

THE BENNETT BANNER

"Anything Worth Reading, We Write"

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

The school year got underway with an exceptionally fine start and we face this new year with the high hope that the prevailing school spirit will remain at the same high ebb throughout the term.

The *Banner* is your spokesman and it is our aim, at all times, to make the paper so worthwhile and informative, that you will eagerly anticipate its arrival "off the press" each month. In every issue we will strive to print the news which will be of greatest interest to you.

However, in order to reach the goal of actually making the *Banner* "your" school paper, we must have your cooperation. Therefore, we urge you to use the *Banner* as the "voice" of your opinions and to share with your schoolmates your hidden talents.

We, of the Staff, are strongly determined to make this year the very best in the history of Bennett. Through a common understanding and unity of purpose, we can make our paper "the democratic spokesman" of our campus. With your staunch support and willingness to be a part of the *Banner*, this can be done. Remember, we are depending upon you to keep the news rolling and to use the *Banner* as your means of expression.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The end of World War II placed a great responsibility on the shoulders of America, because she, probably more than any other nation, will play the most prominent part in shaping the destiny of the peoples of the world.

During the course of the war we did everything humanly possible to help our allies — sent bundles to Britain, supplied them with food and clothing—and provided for their maintenance through lend-lease.

With the arrival of V-E Day the German empire collapsed, but German business is still a menace. We still have to beware of Nazi industrialists; although they are underground, their financial power is still intact. Only by being extremely cautious and ever vigilant can we prevent a similar occurrence such as that succeeding World War I.

The close of this war has again placed the world at the crossroads and if a third great disaster is to be averted the issues at hand must be solved with extreme precaution.

Here, in America, the sudden closing of vast numbers of war industries threw millions of people out of work. Henry Wallace said that during this reconversion period we would need 60 million jobs. The nations most urgent task now is to establish an economy that will provide jobs for all.

However, with labor and management freed from the restraints of war, the question now is—"In the event that the two will not continue to work together to meet the tremendous needs of peacetime production, should the government enforce labor peace?" Experts in the field are agreed that the government should not step in to compel industrial harmony. The majority hold that the government should encourage employers and labor to solve their problems voluntarily; but, also advocate certain possible actions and steps that should be taken to facilitate working relations between the two.

Europe today is a continent of 71,000,000 uprooted, homeless, and soon-to-be-dislodged people. They are people who have been unmercifully struck by the swirling tides of war. What is to become of them?

One of our main sources of interest concerns the future of Japan. Japan still bears close watching. This is evident when we recall the brutal treachery with which this nation entered the war, not forgetting that at the very moment Pearl Harbor was attacked her ambassadors sat at the peace table "toying" with the designs for peace. Japan may have surrendered, her people may bear the marks of war, but her spirit is still unflinching and confident.

As to our allies, England evolved from the war with a tremendous "lend-lease" debt, thus following in the same footsteps as she did in World War I. We are urged to have goodwill toward the Soviet Union, primarily because she is potentially the Greatest of all Powers. At the moment the stand our other allies are going to take can't as yet be determined.

Every day thousands of service men and women are returning from abroad. What is America planning for their future? In her strivings to establish permanent peace will she remember the things for which these boys, representing all races, creeds, and colors, fought and died?

Will she remember that the true road to peace is paved with actions rather than sentiment, and that before she can set herself up as an example of true democracy, there must be peace in her own land among all races and creeds of her own people.

If America and the rest of the world in planning the world of tomorrow will only remember that "all men are born free and equal" we can go from here to that idealism of true and lasting peace.

The Inquiring Reporter

This year more than ever we will be faced with various post-war problems. We, as Bennett students must become "world conscious". The forming of a N. A. A. C. P. Organization on our campus would help us toward this common goal. It is up to everyone of us to begin now in building a strong foundation for our future world.

Question:

Are you in favor of seeing a N. A. A. C. P. organization formed on Bennett's campus?

Answers:

The N. A. A. C. P. should be a necessary and active organization on every Negro College campus. College students will be the future leaders of our race, and since the N. A. A. C. P. deals with Negroes and their problems, the students should have a clear understanding of the various problems being faced now so they will be able to help solve wisely the future problems that will undoubtedly come up.

—EDITH IKE '46

Yes, we should organize a N. A. A. C. P. on our campus. Bennett strives to prepare each young lady to take her place in some community. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is a worthy organization, whose functions touch each member of the Negro race daily. As young Negro women, we should begin early in this vital work.

—ORIAL ANNE BANKS '46

"If it's for the best it's found at Bennett," and the organizing of an N. A. A. C. P. chapter on our campus would be emphasizing the preceding statement. It would be one step forward in our effort of seeking solutions for our racial problems. Many are facing us at the present, such as "the Negro youth in the post war world," including treatment of education, labor and income, transportation conditions, and democracy for minority groups. Then we could become a member of "The Southern Intercollegiate Discussion Group" which has grown out of N. A. A. C. P. chapters on other college campuses in the South.

—IVERY OUTERBRIDGE, '47

I would definitely like to see a branch of the N. A. A. C. P. iniated on Bennett's campus not only because we, as the future generation, should have much interest in the race issue, but because I could learn what the association has done for my race, what it intends to do, and exactly how it functions. After graduation, I shall want for myself and my posterity equal political, economic, and social rights. If they are denied me, I'll know how to go about securing them for myself and others. The N. A. A. C. P. as an organization of action, would help me and others realize these ends.

—RUTH SYDNOR '48

The N. A. A. C. P. has always waged a militant attack against those people who have attempted to prevent the Negro from being accorded first rate citizenship as provided by the Constitution of the United States. An N. A. A. C. P. chapter on a college campus should arouse race consciousness to the extent that young people will go back into their respective communities and fight for their rights.

However, careful consideration should be given to such an organization before any action is taken. In many instances such an organization jeopardizes the financial support of an institution and does more immediate harm than good.

—ROBERT L. JACK.

Reader's Retreat

BLACK BOY - Richard Wright

Life in the little southern rural community was rather uninteresting for four-year-old Richard Wright. He was a restless little boy who constantly craved excitement and new experiences. And he was a curious little boy. He always wanted to know the "why and wherefore" of things.

Thus, when he set the living-room curtains on fire just to see them burn, it never occurred to him that he might set the house on fire. Fortunately, no one was killed in the fire, but over half of the house was destroyed. Richard's mother, literally, almost beat him to death, and he was very ill for many days.

This experience was the beginning of consciousness for Richard. Everything around him began to take on new life and meaning. He began to think.

Soon after, his family moved to Memphis, Tenn., Richard, his mother and his brother lived through bitter days of loneliness and hunger, for Richard's father deserted his family. Richard and his little brother had to care for themselves during the day while their mother worked. He learned to buy groceries and to fight. And he learned to roam the streets all day, and to loiter around saloons. At the age of six, he was a drunkard. However, after his mother put him in the custody of an old woman, he gradually ceased to drink.

Richard was a smart boy. His curiosity continued to increase and he began to think and ask questions about the life around him. He began to become race-conscious. He wondered why "white" people were different from "black" people and he wanted to know why a white man could beat a little colored boy for no apparent reason.

He was late starting to school, because there was not enough money to buy school clothes. However, by the time he did start, he had already taught himself to read and write, and to count. It was during this period of his life that he also learned the obscenities that unguided children pick up in the streets.

Richard's mother became ill, and he was forced to remain out of school. The family had no income and it was impossible to pay the rent for their dingy little flat, so Richard and his brother were put in an Orphanage. He hated it there. After an unsuccessful attempt to run away, he was taken out of the Orphanage. Then he, his mother and his brother left for Elaine, Ark., to live with his aunt and uncle. En route to their destination they stopped off in Jackson, Miss., to visit his grandmother and grandfather. Richard's stay there was an unhappy one, for he unintentionally, but constantly, bucked the strict religious atmosphere of his grandparents' home.

Richard liked his aunt's home, for he no longer had to go hungry. But terror struck the household when his uncle was killed by a group of whites. Again Richard and the rest of the family had to move. After living for some time with his grandparents, they moved to West Helena, Ark. For a while Richard lived a commonplace existence with the usual playing, fighting in the streets, and going to school. Then came days of hunger again, for his aunt left for the North with a professor that she was to marry, and his mother could not earn enough money to keep the family supplied with food.

His mother continued to fail in health, and Richard was finally sent to live with his uncle Clark, in Greenwood, Miss. His brother was sent to live with his aunt Maggie in Detroit. Richard disliked his new home, as no one seemed to understand him. He finally persuaded his uncle to let him return to his mother.

From his mother's suffering, young Richard developed a conception of life that was to remain with him always. At the age of 12 he looked upon life differently from other boys and girls his age. To him life was realistic, because he had only pain, suffering, poverty, hunger, restlessness, and uncertainty to look back upon.

There were many more days of hunger, household discord, and strict adherence to his grandparents' religious beliefs, all of which made Richard very unhappy. He was forced to enroll in a religious school. It was taught by his aunt Addie whom he hated with such intensity that twice he attempted to kill her with a butcher-knife.

As an escape from his unhappy home situation Richard began to make up stories and write them down on paper. He left the religious school he had been attending and enrolled in the public school, where he was put in the sixth grade. He got a job and began to work, much against the wishes of his very religious grandmother.

Every day, more and more, Richard began to hate and fear white people. He began to realize that living in the South as a Negro was hard and cold.

When he was in the eighth grade he had his first story published. He dreamed of going north and writing books. People ridiculed him because of his ambitions. Yet he continued to cram into his brain all the knowledge he could acquire. At the age of 16 he graduated from the eighth grade.

After graduation Richard was again faced with the problem of finding a job. White people did not like to have him around, for they thought he was too ambitious, too observing, and too smart for a Negro. After holding a couple of jobs as clerk and janitor in small shops, he got a job as janitor and apprentice with an optical company. His boss was a liberal man from Illinois, but the men with whom he worked were Southern whites. They soon forced him to leave his job.

Richard became more bitter, disillusioned and discouraged. The experience stripped him of all self-pride, of all belief in common decency. He resolved to try another job until he could earn enough money to go north. He worked first in a drug store, next in a hotel, and then in a theater. He saved every penny he could spare. He even stole money at the theater. When he had saved enough to start him on his way, he kissed his mother good-bye and started for the city of Memphis, his first stop on his journey north.

In Memphis Richard took lodgings on Beale street. He got a job as errand boy and janitor at an optical company. While working there he took many insults from the whites who worked around him. But he laughed the insults off, for he was finally learning how to live in the "white man's" South. He was learning to calculate his chances for life in the South as a Negro, rather clearly.

Richard continued to read, and his knowledge of books began to include those by great modern writers of the world. From his reading he began to grow in thought as well as knowledge.

His mother and brother came to live with him and the three set up house-keeping. After his brother found a job, they made plans for going north. The accidental visit of Richard's aunt Maggie, who had been deserted by her husband, completed their plans. Richard left his job cleanly and smoothly. He and his aunt went to Chicago to prepare

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