full of varied industries that it is full of song and story. The most

robust and lusty songs of road and camp sprout in this area like corn in April. “Uncle Bud” Planchita, “Ella Wall,” and other real characters poured into song and shaped into legend.

It would be profitable in this region to make a series of recordings on John, Jack, Big John, de Conquer (or) that great hero of Negro folklore who is Brer Rabbit and Brer Rabbit is him. Look for fine examples of those folk poems in blank verse known as sermons and prayers.

Area IV.

*Evalina, Evalina you know the baby
dont favor me, Eh, Eh,
you know the baby don't favor me.*

(Sung by Lias Strawn, Miami, Fla.

Drummed by “Stew Beef”)

South Florida: This is the foreign culture area of Florida. That is foreign culture has not yet absorbed into the general pattern of the locality, or just

beginning to make its influence felt in American culture. This foreign area really should be designated as a collection of areas. The Sanctified Church is strong in this area with its rebirth of spiritual and anthem making.

A. Tarpon Springs—A Greek sponge-fishing area with its Greek Orthodox ceremonies and other folk songs and customs.

B. Tampa—With the largest Latin colony in the United States. Here the Cuban songs, dances and folk ways color the soil and flavor the air.

C. Miami—A polyglot of Caribbean and South American cultures.

1. More than 30,000 Bahamans with their songs, dances and stories, and instrumentation.

2. Haitian songs, dances, instrumentation and celebrations.

3. American Negro songs, games and dances.

4. American white songs and stories.

5. African songs, dances and instrumentation. There is a pure African colony there.

D. Everglades–Raw, teeming life of the frontiers and mining or construction camp type. A hot mixture of all the types of material of the area. Worth the whole trip alone. The life histories, Social, Ethnic studies would be rare and vital.

E. Key West to Palm Beach–Bahamian and Cuban elements in abundance. Also the conch settlement at Riviera. All new to study and worth a great deal of investigation...

VIII. “The Jerks Who Go for That One Hundred Percent American Rot.”

The state director for Hurston’s Florida expedition was historian and folklorist Stetson Kennedy (1916-2011), who was born and raised in Jacksonville. In the mid-1940s he infiltrated the

Ku Klux Klan to document the terrorist group's crimes for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. He later published his experiences in the book, "I Rode with the Ku Klux Klan."

As part of his efforts to unmask and discredit the "Invisible Nation," Kennedy shared information about the Klan's secret rituals and finances with George Ludlam, a writer for the popular radio program "The Adventures of Superman," who featured them in a collection of broadcasts entitled, "The Clan of the Fiery Cross."

The series' second episode aired on June 11, 1946. In it Chuck, a young friend of Jimmy Olsen, discovers that his uncle Matt Riggs is the "Grand Scorpion" of a secret society...

...In a glade casting weird shadows over the nearby hills and lighting the sky above burns a huge wooden cross. Before it kneel half a hundred men clothed in long robes.

Pointed hoods slit only at the eyes cover their heads and faces, and a low guttural chant issues harshly from their hidden lips sending an uneasy chill through Chuck's blood. While the boy looks about him at the fearsome sight, Matt Riggs dons a robe and hood on which a pale blue scorpion is embroidered. Then followed by Chuck, he approaches the kneeling hooded band, a barbaric company in the dancing light of the flaming cross.

“Gosh, who are all these guys, Uncle Matt, and why are you wearing the sheets and hoods?” “We’re the Clan of the Fiery Cross, Chuck.” “The Clan of the Fiery Cross!” “Right, we’re a great secret society pledged to purify America, America for 100 percent Americans only, one race, one religion, one color.” “I don’t get it, America’s got all kinds of religions and colors.” “When we get through there will only be one.” “Only one! But the Constitution says that all Americans

have the same rights and privileges.”
“The Constitution, ha! We’ll change that. Now be quiet, be quiet until I call for you.”

[announcer] “Attention brothers! All hail the Grand Scorpion!”

“Brothers in the Clan of the Fiery Cross, supreme authority vested by me as Grand Scorpion, I hereby call this secret session open. Arise now, and by the light of the flaming symbol of our creed, make the sign of fealty to our sacred vows.”

The robed and hooded figures solemnly place their hands over their hearts, crossing the first two fingers of their left hand to extend them toward the flaming cross. Under their breaths, they repeat the anti-democratic oath of the clan...

Episode fourteen aired on June 27, 1946. Superman has successfully thwarted the cruel and unjust plans of the Clan’s Metropolis chapter and now,

Matt Riggs must beg for help from Wilson, the powerful and cynical leader of its national organization...

“...Now, in addition to the police, you’ve got Superman looking for us. Do you realize what that means, just when we were launching a huge new membership drive? This will cost us ten thousand new members.” “Maybe not, Wilson, maybe...” “Maybe, nothing. Your fool stunt cost us ten thousand new members who would have paid us a hundred dollars apiece for initiation fees and another twenty-five dollars for robes and hoods. That means over one million dollars we’d have split.” “So what, what’s money got to do with the spot we’re in now.” “What’s money got to do with it?” “Yes, after all, we’re not in this only for money.” “No? What have you been doing with the twenty-five percent cut you get on all new members to the Metropolis chapter, and the ten percent cut on their robes, giving

it charity?” “Certainly not. I like money, sure, but aside from that I’m also working to purify America, to clean it of foreigners.” “Oh, come now Riggs.” “Look Wilson, I know we’re in a bad spot, but if you’ll only call in the national action committee...” “Wait a minute. Is it possible that you really believe all that stuff about getting rid of the foreigners, that one race, one religion, one color hokum?” “Hokum! Why, it’s the absolute truth. We’ve got to save America from foreign elements.” “Well I’ll be. I thought you had brains, Riggs. But obviously something’s happened to you. You’ve become drunk on the slop we put up for the suckers.” “Suckers! Who are you calling...” “Our members, Riggs, the poor fish who want to hate and blame somebody else for their failures in life. The saps who believe drivel such as, a man is a dangerous enemy because he goes to a different church. The little nobodies who want to believe some other race is

inferior, so they can feel superior. The jerks who go for that one hundred percent American rot.” “Rot, you mean you don’t believe?” “Of course not. You must know there is no such thing as what we call one hundred percent American. Everyone here, except the Indians, are descended from foreigners.” “Why blast you, Wilson. You talk like a dirty foreigner, yourself.” “I’m running a business, Riggs and so are you. We deal in one of the oldest and most profitable commodities on earth, hate. Your mistake was when when you forgot you were a businessman and began believing your own sales talk...”

IX. “Its Tarnished Investigation”

After deadly air attacks terrorized New York City and Washington D. C. on September 11, 2001, the Askew Institute on Politics and Society asked University of Florida historian, Michael

Gannon (1927-2017) author of the widely-acclaimed textbook “Florida: A Short History,” to contextualize the challenges of the moment. One of his primary concerns was the resilience of our democracy.

Among the perils assessed in his 2002 presentation, entitled “Crises that Have Faced Florida from Statehood in 1845 to the Present,” Professor Gannon highlighted the threat of abusive investigative authority, such as that wielded by the Johns Committee during its nine-year campaign of “formal legislative harassment.”

...From 1956 to 1965, the citizens of Florida experienced their own special form of McCarthyism. The practice involved the use of methods of investigation and accusation regarded by many as unjust, even when employed in the cause of seeking evidence of disloyalty or subversion. In Florida the agent of that practice was a committee

of the state legislature named the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee, often identified by its acronym FLIC. The committee was more popularly known in later years as the Johns Committee, after Charley E. Johns—the state senator from Starke and former acting governor in 1953 to 1955. Johns prodded the legislature into appointing the committee and into keeping it in place on a year-to-year basis for nine years. He served intermittently as its chair. Johns was a staunch segregationist, not unlike most members of the legislature in the 1950s. The legislature passed an interposition resolution to prevent the implementation in Florida of the U. S. Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP, was chosen as the Johns Committee’s first target. The committee vigorously went after the NAACP

membership lists allegedly to expose communists. However, the black organization resisted, fearing both that individual members might be singled out for unjust accusation or reprisal, and that membership rolls would plunge. Ultimately, Florida's Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Johns Committee, authorizing the Committee to obtain the names of NAACP members. Finally, in 1962, NAACP attorneys persuaded the U.S. Supreme Court to hear their case. The majority opinion, announced in 1963 (a reversal of an earlier position by the Court), confirmed the civil rights group's associational right to privacy as guaranteed by the Constitution. The Johns Committee was effectively blocked from further harassment of the NAACP as an alleged agent of a Communist conspiracy.

Five years earlier, in 1958, when first frustrated in his attempts to rein in the NAACP, Charley Johns diversified. In August of that year he covertly sent

his committee's chief investigator Remus J. Strickland to Gainesville to search for homosexuals on the University of Florida campus. Informants to Mr. Strickland and his staff gave parties to which suspected faculty members and students were invited and enticed to sexual activity or disclosure. (Mr. Strickland also conducted anti-homosexual investigations at Florida State University in Tallahassee and in various districts of the Florida public school system.)

Mr. Strickland and his staff concentrated on professors' ideas at the fledgling University of South Florida in Tampa. The university's Staff, Faculty, and Advisors Handbook guaranteed the right of faculty members to teach their subjects with unhindered academic freedom. Nonetheless, the Johns Committee decided to go after certain books on assigned reading lists that it found salacious or distasteful, such as Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament* and John

Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Several faculty members were ultimately dismissed or forced into resignation due to their choice of class readings.

Mercifully, in 1965, the legislature pulled the plug on its tarnished Investigation Committee. Although the end of FLIC did not mean that external interference in professional faculty life ceased abruptly, the crisis years of formal legislative harassment of Florida's NAACP chapters and of Florida's university faculties were over.

X. "Weapons of the Mind"

Cuban poet and patriot José Martí (1853-1895) warned against the blinders of provincialism. They can often conceal powerful forces that surround us. Ideas are our best defense against such threats, and the most powerful idea is unity. Martí's America was inclusive. It was transcontinental and

hemispheric. He opposed imperialism in general and Spanish colonialism in particular, and he united communities through his memorable speeches. This latter trait is best exemplified through his influential and iconic orations on the front steps of Vicente Martinez Ybor's cigar factory east of Tampa. In Marion County, Martí City was soon named in his honor.

The following paragraphs were first published in the March 5, 1892 issue of "El Partido Liberal," as a part of his essay entitled, "Our America."

The conceited villager believes the entire world to be his village. Provided that he can be mayor, humiliate the rival who stole his sweetheart, or add to the savings in his strongbox, he considers the universal order good, unaware of those giants with seven-league boots who can crush him underfoot, or the battling comets in the heavens that go through the air,

devouring sleeping worlds. What remains of the village in America must rouse itself. These are not times for going to bed in a sleeping cap, but rather, like Father Juan de Castellanos' philosophical conquistadores, with our weapons for a pillow, weapons of the mind, which vanquish all others. Barricades of ideas are worth more than barricades of stones.

There is no prow that can pierce through a cloudbank of ideas. A vital idea set ablaze before the world at the right moment can, like the mystic banner of the Last Judgment, stop a fleet of battleships. Small towns unknown to one another should quickly become acquainted, as men prepared to fight a common enemy. Those who shake their fists at each other like jealous brothers quarreling over a piece of land, or the owner of a small house who envies the man with a better one, must clasp hands and become one. Those who use the authority of a criminal tradition to lop

off the hands of their defeated brother with a sword stained with his own blood, must return that land to their brother if they do not wish to be known as a nation of plunderers. The honest man does not absolve himself of debts of honor with money, at so much a slap.

We can no longer be a people of leaves, living in the air, our foliage heavy with blooms and crackling or humming at the whim of the sun's caress, or buffeted and tossed by the storms. The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing! It is the time of mobilization, of marching together, and we must go forward in close ranks, like silver in the veins of the Andes...

XI. “His Tongue Was Forked, He Lied and Stung Us”

*Born near the site of modern
Kissimmee, Coacoochee (c.1807-1857)*

was a son of “King Philip” Emathla. Better known as “Wildcat,” he grew into a formidable warrior and became a close ally of the Seminole leader, Osceola.

Together, they resisted ethnic cleansing policies in general and President Jackson’s Indian Removal Act in particular. They united diplomatic efforts with a sustained and extremely effective application of military force -- until a false flag of truce ended their resistance through a fateful violation of trust.

This first speech was delivered at Tampa on March 1841 after his daring escape from the Castillo de San Marcos in Saint Augustine, just prior to his final deception and capture. Here, he invokes the inextinguishable nature of the human need for freedom—even in the face of the inevitable—while still articulating his desires for a peaceful reconciliation.

The whites dealt unjustly by me. I came to them, they deceived me; the land I was upon I loved, my body is made of its sands; the Great Spirit gave me legs to walk over it; hands to aid myself; eyes to see its ponds, rivers, forests, and game; then a head with which I think. The sun, which is warm and bright as my feelings are now, shines to warm us and bring forth our crops, and the moon brings back the spirits of our warriors, our fathers, wives, and children.

The white man comes; he grows pale and sick, why cannot we live here in peace? I have said I am the enemy to the white man. I could live in peace with him, but they first steal our cattle and horses, cheat us, and take our lands. The white men are as thick as the leaves in the hammock; they come upon us thicker every year. They may shoot us, drive our women and children night and day; they may chain our hands and feet,

but the red man's heart will be always free.

I have come here in peace, and have taken you all by the hand; I will sleep in your camp though your soldiers stand around me like the pines. I am done; when we know each other's faces better I will say more.

This second speech was delivered in chains from the deck of a Navy brigantine docked in Tampa Bay on July 4, 1841. Here, Coacoochee laments the value of his previous treaties with the United States. His experiences exemplify the Seminole "Trail of Tears."

Both speeches were translated to English by Coacoochee's Black Seminole ally, John Caballo (also known as, "John Horse"). After deportation to the Oklahoma Indian Territories, Coacoochee moved with his followers to the nation of Mexico, where he lived out the remainder of his life.

I was once a boy, then I saw the white man afar off. I hunted in these woods, first with a bow and arrow; then with rifle. I saw the white man, and was told he was my enemy. I could not shoot him as I would a wolf or a bear; yet like these he came upon me; horses, cattle, and fields, he took from me. He said he was my friend; he abused our women and children, and told us to go from the land. Still he gave me his hand in friendship; we took it; whilst taking it, he had a snake in the other; his tongue was forked; he lied, and stung us. I asked but for a small piece of these lands, enough to plant and to live upon, far south, a spot where I could place the ashes of my kindred, a spot only sufficient upon which I could lay my wife and child. This was not granted me. I was put in prison; I escaped. I have been again taken; you have brought me back; I am here; I feel the irons in my heart. I have listened to your talk; you and your officers have taken us by the

hand in friendship. I thank you for bringing me back; I can now see my warriors, my women and children; the Great Spirit thanks you; the heart of the poor Indian thanks you. We know but little; we have no books which tell all things; but we have the Great Spirit, moon, and stars; these told me, last night, you would be our friend. I give you my word; it is the word of a warrior, a chief, a brave, it is the word of Coacoochee. It is true I have fought like a man, so have my warriors; but the whites are too strong for us. I wish now to have my band around me and go to Arkansas. You say I must end the war! Look at these irons! can I go to my warriors? Coacoochee chained! No; do not ask me to see them. I never wish to tread upon my land unless I am free. If I can go to them unchained, they will follow me in; but I fear they will not obey me when I talk to them in irons. They will say my heart is weak, I am

afraid. Could I go free, they will surrender and emigrate.

XII. “We Have No Need for Such Solutions”

Paul Dirac (1902-1984) was awarded the 1933 Nobel Prize for significant contributions to the emerging field of quantum physics. The Cambridge University Lucasian Professor of Mathematics settled in Tallahassee, and served for many years on the faculties of Florida State University and the University of Miami.

Like other empirical scientists, Dirac questioned the ethical value of supernatural explanations for natural phenomena. He dismissed religious claims as abusive distractions and political obstructions that, when weighed against the measurable benefits of evidence-based reason, invariably fail the test.

The following remarks are from his presentation at the Fifth Solvay International Conference in October 1927, as documented by his colleague Werner Heisenberg.

...If we are honest –and scientists have to be –we must admit that religion is a jumble of false assertions, with no basis in reality. The very idea of God is a product of the human imagination. It is quite understandable why primitive people, who were so much more exposed to the overpowering forces of nature than we are today, should have personified these forces in fear and trembling. But nowadays, when we understand so many natural processes, we have no need for such solutions. I can't for the life of me see how the postulate of an Almighty God helps us in any way. What I do see is that this assumption leads to such unproductive questions as why God allows so much misery and injustice, the exploitaion oft

the poor by the rich and all the other horrors He might have prevented. If religion is still being taught, it is by no means because its ideas still convince us, but simply because some of us want to keep the lower classes quiet. Quiet people are much easier to govern than clamorous and dissatisfied ones. They are also much easier to exploit. Religion is a kind of opium that allows a nation to lull itself into wishful dreams and so forget the injustices that are being perpetrated against the people. Hence the close alliance between those two great political forces, the State and the Church. Both need the illusion that a kindly God rewards—in heaven if not on earth—all those who have not risen up against injustice, who have done their duty quietly and uncomplainingly. That is precisely why the honest assertion that God is a mere product of the human imagination is branded as the worst of all mortal sins...

XIII. “What is Indifference?”

In 1960, Elie Weisel (1928-2016) published “Night,” the seminal memoir of his experiences as a young Romanian Jew in Auschwitz. He taught human rights seminars at Eckerd College in Saint Petersburg for twenty-four years, and was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1996.

Deeply rooted in a long tradition of ethical humanism, Weisel’s moral compass draws meaning and direction from humanity’s collective knowledge of past tragedy. Bearing witness provides a powerful foundation. If humanists aspire to be “guided by reason, informed by experience, and inspired by compassion,” Weisel certainly manifested these values through his life, and in his work.

This excerpt is from the speech entitled, “The Perils of Indifference” delivered on April 12 1999 at the White House, in the city of Washington.

...We are on the threshold of a new century, a new millennium. What will the legacy of this vanishing century be? How will it be remembered in the new millennium? Surely it will be judged, and judged severely, in both moral and metaphysical terms. These failures have cast a dark shadow over humanity: two World Wars, countless civil wars, the senseless chain of assassinations (Gandhi, the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Sadat, Rabin), bloodbaths in Cambodia and Algeria, India and Pakistan, Ireland and Rwanda, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Sarajevo and Kosovo; the inhumanity in the gulag and the tragedy of Hiroshima. And, on a different level, of course, Auschwitz and Treblinka. So much violence; so much indifference.

What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means "no difference." A strange and unnatural state in which the lines blur between light and darkness, dusk and dawn, crime and

punishment, cruelty and compassion, good and evil. What are its courses and inescapable consequences? Is it a philosophy? Is there a philosophy of indifference conceivable? Can one possibly view indifference as a virtue? Is it necessary at times to practice it simply to keep one's sanity, live normally, enjoy a fine meal and a glass of wine, as the world around us experiences harrowing upheavals?

Of course, indifference can be tempting—more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, our hopes. It is, after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person's pain and despair. Yet, for the person who is indifferent, his or her neighbors are of no consequence. And, therefore, their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest.

Indifference reduces the Other to an abstraction.

Over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the “Muselmanner,” as they were called. Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lie on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were—strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. They were dead and did not know it.

Rooted in our tradition, some of us felt that to be abandoned by humanity then was not the ultimate. We felt that to be abandoned by God was worse than to be punished by Him. Better an unjust God than an indifferent one.

For us to be ignored by God was a harsher punishment than to be a victim of His anger. Man can live far from God— not outside God. God is wherever we are. Even in suffering? Even in

suffering. In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger and hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony. One does something special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it.

Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor—never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees—not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them

from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own.

Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment...

XIV. “Our Bright Star is Cast”

In 1900, James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), principal of the segregated Stanton School in Jacksonville, composed the following poem for his students in celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s birthday. His younger brother, the accomplished musician John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954), set his words to music and their work soon became known as the black national anthem.

Johnson’s diverse energies were always directed towards the cause of civil rights. At first through creative poetry, prose, music, and drama. Then later, as an influential lawyer and diplomat, he helped establish the

NAACP and ASCAP, the musicians' rights organization. His brother, John Rosamond continued his pioneering career as a successful musician and composer in New York City.

This song somehow manages to combine the brutal realism of its historical context with an optimistic hope for a brighter future.

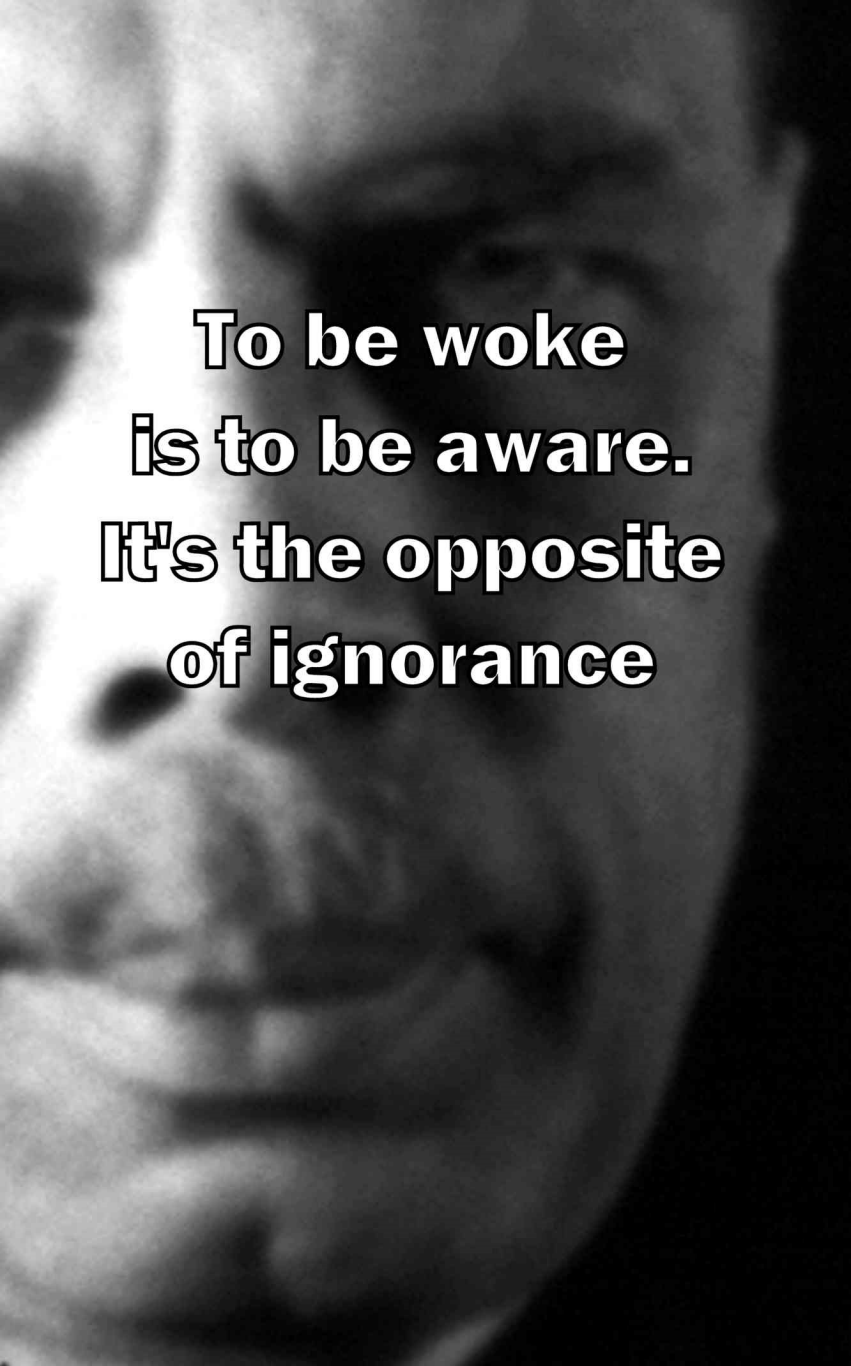
Lift every voice and sing, 'til
earth and heaven ring, ring with the
harmonies of Liberty; let our rejoicing
rise high as the listening skies, let it
resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that
the dark past has taught us, sing a song
full of the hope that the present has
brought us; facing the rising sun of our
new day begun, let us march on 'til
victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the
chastening rod, felt in the days when
hope unborn had died; yet with a steady

beat, have not our weary feet come to the place for which our fathers died.

We have come, over a way that with tears has been watered, we have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, out from the gloomy past, 'til now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast...



**To be woke
is to be aware.
It's the opposite
of ignorance**