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Braham Dabscheck

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Mostly, the Cold War's importance remains an issue because it details and provides examples of the difficulty in dealing with a movement that is totalitarian one in a free society. While European unions were pragmatic in dealing with communists, it is also possible that they were naïve. The crimes of the Soviet Union are now apparent, but the crimes and bad behaviour that the United States had to take to stop communism have been, and continue to be, documented. As Derek Leebaert argued: the struggle to stop communism created a fifty-year wound and the true costs of it are revealed in the current state of politics. The support of awful regimes and the damage done to unionism are still apparent. Carew's work is an important addition to this debate and is highly recommended.

Jeffrey Muldoon

Associate Professor
School of Business
Emporia State University
Emporia, Kansas, USA

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Justice John Marshall Harlan, in his famous dissent in *Plessy v Ferguson*, (that decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, which enunciated the "separate but equal" doctrine that gave a legal imprimatur to Jim Crow) said: "Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes amongst citizens."¹ This is a precept that the lawyer Morris Berthold Abram (1918-2000) steadfastly held to throughout his life.

Abram is most famous for a long campaign he waged in establishing the principle of "one man, one vote" in overthrowing Georgia's county unit voting system. His commitment to the Constitution being colour-blind also resulted in

him clashing with those that supported quotas and affirmative action to enhance the position and status of African Americans, beginning in the latter part of the 1960s. Abram encountered the incongruity of having once been hailed as a champion of civil rights being denounced as a villain because of his stance on quotas and affirmative action.

David Lowe provides an account of the life of Morris Abram. He employs a traditional chronological account. He only has one "thematic" chapter where he explores Abram's family life, interactions with others, his intellectual curiosity and gentlemanly Southern style (p. 135-145). Those who worked with Abram praised him for his collegiality and ability to develop consensus. Abram was born of Jewish parents in Fitzgerald, a small town in Georgia, in 1918. His parents were not religious and did not mix with the small Jewish community in Fitzgerald. He did not have a bar mitzvah. He was an exceptional student with his family funding his tuition at the University of Georgia. He won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, which was cancelled because of World War II. The University of Chicago's Law School offered to provide scholarships to would-be Rhodes scholars. He accepted the offer but was short of income for living expenses, which was picked up by the father of a schoolboy friend. After graduating, he enlisted in the armed forces, serving his time in America.

Lowe refers to a key moment that Abram experienced when he was helping out at his father's store on a break from college. He was looking at a group of white and black sharecroppers and field hands—"ragged, dirty and illiterate"—and asked himself how many of the blacks would he invite home. "The answer was none, but he realized that it was the same for whites". He then asked himself, "did he require that all blacks be acceptable before any could be, a stan-

dard he did not apply to whites?" He also thought about the ways in which Jews were stereotyped in the same way as blacks. He later wrote that "segregation became an abomination to me and irreconcilable with the American tradition" (p. 24).

After the war, Abram spent time studying at Oxford and participated in the Nuremberg trials where he learnt first-hand about the evils of Nazism and anti-Semitism. He returned to Georgia, where he was unable to find employment with any of Atlanta's leading law firms, even with the firm of the friend's father who provided him with financial support, because he was a Jew. In 1949, he started his campaign against Georgia's county unit voting system. Under the system in primary elections for Democrat candidates (Republicans were not organized in Georgia so whoever won the primary ended up being elected), counties (or electorates) of different sizes were constructed, which gave greater weight to rural areas over towns and, in turn, cities. A vote in a rural county could carry the weight of 99 in a city. The effect of this system was to reduce the value of the votes of African Americans who were concentrated in cities.

Before the Supreme Court, in 1963, in *Grey v Sanders*, Abram said:

I do not think there is any way that you can uphold this system even if you don't say a system is *per se* unconstitutional, until you can say that two equals four or feel that 50c is the proper amount for a dollar or that you can give eight ounces per pound. I think a qualified voter is a qualified voter, is a qualified voter, and a vote, is a vote, is a vote. (p. 76)

The Supreme Court concurred with this reasoning. Justice Douglas, writing for the Court declared:

Once the geographical unit for which a representative is chosen is designat-

ed, all who participate in the election are to have an equal vote—whatever their race, whatever their sex, whatever their occupation, whatever their income, and wherever their home may be in that geographical unit. This is required by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.²

Abram's approach to civil rights was that of an "integrationist". He was part of a "loose coalition" of African American, other religious and like-minded groups and individuals who supported civil rights. In the latter part of the 1960s, a split occurred between old guard African American integrationists and younger generation "separatists". Amongst other things, the separatists supported quotas and affirmative action to overcome problems experienced by African Americans. This new generation of leaders, such as Malcolm X, also criticized Jews as being responsible for the problems experienced by African Americans. Abram who had successfully rolled a voting system which favoured whites/discriminated against blacks would not support any system that favoured people based on race.

In a 1986 article, he wrote, for the *Harvard Law Review*, he maintained that the role of securing racial justice is best limited to "vigilant concern with equal opportunity, procedural regulation and fair treatment of the individual". He referred to a decision of Justice Douglas that the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment "commands elimination or racial barriers, not their creation in order to satisfy our theory as to how society should be organized". He finished his article by appealing to social engineers to refrain from masking their redistributionist goals as civil rights, since such rights belong to everyone, and are too important "to be captured by a set of special interests".³

Abram was called by US Presidents to serve in a variety of functions: as general

Counsel of the Peace Corps, a Commission on Ethical Problems in Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Commission on Civil Rights and US Representative in the European Office of the United Nations. He also headed a New York investigation into corruption in the nursing home industry. Abram was President of Brandeis University in the late 1960s at the height of the student sit-ins and challenges associated with campaigns by African American students against what they regarded as racist bias. He did not enjoy his time at Brandeis and returned to the law. He was also involved in philanthropic work and a leading spokesperson on behalf of Jewish groups such as the Jewish American Community. He also founded UN Watch. In his later years, he became increasingly worried about the rise of anti-Semitism in America and across the globe.

David Lowe provides valuable information on the life and times of Morris Abram; this talented man from the South who made a major contribution to putting an end to a voting system that discriminated against African Americans, an advocate for civil and human rights and a spokesperson on behalf of American Jewry.

Braham Dabscheck

Senior Fellow
Melbourne Law School
University of Melbourne
Melbourne, Australia

Notes

- 1 *Plessy v Ferguson* 163 US 537 (1896), at 569.
- 2 *Grey v Sanders* 372 US 368 (1963), at 379. Other relevant cases are *South v Peters* 339 US 276 (1950); *Hartsfield v Sloan* 357 US 916 (1958); and *Baker v Carr* 396 US 186 (1962). Also see *Shelby County v Holder* 570 US 520 (2013), where the Supreme Court overturned a section of the *Voting Rights Act* 1965, which required certain states and counties to obtain federal clearance before implementing changes to their voting laws or practices.
- 3 See M. B. Abram (1986) "Affirmative Action: Fair Shakers and Social Engineers", *Harvard Law Review*, 99 (6), p. 1312-1326.