

# Editorial: Commentary

What is the favorite American pastime? We must certainly and safely say it is not baseball. No, it must be the fine, admirable art of argumentation. Nothing is gained by it, but disputations do pass the time.

The problems that exist in discussions between pacifists and bayonet-rattlers, students and administrators, and parents and offspring are obvious. Permit us, in the noble tradition of didactics, to name and explain them.

Probably the first and largest difficulty in intelligible, not necessarily intelligent communication, is inflexibility of position. It produces the posture defined so ably by Ambrose Bierce, i.e. "positive-mistaken at the top of one's voice."

As a result, neither person is willing to listen to the other without the a priori assumption that his opposite has nothing worthwhile to say. When one is so rigidly restricted to a position, he is unwilling to concede anything to another, different point of view.

Out of inflexibility grows a second evil, intolerance. What so delights a person as the smug conviction that he need have no forbearance for the specimen of ignorance he is talking to. Naturally, when one's beliefs are greatly ossified, they are untouchable by new approaches to the same subject.

Consequently, one is able to remain opaque against the hazard of any new light. Narrow-mindedness causes an incapacity for change, even though mutability is the natural nature of man. Witness the recent mission of Apollo 8. Further investigation into space may produce more living space for residents of our rapidly crowding planet. Still, such exploration is considered a wast by those bruised consciences who point to all the evil in evidence on this sphere.

The intelligentsia of the late fifteenth century believed the world was round. Only the uneducated and foolish pictured it as flat. Ferdinand and Isabella may have been more motivated by the promise of wealth than reason. But, poor motive sometimes produce excellent results. The fact is there two rulers did heed the voices of the learned. It is absurdly idealistic to maintain everyone has something of value to relate to us. If it please Eric Hoffer, let's give equal time to the average man. A democratic society, ipso facto, should still pay heed to its "\_\_\_ damned intellectuals." Isn't that only fair, Mr. Hoffer?

## Addendum

"Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious; both are disappointed."  
Oscar Wilde

I think that perhaps it is time someone asked the Honor Court how it justifies its inconsistency concerning the problem of narcotics on our campus. I fear that I might be a little old fashioned, but I cannot understand how anyone can suspend a student for drinking a beer and turn right around and merely spank the hand of a student using narcotics. "They" say it's bad for the reputation of the school to drink beer. "They" say that a person using narcotics needs "therapeutic" help so "they" take it upon themselves to send them to a psychiatrist. Well good!! I know "they" feel better. "They" have just legalized narcotics.

I fail to see any justification in such a decision. I can see me going home and telling my parents I was suspended for drinking a beer; yet, anyone who wanted to throw a cheap drunk could grab a little grass or pop a pill, claim to see God, and get off with just a little brown on his nose.

When I first brought up this issue, I was told to keep my mouth shut because I didn't know the facts. I need to know only one fact. Narcotics existed on this campus and the Honor Court decisions in this matter showed unjustifiable inconsistency when compared to rulings on drinking violations.

It strikes me as rather ironical that Montreat, reputed to be rather backwards, holds true to form and again manages to do everything backwards. Almost everywhere else beer is allowed and possession of narcotics results in immediate expulsion. Good ol' Montreat expels you for consuming beer and feels sorry for you if you indulge in narcotics, which, I might add, is a federal offense.

Thank you,  
Tommy West

By ROGER RAPOPORT  
College Press Service

DETROIT, Michigan--Ozell Bonds walked into Room 2 of the Wayne State University Education Building looking much like any other student. But instead of heading for a seat, he strode up to the podium and put down his lecture notes. Dressed in levis, turtleneck, socks and tennis shoes, all black, he looked down through his sunglasses at a classroom full of education school professors - men and women more than twice his age.

Ozell's lecture was one of several being offered by members of the Wayne Association of Black Students in a course on "Black Social Thought" for Education faculty members. It is all part of a burgeoning, yet peaceful, black movement on this campus just a few blocks from the 12th Street ghetto where the 1967 Detroit riots began.

Black students at Wayne are busy mapping a new black college that will offer a full four-year curriculum as well as courses for students and faculty from other departments.

The Wayne developments, which are moving ahead with moral and financial support from the campus administration, have turned many conventional educational concepts inside out. Perhaps most important is the idea that students have as much, if not more, to contribute to the educational process than teachers. Not only can students skillfully organize new curriculum by themselves - they can also teach it impressively.

Lonnie Davis, head of the ABS at Wayne, points out that the syllabus for the "Black Social Thought" course offered a reading list of no less than 45 books (from Baldwin to DuBois).

Some faculty were so astounded by the reading list, they almost dropped the course.

Graduate student Davis complains that "It's obvious to us that most of the teachers taking our course aren't reading all their assignments. Many of them come to class unprepared."

Still, they have had stimulating two-hour weekly sessions on topics like "Who is the Black Man," "Who is the White Man to Us," "Black Music," and "Third World Revolution." A discussion of "White Woman, Black Man" was so provocative that it was carried over to a second session.

In one of Ozell's recent lectures, he offered a terse 25-minute lecture on the relationship of slavery to present-day conditions in the South.

"The black man served in the house during slavery so he had frequent personal contact with whites. That's part of why the southerner today can associate freely with the black as long as he stays in his place."

After the lecture ended, one teacher launched into a lengthy argument with Ozell about the use of violence in the present-day civil rights struggle:

"I see all your aggression and racism as defensive violence. I see it as an assertion of your humanity, pushing off the oppressor instead of using a direct hit. But the problem with using all these threats is that you are scaring away many whites who might otherwise rally to your side."

Ozell replied: "I come here to attack you verbally with words - to call you racist honkies. People who react with fear are too stupid to see the truth because if we were going to hurt you we would come with guns. Our

function is to make the whites move into action to join with us to help civilize a barbaric country."

In the end the teacher pleaded Uncle: "It's really the white man's job to change white racist attitudes - not the black's."

The ABS is currently planning to open its Black College in September. The group has already won \$34,000 from the Catholic Church and is working on the Ford foundation for an additional grant. "We hope to bring in top black teachers from around the country to help staff our college," says Lonnie Peaks, who is studying for a masters degree in Community Organization.

A four-year program will let students work toward a degree in black studies. "This make sense--after all, Wayne is really our campus. It was built right out of the ghetto," says Peaks.

Students from other departments will be encouraged to enroll in Black College courses. Already the economics, social work, and education faculty have tentatively agreed to push the black courses. "We think courses on black culture will be a real asset to future teachers working in the ghetto," says Peaks.

So far the administration has been cooperative in working out class space for the new school: "Whenever they balk at one of our proposals," says Peaks, "We just say, 'Now look, you guys just had a riot here and none of us wants a new one, do we?'"