

From— Racism deserves to get the red card

BY RICH MKHONDO

Sport is supposed to be the epitome of the level playing field, where people are judged by their performance on the field or court, not by the colour of their skin. My favourite sport, football, has the capacity to bring people together. I am pained by the fact that when it comes to the poisonous hate of racism, the game has also been there, done that.

It is hard to think of a single month in a single year in the past generation in which there has been no racism in sport. As we bade farewell to 2011, England and Chelsea captain John Terry was alleged to have racially abused Queens Park Rangers defender Anton Ferdinand. Terry was said to have used the words “****ing black ****” in an exchange with Ferdinand....The Terry incident came soon after the spat between Liverpool forward Luis Suarez and Manchester United defender Patrice Evra....While we have advanced from the days when banana skins were tossed at black players, the fact that a footballer could insult a fellow professional in terms of his skin colour is an affront to these enlightened times....

No matter how far we have come in the fight for equal rights, racism is still a major issue every day, everywhere, as well. All of us are guilty of it, one way or the other. We all judge people based on appearance without even thinking about it. Of course, we would like to think that we have moved beyond issues of race, ethnicity and skin colour—that those issues are problems of the past. The truth is that despite the progress we have made breaking down barriers, we are still steeped in the filth of racism—and those who think it’s already gone need to be especially active in recognising and ridding it from society....

Why do people act in these horrific ways, and what do these terrible events have to do with the everyday racism that does not make the headlines?

Eli Siegel, an American educator who founded the philosophy of Aesthetic Realism, has an answer. He explains that racism begins with the hope for contempt—the “false importance or glory” a person gets by making less of the reality of other people.

In his book *James and the Children*, a consideration of *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James, Siegel writes: “According to Aesthetic Realism, the greatest sin that a person can have is the desire for contempt. Because as soon as you have contempt, as soon as you don’t want to see another person as having the fullness that you have, you can rob that person, hurt that person, kill that person.” Contempt, Aesthetic Realism explains, is the cause of every injustice—from ethnic ridicule and slurs to the deadly forms of racism, bombs and war.

One of the clearest places where contempt can be seen is on the pitch, where it can construe itself as an international danger. It also carries personal friction, as demonstrated by Suarez’s and Terry’s moments of “false importance or glory.” A person who is “white” (Suarez) looks at a person whose skin is darker (Evra) and feels: “I am better than you.” Because the two white players wanted to think well of themselves, an easy way of seeming to think well of themselves was to consider the other as inferior.

In my life, respect for people begins with asking, and honestly trying to answer, the necessary question which Siegel first presented: “What does a person deserve by being a person?”

No one begins life as a racist, but all of us can yield to the temptation of wanting to feel superior to other people, especially when we feel unsure of ourselves.

Rich Mkhondo, an executive for Corporate Affairs at MTN Group, was Chief Communications Officer of the 2010 World Cup.

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Meaning of Machias 1775 Naval Victory Lives On

By Harvey Spears

Why does an historical event that took place on June 12, 1775—the onset of America’s Revolutionary War—have such meaning for people today? As a photographer who loves the natural beauty of coastal Maine, and the history of our great country, that is the question I was thinking about as I

traveled from New York City to Machias last summer to participate in Margarett Days. I loved being at this event, which commemorated the 235th anniversary of the first naval battle of the American Revolution. Its meaning came alive as I thought about what Eli Siegel, the great American philosopher and founder of the education Aesthetic Realism, said: “The aim of history is to make past feeling felt more, or, simply, the past felt more.” I believe this is why people are so stirred seeing our relation to the past, to men and women who lived at a critical time in our nation’s history.

Largely unknown today, this mighty occurrence was called the “Lexington of the Sea” by the eminent writer James Fenimore Cooper. Though few in number, the men and women of Washington County seized the British ship the Margarett, anchored in Machiasport. It was a known fact that the British were planning to use the Margarett to transport lumber to Boston in order to build forts to be used against Washington’s army. Though threatened, Mainers put their lives on the line to protect the meaning of the Revolution, and refused to provide the British with one log of Maine’s valuable resource. Their brave decision stands for what we, as individuals and a nation today, so much hope for. In the periodical *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Ellen Reiss wrote:

“What the American Revolution was concerned with is the same thing Americans are in tumult over now—as people across this nation are so worried about jobs and money....By April 1775

there came to be a fury in many persons in America that while they lived on the American earth, planted it, built on it—the wealth...was being robbed from them by an English king. There was fury that George III saw the American land and the people who lived on it as a means to enrich England.”

I believe this describes the underlying cause of the fierce resistance to British tyranny shown by ordinary citizens—women and men who felt there was something to oppose with relentless determination and something big and beautiful to be protected and fought for. This feeling was represented with depth and style in the Margarett Days celebration!

While today America’s wealth is not going to the British monarchy, there is tremendous hardship and distress in the lives of most Americans because our vast wealth is used to bail out corporations and enrich executives and shareholders, as the average American gets poorer, including in Washington County. No person should ever be forced to worry about not having a good-paying job or not being able to afford the basic necessities. If America’s economy were based on ethics, and people, including in our government, were honestly answering the question Eli Siegel asked: “What does a person deserve by being a person?” our country would be so different!

As a photographer, I was stirred by the expressions on the faces of people. For instance, there was Chris Sprague, a direct descendant of Jeremiah O’Brien, who spoke with such pride as he told of the preparations prior to the attack on the Margarett. There was Dona Emerson who described the dilemma of Hannah (Watts) Weston, a young woman of 17, trying to decide how she can aid the defense of her land. She bravely carried ammunition for miles through the woods to support the men fighting at the

front. We learned about the Rev. James Lyon who was portrayed by Doug Guy. Rev. Lyon, through the immortal words of Thomas Paine, inspired courage and perseverance:

“THESE are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

And I was moved by Valdine Atwood who told the story of “The Battle of the Rim” where the Passamaquoddy Indians joined the colonists, and fought side by side with them.

All these activities represented the feelings of people and what people are now insisting on more than ever—that they be seen with the fullness and justice they deserve. Commenting on the battle of Lexington, Ellen Reiss wrote: “As they (the colonists) came out, that April day, with their flag and weapons, to face the trained soldiers of England, they were saying, ‘This land on which our lives take place is *ours*. It does not exist for some monarch and his henchmen to make profit from, while tyrannizing over, sapping, and ruining our lives in order to do so....’ For the 13 colonies to be independent was for the people living in them to own the rocky Massachusetts earth and the lush Virginia earth and the earth at New York harbor, where ships could come.”

I believe that in 1775, the people of Machias felt intensely: “This land is ours—and we’ll protect it with our very lives!” We can use what took place then to be clearer and surer about what we hope for and deserve—an economy that is based on ethics, and which will enable every man, woman and child to have good lives.

Harvey Spears is a photographer/writer/art director who is from New York and Maine and loves photographing in Maine. His work has appeared on the State of Maine website, including the Maine Fish and Wildlife magazine. His work has also appeared in photographic exhibitions.

People are now insisting more than ever that they be seen with the fullness and justice they deserve.



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APRIL 2, 2012 NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER www.nydailynews.com

Racism can end

Dear Editor:

As two persons—one black, one white—who have been friends for over 25 years, we like so many others are very angry at the killing of young Trayvon Martin.

We feel it is a national emergency that people use this tragedy to once and for all understand what racism comes from and how it can end. And yes racism can end!

The answer is in the important philosophy and education Aesthetic Realism, founded by Eli Siegel. It explains that there are two desires in every person, regardless of the color of their skin. The first is our deepest desire: to like the world honestly and see meaning and value in things and people. The second is the desire for contempt, “the addition to self through the lessening of something else.”

Contempt is so ordinary, from making fun of a person who makes a mistake or thinking you’re better than another because of the section of town you live in. Contempt is also what makes for the great injustices of this world from war to racism—it’s what made for slavery and Nazism.

In the international journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, of June 25, 1997, titled “Racism Can End,” Chairman of Education Ellen Reiss wrote: “The big thing people have not known about racial prejudice is that it does not begin with race. It begins with how one sees the world.”

Unfortunately, these horrors will continue unless the larger and stronger desire for respect is gone after, and the desire for contempt is criticized in all of us. We want the tragic and unjust killing of Trayvon Martin to be a means of people being truly against injustice in others and ourselves.

Sincerely,

ALLAN MICHAEL
Brooklyn

MATTHEW D’AMICO
Manhattan

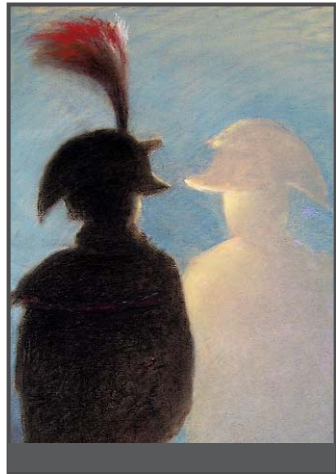
CORRIERE DELLA SERA*

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Napoleone a NYC, l’arte di Koppelman

La mostra

Un sottotitolo titolo curioso e immaginario, York», per la mostra inaugurata ieri nel Museo su «Chaim Koppelman e l’Imperatore», co 1957 e il 2



Icona L’artista americano Chaim Koppelman ha dedicato parte della sua carriera a descrivere la figura dell’imperatore

Koppelman, formatosi con Eli Siegel fondatore della corrente del Realismo estetico Napoleone con una profondità che gli dà filosofici, cogliendo in questa figura il corpo apparire, tra la radice rivoluzionaria e l’anima fetta incarnazione della teoria Siegeliana di Inedite, ovviamente, le raffigurazioni dell’Island, in una affollata spiaggia estiva, nuda alca un bue entrando a Manhattan.

Translation of Corriere della Sera article:

Exhibition

“Napoleon Entering New York” is the subtitle, intriguing and fictitious, for the exhibition inaugurated yesterday at the Museo Napoleonico in Rome on “Chaim Koppelman and the Emperor,” with works from 1957-2007.

It was the artist Chaim Koppelman, considered one of the greatest American printmakers, who was to open, at least ideally, the gateway of New York to Napoleon. To the figure of Napoleon studied in different forms, in all his contradictions and his diverse attitudes, Koppelman (1920-2009) in fact dedicated a large part of his long career, beginning at age nine, when, for the first time, he drew Napoleon’s profile in his geography book. And a good portion of these works (he created one hundred such paintings, drawings and prints) are on exhibit in Rome, until January 8 (piazza di Ponte Umberto I, from Tuesday to Sunday 9-19, tel. 060608).

Koppelman, a student of Eli Siegel (1902-1978), the philosopher and founder of Aesthetic Realism, explores the figure of Napoleon with a profundity that derives from his lengthy study of that philosophy. He presents in the Napoleonic figure the contrast of what is and what appears, of revolutionary roots and imperial ambition, a perfect embodiment of the Siegelian theory of the oneness of opposites. The emperor is represented as he has obviously never been seen before: at Coney Island on a crowded summer beach; nude; or portrayed riding a steer as he enters Manhattan.

* The *Corriere della Sera*, or *Evening Courier*, is the largest newspaper in Italy.

Malverne/West Hempstead, NY



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and



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MARCH 5, 2012

Pensions are not luxuries

To the Editor:

As a retired school crossing guard for the Nassau County Police Department for 28 years who loved the work I did making sure our children were safe, I am grateful to the labor movement, including CSEA, for the modest pension I now receive. It has allowed me and my husband to live with dignity in our later years.

I am outraged at our political leaders who are trying to blame our economic problems on pensions. We, the workers, are taxpayers who have paid into the pension system; we are not getting rich from it. The attempt to destroy traditional pensions and replace them with 401(k)s is shameful, and is only making it harder for people to retire. In the journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Ellen Reiss, chairman of education, writes, “...pensions, which are not gifts, were earned by workers with the labor or their bodies and minds. Pensions are not luxuries, because in a civilized country, to feel one can meet old age without terror of impoverishment should not be a luxury.”

I am grateful for this quote because it describes how I feel about my pension and the fact that no person getting older should be terrified that they will not have enough money to live decently.

ANNA MILLER
West Hempstead

