

Editorials

Belk Not The Man

The race is on, and the mayor's office is up for grabs in Charlotte. There are, it seems to us, three serious candidates for the office. Serious, that is, as threats. And it's a tossup as to who'll be behind the big desk when all the votes are counted. Right now, it looks like Mr. John Belk is the man to bet on. He has most of the "big time" politicians and moneyed industrialists behind them. This large (by smoke-filled room standards) group of "concerned citizens" has met with Mr. Belk, according to a recent CHARLOTTE OBSERVER article, several times at NNCB and the Charlotte City Club to invite Belk to announce his candidacy. His entrance into the race has chased Mayor pro-tem Jim Whittington, the people's candidate, back to the City Council and caused pessimistic looks to appear on the faces of Gibson Smith's backers.

How could this one man form such an immovable barrier in the way of other candidates? What is it about him that strikes fear into local politicians? Simple - money. Belk is (if you'll pardon the vulgarism) rich. He's got more money than he knows what to do with. He and his family nearly own Charlotte. Now he's out to make it official. The group of area businessmen who approached Belk justified their move with financial good sense. They say that they were looking for a candidate who would be heard by financiers and big businessmen around meeting tables up north. The fact that Belk was the fourth influential character that they approached is not insignificant. The same proposition was, and admittedly so, offered to several others first. Does this say something about Belk's backers? Could they be seeking a figurehead, an image rather than a mayor? Could be.

And, if Belk is elected, what are the consequences for the people of Charlotte? While he is sitting at a table conference somewhere up north, luring business and industry to the Queen City, children will starve and teens will shoot it out in the streets. No, Belk is not the man for the position. We must not allow the mayor's office to be rented for two years. Let's have an election, not an auction!

Black Men Search for their Identity

Now we have a black studies program or at least the beginning of one, and that's good. It does not matter whether it came about as the product of a long and tedious search or as a reply to a demand. The fact is that it is here, and we must now make the most of it.

The question of "why a black history course" has often been heard on campus lately. Some have even gone so far as to assert that the blacks will be disappointed when they find out where and who they came from. We don't think so. All men need some sort of roots in the past to cling to, some type of identification in this impersonal world of today. The average black man of ten years ago knew no more about his history than who his mother was. This is changing. The black community is responding to a rapidly progressing world which would sink us all in mechanistic obscurity if we do not fight back. The black man on campus is searching for his identity at least as hard as the white man. He must search harder, because the material is not readily available. Only recently have black historians in America begun to chronicle the events of the past that have bound them together as a solid ethnic group. But there has always been an African history. The slated view of the primitive black man that has been furthered by the mass media has come to light as the inaccurate and untruthful misrepresentation that it is. George Washington Carver and Willie Mays are NOT the source of this newly awakened pride that black men are beginning to share. They are going to back to the ancient civilizations of Africa that were as sophisticated as the Greek culture of the fifth century BC. Have you ever thought seriously about Carthage, the greatest threat to the Roman Empire at its height? This is what the blacks at UNC-C are seeking to know. It's a great idea. Would that the whites of America could stop trying to cheat and outfox each other long enough to follow this example and look for a meaningful heritage. What good are flags and anthems when they have lost their meaning?

Oops!

THE JOURNAL wishes to retract an error that appeared in an article in last week's edition. Miss Barbara Smith's article concerning the literary magazine referred to a photographic essay entitled "Nude Study." The by-line to the study included the name of Phillip Morgan. Mr. Morgan reports that he took none of the pictures on that page. We apologize for taking for granted that the magazine was accurate in its by-lines. We'll check next time.

The Monster Within Us

By Walt Sherrill

Last week, the Journal carried a satire about Racism—one aimed, not inappropriately, at racism on our campus. And it wasn't by accident that the satire indulged in the very pettiness it chose to ridicule. In that satire I took the liberty to paraphrasing many of the remarks I've heard these last few weeks and added to them several comments of my own about what must be considered a deplorable situation. But the satire told only half of the story.

Its easy to exaggerate response to an article, particularly to one read by, at most, a tenth of the Student Body; but it isn't quite so easy to exaggerate the comments it fostered or to misinterpret their meanings. The Journal staff, after first reading the satire, said in effect, "...well, you'll certainly find out who the bigots are..." And they were right—with a vengeance.

There have been a number of studies conducted by both private and governmental organizations which cite as the major continuing cause of racial unrest, white racism. I, along with many others,

We Have Lost Sight

By Tim Britton

Mr. Politician, take heed. You are directing our society out of sight. Your petty inequities, your grandiose blunders, your constant ability to bend us the reed under pressure from powerful interest; these are your crimes. You have been charged with guiding the destiny of all of the people, to project into the future, to determine the most appropriate plan of action, considering the welfare of the masses.

You have violated this trust. Billions of dollars are being poured into the unpopular war in Vietnam. Everyday, the press brings us additional news of a monstrous, billion dollar blunder by the military. How many millions of dollars went down the drain on the TFX program Mr. Politician, and how did you vote on the military appropriation? What are your views on the thin-line anti-ballistics missile defense? Who is it defending again? It is agreed that it won't stop sophisticated Russian missiles, and the Red Chinese haven't the technology to send up a sophisticated kite. Why aren't those same monies being re-channeled into help for the poor, or aid to education? We know why, Mr. Politician. Aircraft industry lobbyists pay the tab for your club membership, and finance Caribbean cruises. The poor and the students are too busy learning or grovelling for food to concern themselves with pressure tactics.

If you really are concerned about student rioting on campuses; if you really want to know why the poor burn down their rat-infested ghettos, take a look at your voting record. We have, and we will continue to do so, as long as you continue to be insensitive to the welfare of the masses. Our destiny is in your hands. Handle it with care. There is a growing number of those who would take it back.

The Publications Board will meet today at 11:30 in Dr. Cone's conference room. The major topic for the meeting will again be the budget for '70. The selection of editors for the annual and the newspaper and the presentation of the Boards writing award will also be discussed.

have been among those who have dismissed such charges as too simplistic. After last week's satire and the response it received, I find that I might, perhaps, reevaluate my thoughts.

Racism is a topic I've discussed with a number of foreign students on our campus over the past few semesters, most recently just last week. Its a topic they feel ill-prepared to talk about; they are our guests and criticism is a unsatisfactory way to show appreciation for many favors extended. Yet a few spoke with a candor that must be admired when they said, "...well, yes—perhaps America IS a racist nation." Such a remark, however, is not quite the wholesale condemnation it might seem, for racism has a different value for many of them; often they have similar problems in their own countries, and their analyses or understanding of the problem varies with their experiences. Most of them, on the other hand, are unsparing in their praise of American generosity and hospitality, but our problem is racism. Here.

Ben Chavis has accused the Administration of Racist policy, and many of us have considered this charge unjustified. Having reconsidered many of my thoughts, I still think this criticism unfounded; but I also think that Ben missed his chance when he failed to direct his criticism where it was due—at the Student Body, at You and I. Perhaps this is because people find it easier to tilt at the windmill of bureaucracy than at the real dragons in the world.

Not all students on this campus are openly bigoted, and even fewer are consciously so. Quite a few are too concerned with making a living or supporting a family to put enough time and emotion into relationships to be bigoted. Still others are prejudiced and aware of it. Many of us number ourselves in this group, and we're not proud of our limitations. But there are still others who say little and wait for an opportunity to speak. Demonstrations like that held here on campus several weeks ago, or even satires, give them all—Black and White—voice.

Not all students on this campus are racist. But there is a significant number of people who react unthinkingly to the color of a person's skin rather than to the form of his action. And as anyone who has watched a riot or demonstrations should know, some groups can have significance far out of proportion to their actual strength.

Few people seem to realize the sacrifices required to those who, like Ben Chavis, make sustained efforts to do what they think they must; and it is not my aim here to be an apologist for them. But don't doubt that they are sincere, or that they think they are as

right as you in what they are doing.

Black power, as Carmichael spoke of it, is meant to serve as the catalyst upon which can be built pride and self-awareness. And in so far as it has served this end, Black power has been good. But some of the side-effects of Black power have served other functions, functions neither intended nor foreseen. Among them we find that Black power serves as a focus for white resentment, an emotion too easily explained away as "backlash". Its not backlash at all, for its been with us for years. We might call it "Red-neck power."

There are probably times when Black activists find themselves committed to courses of action they don't want to follow—yet must. Black power and other movements like it seem prone to this unhappy accident. Yet this seems as much a function of the environment in which the movement exists as of the movement itself. But if they, the activists, find things getting a little out of hand now, let them wait. Let them wait until "Red-neck power" becomes respectable, as it surely will if violence and force become acceptable methods of remedying grievances. The streets will run with blood and it won't be White or Black—just red. Indeed, when the least admirable emotions on both sides of the confrontation are unleashed, each will feed upon the other until they both die, bloated, stomachs ruptured, from self-abuse.

I wrote a satire because I was human, because I was disgusted, because I saw a way to strike back at something that upset me. And that, perhaps, is an all too-human reaction. But I also wrote a satire because I wanted to see how it would be received: I fanned a spark to see if it would burn, and it did. I hope that the fuel supply is limited. Prejudice is a very subtle force on our campus.

There are many racists on this campus; they are good people, admirable people, they are both black and white, and they are our friends. They are also people unaware of their own thoughts until they find themselves provoked by situations and events. What is to be done?

We can't, in any event, rely upon Reason or sanity—for that is not the stuff which race relations are made. But reactions are what its all about, and gut reactions aren't easily controlled. So what does that leave? You tell me. I'm running out of ideas, and perhaps even hope...

(In last week's satire I worded one phrase so ambiguously as to offend, unintentionally and without cause, a person for whom I have a great deal of respect. That phrase was meant to emphasize the violence inherent in an ideology and not as a personal attack. My apologies.)

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