

Voice of Reason

S. Scott Spagnola
Staff Writer

Two weeks ago, a furor was raised on the campus of UNCG over a letter that was printed in the school newspaper, *The Carolinian*. The controversial letter was highly critical of Martin Luther King, Jr., and essentially denounced the decision to make Dr. King's birthday a holiday.

Shortly after the publication of the letter, the alleged author, Brian Nance, received threats over the phone. The numerous threats became so troubling that the freshman student had to be moved off campus for his own safety.

As events became clearer, it was discovered that Nance was not the author at all. In essence, there was a Lisa Davis element to the whole thing. Someone had submitted the highly critical letter and signed Brian Nance's name to it. For several days, the tension on the campus of UNCG was rather tense, and *The Carolinian* rushed to put out disclaimers on the letter. Campus security went into high gear to find the real author, who was discovered to be an old nemesis of Nance's. Case closed. Or is it?

There is one disturbing element about the entire episode that has gone essentially unquestioned. *Greensboro News & Record* columnist David DeBuisson brought the matter to light in his Sunday column: suppose Nance had written the letter. The university's response to the threats against him went virtually unnoticed.

Why wasn't there an uproar against the threats against Nance? Why hasn't the university conducted an investigation into the source of the threats against Nance?

It is a question of that old double



Photo by Mark Lewinter

Spagnola

standard of political correctness. Because the views expressed in the letter were unpopular, there seems to have been an element of justification for the threats against Nance. The message is clear: it's okay to speak your mind, as long as what you say is politically correct. To date, the real author of the letter is rightfully being punished for his acts, but those who issued threats against Nance for supposedly expressing an unpopular viewpoint remain untouched. This demonstrates once again the hypocrisy of the Left. The only protected form of speech is liberal speech, or so it seems.

In defense of the Left, or at least the Guilford Left, I will say that Guilford College is extremely fair in allowing voices of dissent to express their opinions. Next to UNC-Chapel Hill, Guilford is the most Left-leaning school in North Carolina, and the respect for dissenting viewpoints is evidenced by the existence of this column.

Recently, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakahn spoke at the moderately conservative campus of Wake Forest University. Universities across the United States sponsor speakers such as Farrakahn. His presence at Wake Forest provides an interesting contrast to the UNCG case. Farrakahn has re-

cently been in the news because of the anti-Semitic comments of his top deputy. Farrakahn himself is well known for his anti-white, anti-Jew statements. He is a black racist. It seems that it is okay for Farrakahn to make openly racist comment and escape criticism, but when anti-King remarks are made, suddenly there are threats of bodily harm that are essentially ignored.

The anti-King remarks in the "Nance" letter were not racist, but instead were misguided criticism of the late civil-rights leader. For the record, I do not support those criticisms of Dr. King. Imagine the uproar that would occur if UNCG or Wake Forest invited white racist David Duke to speak on campus. There would be protest after protest. Even the arrival of Jesse Helms would be enough to stir much tension, although Helms has never made a racist comment.

This is the most disturbing trend of the political correctness double-standard. When racists like Farrakahn speak, people are expected to "understand" his message. When racists like Duke speak, people are expected to be outraged. Never mind the fact that both men preach words of hate, and are counterproductive and destructive to better race relations.

One thing that cannot be ignored is King's message. I don't think that King would approve of Minister Farrakahn's divisive rhetoric, nor would he approve of the persecution of dissenters. After all, King himself was a dissenter. When society excuses certain forms of bigoted speech, but persecutes others, a climate of resentment and mistrust is created. Farrakahn has the right to preach his message without recourse, so too should those who dissent from the typical liberal orthodoxy.

Letters to the Editor...

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

To the editor, but not really...

In reference to Eric Parisi's letter of last week, in which he accused me of ducking his challenge to debate, let me clear up matters for the record.

First, I did receive a letter from Mr. Parisi in my mail slot in December. Since I do not live on campus, I rarely check my mailbox. The reasons for my failure to respond are as follows: (1) As stated above, I rarely check my mail slot. By the time I got Mr. Parisi's letter, it was in the midst of exams with only two days left in the semester. Contacting Mr. Parisi would not be feasible. (2) Mr. Parisi never gave any specific issues or issues that he wanted to debate. (3) Mr. Parisi never suggested any forum or guidelines for a debate. These are the reasons that I never accepted his challenge. Just in case anyone thinks that these are lame excuses, let me give you a couple of points to ponder refuting Mr. Parisi's claim that I might not be "brave" enough or lack the courage of my convictions to debate him. In high school, I debated policy at competition tournaments across the United States. I was ranked among the top debaters in North Carolina my senior year, and I placed second in the National Forensics Institute Policy Debate Tournament at American University in 1987. Furthermore, I have many liberal friends across the state of North Carolina that are involved in the North Carolina Student Legislature (an organiza-

tion I encourage every Guilford student to join); that would certainly disagree with the premise that I lack the courage to debate anyone. I don't say this to blow my own horn, but instead I write this to make it perfectly clear that I am not ducking Mr. Parisi or anyone else. I welcome his invitation if a forum can be established. I invite Guilforum, WQFS, the Student Union or anyone else to contact me and Mr. Parisi to sponsor such an event. All I ask is that Mr. Parisi come forth with the issues he wants to debate. It's all in his hands. Everyone knows where I stand, and I welcome the opportunity to discredit whatever Left-wing theory he wishes to defend. Furthermore, I am more than willing to explain and defend any position that I have taken on any issue.

There is one final remark that I must make concerning Mr. Parisi's letter. He quoted me as challenging "some brave fool" to a debate. I did not make such a statement. What I did say was "some brave soul." I am not surprised by this revision of what I really said. After all, the Left has been trying to rewrite the Reagan years; why should I be immune from similar distortion of the facts? It is typical of the Left to try and paint conservatives in a bad light, (in this example, condescending), but the truth is right there on page four of the Dec. 3 issue of *The Guilfordian*.

I'm sure much of the inferences

See LETTERS page 7

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