EDITORIALS

QUESTIONS OF POLICY

(Editor's Note)

Last week on this page there was begunn discussion of the state's care of its Negro mentally diseased and handicapped. Other aspects of the same situation are commented on this week.

It will be interesting to see what new ingenuity Talmadge and his friends will pull out of the hat to check the black boc.

Considering the "separate but equal" doctrine, an outside observer might well conclude on the basis of the relative institutional facilities for the two races, that the Negro race in North Carolina is a lot saner and a lot less mentally defective than the white race.

Accompanying the article is a picture of a staff conference at the Goldsboro hospital. All the faces in the picture are white. This would indicate that under the system which calls for separate institutions for Negroes and whites, all the important positions in this Negro institution are filled by white persons. From the superintendent down to the case worker the personnel is white.

The interesting article would indicate that this staff is serious, conscientious and devoted. It is clear that the members are overworked. But why, in a Negro institution should there not be some Negro professionals on the staff? There was a time when this question might have been countered by the allegation that there were no competently trained colored persons to fill such positions; but certainly no one could argue successfully that qualified Negroes could not be found for at least some of them today.

Finally, the article reports that the population of the Goldsboro institution is 2,771, as big as that of a good sized town. It goes into detail at the same time concerning the plan of individualized treatment which the staff is trying to carry out with the patients. Yet the staff "consists of six medical doctors, a psychologist, a social service worker and their assistants." (Number of assistants not specified.)

There have been criticisms of the inadequate care and curative treatment given the patients in North Carolina's mental disease hospitals in general. The writer does not know how the size of the Goldsboro staff compares with that of the other institutions in the state, but in view of the other facts one knows, it is a very sound conjecture that the Negro institution is not better off in this respect than the others. But be that as it may it is obvious that a staff so small cannot handle the highly specialized and technical care and curative treatment of nearly 3,000 persons, representing every known type of mental disease and mental deficiency.

When the state authorities, goaded by criticism and aroused by scandal, examine the staff of affairs in our mental institutions they will make high-sounding statements about the needs of "all our institutions for the unfortnate." But will they also consider the gap that exists already beween the institutions for white and the institutions for "our cullud people"? And will they examine all phases of such discrimination, including that of staff personnel on the higher levels?

FACING FACTS

The eminent historian, Henry Steele Commager, in an address before the United Church's Institute of Religion, brought into this area a fresh and a refreshing slant on the civil rights issue. A disinterested student of human affairs, unhampered by consideration of the possible local reaction against him because of the frank statement of his views, Dr. Commager said:

The question of the gradual institution of reforms concerning civil rights as opposed to immediate action is largely artificial. There is no danger that we will create Utopia overnight. We may be sure that whatever will be done will be done gradually."

We take this to mean that, the natural inertia of the human mind and of human society being what it is, the time to initiate a reform is when the need is evident for it, since at best it will take years to achieve in actuality what appears to be revolutionary on the surface of it.

One need only to think of the fact that the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments are all more than 75 years old, to realize how sound Dr. Commager's observation was. One need only to reflect on the three-quarter-century struggle of the Negro for the ballot a struggle not yet over, in spite of the ratification three quarters of a century ago of the 15th amendment. "We may be sure," he said, "that whatever is done will be done gradually." All too sure.

There is hardly a social reform one can think of which would ever have been brought about if it had been necessary to wait until even all the good and intelligent people were sure that the time was ripe. There was honest opposition to suffrage for women right down to the very day it finally became a fact throughout the United States, and there are still those, including women, who think it was a mistake to extend the ballot to females.

Another point clearly expounded by Dr. Commager was the fallacy in the overemphasis of the distinction between national and local in the matter of civil rights.

In the compact modern world, as instance after instance demonstrates, wrong cannot be localized in its effects. There is plenty of room for states and localities to work on their "peculiar" problems, but it is a mistake to characterize many of these problems as local either in their manifestation or in their effects.

Furthermore, the states have insisted that they be allowed to handle their own problems ,when, as Dr. Commager points out and as is pretty obvious anyway, they too often have wanted to be left alone to do nothing at all about them. It has been noted in these columns that it is difficult to find any instance in which a southern state has by its legislative action done anything to lessen discrimination. On the other hand their statute books show many examples of laws whose effect is to produce discrimination.

An interesting and important local sidelight on Dr. Commager's address was the statement made at the meeting by Prof. Joseph D. Clarke, who presided. After referring to the recent declaration of Governor Kerr Scott to the effect that Negroes should have representation on state boards he added that as a member of Raleigh's school board he would like to see a Negro on that board "to represent the one-third of Raleigh's school children who are Negroes."

"SHINING SYMBOL"

A bill to unmask the Ku Klux Klan was recently defeated in the House of Representatives of the state of Georgia. That Georgia is not a total loss is indicated however ,by the fact that it was only after "three hours of fiery debate," as the United Press reported it, that the vote to reconsider the unmasking measure was finally taken and the reconsideration motion lost.

According to U. P., the Klan's right in Georgia to remain hooded was won by impassioned oratory of one Rep. Julian Bennett, who in the course of his speech described the Klan as "a shining symbol of the Southern way of life."

Such a characterization of the Ku Klux Klan in the Year of our Lord 1949 is a sad and depressing thing; sadder and more depressing is the acceptance of that characterization by the great majority in a legislative body of one of the United States at this late date. But part of the shame may be charged against the thousands of respectable southerners who in the past have romanticized and glamorized the old Klan of post-Civil War days. They established a pattern which has outlasted them. Lawlessness was made noble, and intimidation of the weak and helpless was glamorized.

What happened in Georgia a few days ago them cannot be charged exclusively against the ignorance and prejudice of today. The foundation for it was laid long ago by men and women whose opportunities and advantages should have made them know better.

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LETS START AT HOME.

Second Thoughts

BY C. D. HALLIBURTON

The publishers and readers of this area have been highly alert on the Mallard affair. Many of these prominent public figures were really vocal, and will be again, in favor of state and local handling of legislation and law enforcement and against outside interference, especially Federal interference through legislation. One is sometimes at a loss to explain to oneself how intelligent and honest men can rise in the halls of Congress and on platforms everywhere or take editorial pen in hand, in defense of the rights of the state and the local community, and at the same time fail to condemn indeed and shameful miscarriages of justice which occur under a system of state and local control. The thing so often seems to be a complete perversion — a defending of the wrong and a condemning of the right.

There are a few who couple with their advocacy of state and local control the idea of state and local obligation to exercise that control in the direction of impartial justice and complete equity. But there are others, and good men, too, who play only the first part of the tune and never get to the second part. Why are not some voices raised against the dismal failure Georgia has made in handling the Mallard affair? Georgia and the courts and the locality within Georgia in which the whole sorry and sordid thing took place? They are silent. But let civil rights legislation be broached in Congress. Then the whole lot of them, senators, congressmen, state and local officers, editors — will be out in full cry against "outside interference." Many of them will be putting out the old canards, claiming that the Negro is better treated in the South than anywhere in the world, proclaiming that the southern Negro is perfectly happy and contented until some agitating scum from the North, or some stooge, white but misguided white man from the North, or some stooge white or black, under the domination of Moscow, begins to stir up things. And all the rest of the shopworn bag of ideas and statements, from social equality down, to point out that the South is giving the Negro better schools.

As we say, we have read little or nothing concerning the case of the Mallard orgie but Time magazine, that often acutely observing reporter and accurate mirror of the American scene, printed in its issue of January 24 a news story which seemed to be a reversal of policy. It began by giving a starkly plain and illuminating account of the trial of one of the alleged lynchers. After the acquittal of the first one of the five indicted for the crime and the charges against him dismissed:

Here are a few excerpts from the Time account which ought to be required reading for all Americans and especially prospective administrators and states rights editorialists and orators. There is a possibly unintended significance in the fact that Time misfiled the story in the section supposed "National Affairs."

By last week Amy Mallard was probably as unpopular in Toombs County, Ga., as her husband had been before he was lynched. The lynching caused a lot of trouble and everyone thought that was Amy's fault. (Mallard had been a real uppity nigger — some said he even wanted to be called mister — and kept a Toombs County thought he had gotten just what he deserved.

But Amy Mallard was not an awful bus. A farm named Joseph Goldwasser, who owns a department store in a Negro district in Cleveland, offered to help her. Between them and some other folks they got two Toombs County white men indicted for murder. But last week at the trial [illegible] they found not that it was easy to get away with things like that in Georgia.

It was a real unruly trial.

The story goes on with some of the finer details of the conduct of the trial, showing that from beginning to end it was only a mockery and was never intended to be anything else.

The whole Time account should be wholly read, and we wish that its reading by those classes of persons above mentioned were assured.

IN THIS OUR DAY

BY C. A. CHICK, Sr.

A TRIP ON A BUS

On January 14 the president of the North Carolina Teachers Association called a meeting in Charlotte of the Executive Board, Section Chairmen, and others to consider the annual program for the Association. Being chairman of the general section I attended the meeting. I made the round-trip from Fayetteville by bus.

My experience on the trip was of course, as former trips, just what I expected — Negroes crowded in the rear of the bus like sardines in a can. But as disgusting and as distasteful as it is to be forced to ride under such conditions, they experiences Negroes are forced to undergo in the waiting rooms is more humiliating and abominable.

That part of the bus station set apart for Negroes generally is large enough to accommodate about half dozen people; they are seldom, indeed if ever, clean; they are cold in the winter, and, by and large the Negro waiting room serves as a storage room for empty soft drink bottle, baggage, etc. With but few exceptions, only one person at a time can go into the rest room. In one station the rest rooms are so arranged that the door opens directly into the waiting room. Under such conditions, of course, there can be no privacy. In another station the door to the men's rest room opens directly in front of the "hole in the wall" of the kitchen through which Negroes may secure drinks and sandwiches. And, of course, a newspaper stand and a public telephone are almost out of the question in that part of the station reserved for Negroes.

About all one sees in the Negro waiting room are a pop corn machine and a juke box. The conditions under which Negroes may secure food are humiliating to the nth degree. A small hole in the wall at the rear of the kitchen is generally reserved for Negro passengers.

I thoroughly believe that it is impossible for a law-abiding and self-respecting Negro to travel by public buses in the Southern part of the United States without having, so to speak, the very life crushed out of his soul. A Negro cannot travel by bus without losing some of his hope for a better day; he cannot help from losing a portion of his enthusiasm, loyalty, and patriotism for most things he may have held so dear before such a humiliating experience. He cannot suffer such an unfair treatment and remain as productive as he was before, because no one can do his best, no one can possess a zest for life who feels that he is not appreciated by society. And no one can suffer the things Negroes suffer (whether traveling by bus or train, but especially by bus) in the South and still believe that they are appreciated by a society which enforces them to suffer such insults.

It was reported that during World War II, when it was definite that Hitler would be defeated, a group of people were debating the question what should be done with him for being responsible for the War. A Negro in the group suggested that he be brought to the United States, cut his hair, paint him black and turn him loose. The Negro felt that that would be ample punishment to Hitler for all of his crime against humanity. When I hear of a white person having been found guilty for some crime, I quite often say, "Cut his hair, paint him black and give him a long free ride on a public bus in the Southern part of the United States. I am sincerely and thoroughly convinced that regardless of the nature of the crime this would be sufficient punishment.

HERE AND THERE

(BY ANP)

Negroes are becoming thoroughly incensed over rumors that the civil rights program in congress is to be compromised. Elks have planned a rousing rally on February 11th in Washington to lend all aid on Capitol Hill. Cell for action is underwritten by some of 21 prominent liberals in the country. Should be quite a conclave.

* * *

Over in VA, Joe Albright has made it very clear to all concerned that he is the arch-foe of any effort to by-pass the agency's "Circular 38," the non-discrimination in employment directive supplementing President Truman's executive order 9980. Big Joe and VA's Fair Employment officer, Jack Crowley, work together in very friendly fashion. Incidentally George Holland, VA liaison representative, and Albright's aide, sits on VA's Board of Review for FEP.

* * *

Lockburn Airbase will soon see the end of the segregated Air Force field, Pearson, AF to begin full integration of Negroes in all branches. Happy news it all. Joe Albright, who set a pattern of integration when he became the first Negro in AF history to deliver lectures to all white personnel back in 1944. (And wow's can that?)

* * *

And by the way, Air Force, does this mean that Col. Ben Davis is to be a brigadier general. (We hope?)

* * *

10,000 Negroes attended the inauguration of President Truman. And now that all that hoopla is over where do we go from here? That's up to us, junior, that's up to us. Amen!

* * *

Negro athletes attending track meet in Washington, sponsored by daily newspapers were jim crowed in hotels. (Lord, Lord, how long?)

* * *

God bless our entertainers! They are doing a grand job of entertaining in VA hospitals, and are contributing to enhancing racial relations in vets affairs. Score a big bullseye for the National Council of Negro Women for launching this project. (Nice work ladies.)

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY DEAN B. HANCOCK FOR ANP

A CONSPICUOUS HOUR

Even while the salmes are being sung Harry Truman is being sworn in as President of the U. S. The world looks on in stunned amazement. There are a thousand reasons why Truman should not be president. But there is only one, yes only one, why he should be, and that is, the nation found in him the expression of something that is close to its heart.

At heart the nation is righteously inclined and when Truman appeared on the scene last year as candidate for the presidency, he easily became the embodiment of a nation's righteous hopes. He spoke the language that satisfied the righteous ambitions of a great people. Truman dared to play an under-dog role in the great American drama and he dared to take the part of the under dog in his struggle with privileged and entrenched plutocracy. He dared to be a little David and arrayed himself against the great Goliath of a heavily financed republican party and he felled the giant and came off the lists, victor in one of the mightiest political struggles of history.

Truman won not because he was imposing of stature, not because he championed a popular cause, not because he was burdened with learned degrees; not because propitious circumstances where hurtling him towards the highest office this world affords, the presidency of the U. S., he won because he espoused an unpopular but righteous cause and believed in himself and his cause and the beneficence of a just God.

Here is a little man without a college degree, in an age and in a country where degrees are worshipped as so many gods towering in moral majesty. In other words in a country where degreeism has become a mania, an undegreed white man from Missouri rides the crest of a popularity almost without a parallel in this nation's history. It is true, Lincoln went from his rail splitting to the presidency; it is true that Booker T. Washington went from slave cabin to the Hall of Fame. But these two greats lived in a day when learning was not so worshipped as today.

They lived before our nation asked about the degrees first and character next, before diplomas, like wares over the trader's counter, were auctioned to the highest bidder, before degree worship had become a consuming passion to many millions. Truman in spite of his degreelessness has risen to one of the most commanding eminences of history. Nothing could be greater proof of our country's greatness than that it looked over men of high degrees and distinguished lineage and chose Harry Truman to be its president.

Truman is not learned, he is no sensation as an orator; he makes no claims to a blue-blooded antecedent. Truman is just a swell fellow and a people's man and as such he has brought to this nation one of its most conspicuous hours. Truman has redeemed the faith of millions of his fellowmen in the ultimate triumph of righteousness, a faith that is at times shaken to its foundations.

In being president of all the people no one group need expect all its hopes and dreams to materialize in short order. It is true he is the spokesman for the nation's liberal elements, but it must not be forgotten that his opposition is not dead. His road will be a rocky one and Truman needs the prayers of a nation. The Dixiecrats are lying in wait to ambush him. The old reactionaries are eagerly awaiting the hour when they can join the chant "Away With Him" "Crucify Him!"

Ravenous wolves of the jungle were never more hungry for the blood of their prey than a certain sector of the south is hungry for the utter destruction of Truman and Trumanism. If his program suffers a temporary set-back and does not work as 'planned,' Negroes must not grow too impatient — and too quickly. Truman has shown where his heart is; and we must not play into the hands of the Dixiecrats who are clamoring for his destruction.

Truman has proved himself the boldest knight ever to champion the cause of civil rights for all Negroes included. Truman's elevation to the presidency is one of the most irrefutable testimonials democracy will ever flaunt to the world. He makes possible a nation's conspicuous hour!

SENTENCE SERMON

The only Christ some individuals will see is what they see of Him in you and me.

Modern science, His features cannot trace; you and I are the only ones who can wear His face.

Then if we betray our trust, we make of Him a God of deceit and of lust.

He gives His followers the right of choice and deputized them to imitate His voice.

But false prophets and spiritual ventriloquists His kingdom betrays and to His purposes and progress His cause delays.

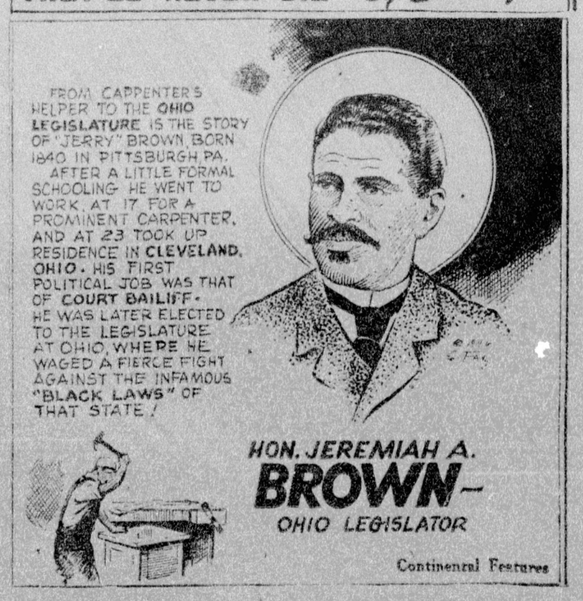
Jesus never used a smoke screen or engaged in bally-hoo, and these are two things He doesn't want His followers to do.

The more sincere we are in word and deed the greater is Christ's desire to fulfill our every need.

Fluff and feathers only detract from His Majesty; He prefers plain men and women of love and purity.

He can take the humblest soul and bring joy out of confusion when stormy billows roll.

Yea, Christ's kingdom does not depend on numbers, great forces now without Christ are making terrible blunders.

We are learning every day about men of experience, influence and training who are being bound by their own destructive fetters for leaving Christ out of their planning.

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