

The Franklin Press and The Highlands Maconian

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JULY 1, 1954

The Point Is...

Last winter the American government was pleading with the 23 American prisoners of war who had refused repatriation from North Korea to come home.

By implication, if not by unequivocal word, they were promised immunity from punishment for misdeeds they may have committed while held by the brain-washing Communists.

Two of them finally returned to the American side.

In May, one of them, Cpl. Edward Dickenson, Virginia farm boy, was courtmartialed and sentenced to 10 years at hard labor. He was charged with informing on prison camp comrades and currying favor with the Reds.

And last week the army announced that the other soldier who heeded our pleas and promises, Cpl. Claude Batchelor, Texas youth, will be courtmartialed for cooperation with the enemy. After holding him in custody for nearly five months, the army announced it has collected enough evidence to warrant a courtmartial.

Cpl. Batchelor will be tried, and no doubt convicted and sentenced. And no doubt the evidence, in a strictly legal sense, will warrant it.

But the point is not whether he is guilty or innocent, nor even whether or how much extenuation there may have been in the circumstances.

The point is the United States, through the Army, has lied.

The Prison Breaks

The recent prison breaks here—three, involving nine prisoners, within two weeks—raise a number of questions.

The first and most obvious question is whether proper precautions are taken to prevent escapes. If the answer to that is no, then that situation must be state-wide, because the breaks are not confined to the Macon County camp; there has been a long series, in various sections of North Carolina.

The second question is whether the treatment of the prisoners is such as to drive them to try to escape. We do not pretend to know the answer to that question, but our guess would be that, in part at least, it is yes.

The third question is whether our whole prison system is wrong. Evidence that the answer to that one is yes is the generally recognized fact that, if a man isn't a criminal when he enters prison, he is almost certain to be one when he comes out.

And of course the responsibility here is not primarily upon prison officials but upon the public, for the system, by and large, conforms to what the public wants it to be; public opinion could change it.

We don't like to admit it; we'd much prefer to tightly close our eyes to it. But isn't it true that the trouble lies chiefly in our motives for imprisoning a man? Isn't it true that the major motive is vengeance, with protection of the public purely secondary, and reform only incidental? And isn't it true that those are the motives that guide our prison officials because they are the motives of the rest of us?

At The Tabernacle

For the remaining four nights of the series, the evangelistic services at the Friendship Tabernacle should draw capacity crowds.

That is true, in part, because the meeting has been well publicized; in part because the visiting minister is a good speaker; and in part because some persons will go for duty's sake. But if those are the only reasons for attending, something's wrong.

Because if the churches of Macon County (which

are sponsoring the services) have the real thing, then publicity isn't essential (remember how Jesus repeatedly cautioned, "go, and tell no man"—and how the multitudes that followed Him continued to grow.) And the forensic skill of the preacher is secondary. And there's a far deeper motive than duty.

For if Christianity is anything, it is a gospel so dynamic, so revolutionary, it is exciting. If it is anything, it is something men, desperately in need of they know not what, will seek out. If it is anything, it is a gospel that provides the answers for those who, having tried everything else, have concluded there are no answers. If it is anything, it is the last, untried solution for both personal and social problems.

Letters

SOME QUESTIONS

TO THE CITIZENS

OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLANDS:

Since I have always believed that the citizens are entitled to know how their duly elected officers conduct the affairs of the community, I am asking The Franklin Press to publish this letter, giving the details of a recent occurrence in the Town of Highlands.

The Highlands Art Gallery has a new building on the south side of the main street of Highlands. It has a wide entrance or alley running from the street across the side walk on each side of the building. In front of this building and between the two alleys there is room for three vehicles on the south side of the street, and this space in the past has been designated as a parking space by parallel parking lines on the street, though the paint is now practically gone. I, like other persons, have used these spaces to park my vehicle until, on June 18, the mayor approached me and demanded that I move my vehicle immediately, and upon my refusal, he threatened me with physical violence—which threat he did not see fit to carry out, although challenged to do so.

The next day the police came to me with a warrant for my arrest, stating that the mayor had sent him with instructions that the warrant be not served if I would move my vehicle, otherwise to arrest me and have the town truck move my vehicle.

Although I knew of no law that I had violated, I moved my car rather than be arrested and placed in jail. Immediately after I moved my vehicle, the owner or owners of the Highlands Art Gallery drove their automobiles onto the public street and parked them in the space vacated by me, and they and other persons have been allowed to park in this space since, without being molested.

After a careful search in the town office, no ordinance was found prohibiting parking in the space from which I was required to move.

On the above statement of facts, the following questions arise:

1. Does the mayor of a town have the right to threaten and demand that a private citizen's truck or private car be removed from a public parking area where there is no city ordinance or visible signs prohibiting such parking, and where the parking of trucks and cars has been customary since the town has had streets?
2. Does the mayor have the right, where there is no town ordinance or signs regulating parking, to issue a warrant for a private citizen, said warrant stating that private citizen "was illegally parking and obstructing" traffic? (The private citizen was not obstructing or illegally parking.)
3. Does the mayor have the right to have the warrant served giving as his authority a state law, which says in part, according to the town lawyer, and so stated on warrant, that it is "illegal to park in front of a building seating fifty people or more". To date I have not been able to locate such a law. And incidentally, the Highlands Art Gallery was not open for business at that time.
4. Does the mayor have the right to authorize a warrant to be served on a private citizen and then make a statement to the private citizen that he did not intend the warrant to be served, thereby using the warrant as an instrument of threat?
5. Who prompted or requested this demand for the removal of a private citizen's truck and car?
6. Do we have in our midst parties who control, in some manner, the majority of the governing body of the town?

O. E. YOUNG

Highlands, N. C.

Poetry

Editor
EDITH DEADERICK ERSKINE
Weaverville, North Carolina

GUARDIAN OAK


Guardian oak with boughs that sway,
You are a child of yesterday,
And many strangers come your way.

What stories you could surely tell,
If day by day you would but dwell
Upon the past you know so well.

But you are peering toward the sky,
You do not trust the human eye,
You do not trust the passer by.


MILDRED S. BURGIN

OUR DEMOCRACY — by Mat



CHECKS AND BALANCES

ONE OF OUR TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, THE REPUBLICAN, WAS BORN 100 YEARS AGO, MARCH 20, 1854, IN A LITTLE WHITE SCHOOLHOUSE THAT STILL STANDS IN RIPON, WISCONSIN.



CHECKS AND BALANCES IN OUR POLITICAL LIFE, AS WELL AS IN OUR GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION, ARE PROVIDED BY THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM. THROUGH THE REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, THE PEOPLE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR WILL, "FOR OR AGIN", IN THE GIVE-AND-TAKE THAT IS AN ESSENTIAL SAFEGUARD OF OUR DEMOCRACY.

News Making As It Looks To A Maconite

By BOB SLOAN

Within me, the feeling increases each day that it is considerably later than we think. Or to put it another way, the inevitable showdown between Russia and the United States is very, very close. And since on the international scene today Russia appears to be calling the tune, if she calls for a showdown she may be further along in the endless armament race than we realize.

Russia's recent charge that the United States attacked one of her ships and her hand in Guatemala certainly show that she does not have the fear of or respect for this country that she once did. Since we (or some of our officials) talked so big about "massive retaliation" in Indo-China and backed down so quickly it may be that Russia plans to see just how far we will let her go in a series of incidents. Have the people of this country decided how far they will let Russia go before we fight? It is a question that will have to be answered some day, so individuals as well as the government should decide when do we stand up and fight.—Or do we?

Undoubtedly the Cherokee Ranch riders show which was here last Monday and Tuesday was a fine show, but I believe that it would have been just as good if the amplyfying system had been tuned so that it could be heard for only 1/2 mile instead of at least a mile. If the show comes back next year, and I hope it does, but I also hope that they get a little less volume on their loud speakers.

Since I have used up many, many inches of space urging that an all-weather paved road be built from Franklin to Nantahala I would like to predict at this time that the contract for a portion of that road from Cold Springs to Felsty Branch, and maybe more will be let within a month. I don't believe that the local people here in Franklin have ever realized the value of this road both from the standpoint of the local trade and the opening up of one of Eastern America's most beautiful tourist attractions. If my prediction comes true I think that Weimer Cochran should spread the first bit of asphalt. It would be most appropriate too that he be assisted by E. W. Renshaw, former forest supervisor, and Dale Thrash, former highway commissioner.

Miss Nolen On Dean's List At Catawba

Miss Connaree Nolen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Nolen, of Franklin, Route 1, was one of 17 juniors at Catawba College, Salisbury, to make the dean's list for the second-semester of the 1953-54 school year. An announcement from the college says Miss Nolen has consistently made the dean's list—requiring an average grade halfway between "B" and "A"—since entering Catawba.

Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The Press was, doubtless, the first paper in the State to print the news and picture of Hon. J. M. Gudger's nomination (for Congress) last week.

Hon. Sam L. Rogers had a walkover at the state convention in Raleigh last week, in his campaign for nomination for corporation commissioner, receiving 850 votes to 390 for S. B. Alexander. Capt. R. B. Glenn was nominated for governor, his nomination coming at 6 a. m., on the fifth ballot.

10 YEARS AGO

Just back from active duty in the Solomon Islands, S/Sgt. Chauncey M. Cunningham, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Cunningham, spent a few days with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Cunningham.

The report of War Bond sales is approximately \$75,000 to date.

Winton Perry, son of Mrs. J. E. Perry, stationed somewhere in England as pilot of a Thunderbolt, has just been promoted to captain.

Others' Opinions

KIND OF TRANSLATION WE NEED

(Milwaukee Journal)

Scientists at the International Business Machines Corp. have come up with a huge electronic "brain" that can translate Russian into English in seconds.

In a test the other day one of the scientists fed the machine a Russian sentence which we put in our letters as best we can—"Myezhdunarodnoye ponyimaniye yavlyetsya vazhnyim faktorom y ryeshenyiy polyityichykyx voprosov." And the machine came right back with "International understanding constitutes an important factor in decision of political questions."

We wonder if this is a step forward. The Russians themselves have been sending human machines to international meetings and the United Nations to rattle off what amounts to tape recordings of Russian speeches. Now we have machines to translate what they say. This solves nothing. What we really need is a machine that translates what they say into what they really mean.

STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

The hot days we've had recently reminded me of a question that often has occurred to me: What in the world would most of us do for something to talk about if it weren't for the weather?

It's a topic we can always fall back on. We can remark on how hot or how cold or how dry or how wet it is. Then we can talk about how it was last week, or last year; finally, when the silences begin to lengthen, we can discuss what it may be like next week, or next year.

It not only is a way to "make talk" when we really haven't a thing to say. It also probably is the oldest of all ways to start a conversation with a stranger. But I sometimes wonder if it isn't the best way in the world to advertise to a stranger that our tongues are more active than our brains.

However that may be, I've always had a yen to reverse the pattern (just to see what would happen) and start a conversation with a stranger something like this:

"I'm not in the least interested in what you think about the weather, and you probably don't care what I think. Furthermore, talking about it isn't going to change it. When we've said everything we can think of to say, it'll be just as hot or cold or dry or wet as it was when we started. So why should we go through the motions of a polite conversation that will have no effect and that neither of us is interested in?"

"Aren't you interested in something besides the weather? If you are, we'll talk about that. If not, let's just keep our mouths shut."

Some day I'm going to get up the nerve to try that approach.

versation as much as anyone I ever knew. He rarely mentioned the weather, or seemed even conscious of it, but he could talk for hours about books or nature or ideas. He talked well, and nothing so pleased him as to find someone else who could talk well—and would take the time to engage in a leisurely conversation.

His conversation was pointless, as far as getting anything practical accomplished. But that wasn't its purpose. To him, the reason for conversation was to give pleasure, both to the talker and the listener—like playing a musical instrument or painting a picture. Comparing it to those things, he called conversation an art.

In his later years, he found fewer and fewer people who both could talk and would take the time to do it. So he came to refer to conversation as "a lost art."

And he put most of the blame for its loss on the radio, which he always referred to as "that miserable contraption that has killed good talk."

I've often wondered, in recent years, what he would have said about television, which demands the attention of eyes as well as ears.

I like Mrs. F. H. Potts' story, about the man, back in the old days in the mountains, who lived in what was considered one of the most poverty-stricken communities in this whole region.

His neighbors had spread highly uncomplimentary reports about him. Finally a friend asked him point-blank if they were true.

He denied them emphatically, and then clinched the denial thus:

"There's two things you'll never hear over there in my section—the truth, and meat a-fryin'."