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DECEMBER 5, 1956

Badly Frayed

Freedom hangs by a slender thread, always. In the United States today, the thread is badly frayed.

Consider what happened to Daniel Lewis Wheelless, of Rocky Mount, and Perry McDonald Walker, of Mount Olive. The details of the incident are somewhat complicated; what is involved is simple. Some people in Washington either never have read the Constitution of the United States, or they have no feeling for that document, and for the rights it enumerates—save one of contempt.

Consider, too, that had these Tar Heels not chosen to fight, the country never would have heard of their cases, or of the similar cases of some 250 other former Korean prisoners of war.

And consider that this is but the latest in a long series of such incidents that have come to light—nobody knows how many never came to public attention.

Wheelless and Walker filed routine claims for the \$2.50 the law grants servicemen for each day spent as enemy prisoners. In their cases, the amounts were about \$2,000 each. (That means about 800 days for each in a Korean prison camp!)

That was a year ago. For more than eleven months, nothing happened. Then, only three weeks before the deadline for getting their claims approved or forfeiting them, the two learned the claims had been disallowed. The reason: "Secret" information, furnished by the Army to the Foreign Claims Commission, that the two North Carolinians had collaborated with the enemy.

Wheelless and Walker demanded a hearing before the commission. They were warned that they must pay for their defense; they were told that the burden of proof would be on them. They insisted. They finally got a hearing—the last day before the deadline.

They asked for the specific information on which the charge was based. It was denied them. They asked to face their accusers. That was denied. They asked for the names of their accusers. That, too, was denied. They were charged with treasonable collaboration, but were given no bill of particulars. The unsubstantiated general charge they denied emphatically, presenting their own evidence and that of other witnesses.

The point, of course, is not the long period these men spent in prisoner-of-war camps, nor the amount of money involved. The point is not that the Army—which had given them honorable discharges and their back pay, and has been paying them compensation for physical disabilities suffered while they were prisoners—contradicts itself by denying this latest claim. The point is not that, following the hearing, word has come down that these two men will get their money. The point is not even whether they are guilty or innocent of collaboration.

The point is that the Constitution of the United States, time after time, plainly says one thing, while the U. S. Army, via the Claims Commission, just as often, and just as plainly, says another.

The Constitution says an "accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy, and public trial". The Army convicted these men on secret evidence, without semblance of a trial, either speedy or public.

The Constitution says no person shall be "deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law". The Army deprived these men of the \$2,000—their "property", until and unless they were proved guilty — without a vestige of "due process."

The Constitution says an "accused shall be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation against him". The Army said "no; this is 'secret' information."

The Constitution says an accused shall "be confronted with the witnesses against him". But again the Army said, "no".

Revival Alone Not Enough

We had hardly finished observing "Safe Driving Day", an event proclaimed by the President of the United States and staged with all the dramatic trappings of modern psychology and modern advertising, before we set a new Christmas record of slaughter on the highways.

"Safe Driving Day" was only the latest in a long list of similar events designed to obtain safety, through education and appeal to the emotions—and we turned from it to killing 600 in a single week-end.

That suggests that an old-fashioned revival meeting, desirable as it may be, isn't enough, in the realm of highway safety.

In North Carolina, we really have worked at this matter of highway safety.

And in this state, we seem to have demonstrated (a) that speed is a major factor contributing to highway deaths; and (b) that enforcement of speed laws helps. It doesn't help enough, though, because the North Carolina toll still is so high that Governor Hodges has declared the situation demands "something very drastic".

The truth is that, human nature being what it is, a certain proportion of drivers are going to use all the speed available within their engines, and that it would take the entire U. S. Army to strictly enforce the laws against excessive speed.

Yet there is a solution; one so simple and so obvious, it is surprising it hasn't been invoked long ago. Speed, a major killer, can easily be curbed, at its source—the automobile factory.

Mrs. Horace Hurst

Mrs. Mary Lou Gray Hurst possessed in generous measure the fine traits that are so common among the people of this mountain region. Quiet and unassuming, a person of great gentleness, she nonetheless could speak out positively when occasion demanded. She was open-hearted, as well as open-handed; and considerate, in the little things that loom so big in human relations. And she possessed the rare gift of being able to discriminate between the important and the trivial—a gift enhanced, no doubt, by her keen, but always kindly, humor.

Illustrating her sense of proportion was her emphasis on her duties as a mother; somehow, in a busy life, she found time for effective work in her church and her community, but these outside activities she always kept in their rightful place—definitely secondary to her home.

None of this is spectacular; but it is significant. Mrs. Hurst's life, in fact, illustrates the point that all the great are not famous. For many of the so-called great would have been greater had they possessed some of the common sense, the innate goodness, the stability of this woman who was hardly known outside her own county.

Letters

Keep Forests Green

Editor, The Press:

Now that the fire season is here again, I wonder how much of our natural resources will go up in smoke from careless brush burning, a neglected campfire, or a careless smoker.

North Carolina produces more wood furniture than any other state in the nation, and ranks sixth in the production of lumber.

We also produce 5.3 per cent of its pulpwood.

More than 91 per cent of North Carolina's commercial forest area is privately owned. Half of the state's forest land is owned by farmers.

So let's everybody help keep our forests green.

B. M. SWEATMAN

Route 1, Franklin.

Must Face Desegregation

Dear Mr. Jones:

The segregation issue continues to boil with no sign of any significant easing of the tensions, or the tempers. We are all proud that this racial bitterness does not exist in serious measure in Macon County. One reason for this favorable condition is that we live in a section of the South where the Negro population is small and where both groups have had friendly attitudes toward one another.

However, ultimately we are going to have to face desegregation and do something about it. Will we be prepared to meet the issue intelligently and fairly when that time comes? As good citizens we want to do what is right for the best interests of all. Will we be intellectually and spiritually ready for such a task?

This letter is to suggest that we discuss the implications of desegregation as fully as we can. No doubt many people in the

Our Great America ☆ by Woody



VIEW

By

BOB SLOAN



It has become quite the fashion recently to designate some year as the "critical year." Everyone who knows me, realizes that if there is anything that I strive for, it is to be in fashion. So here goes.

The year 1956 will, I think, truly be a critical year. By the end of the year it will be apparent—if it isn't already from Khrushchev's recent speech, whether or not there is even an ounce of intent behind Russia's peace propaganda speeches. I believe that it will be obvious to the rank and file of Americans that we were played for a sucker at the Geneva peace table. We will then try to decide whether to spend millions more strengthening our defenses or get compatible with the idea that communism and capitalism can live side by side in something that I think is called peaceful coexistence.

On the domestic front, either the American market will finally have become saturated with consumer goods and our economy will be sagging or our buying public will be absorbing production at a rate not believed possible a few years ago, except by some starry-eyed individual such as Henry Wallace. Frankly, I believe that times, generally speaking, will be as good as they are at the close of 1955.

In politics, Eisenhower and Stevenson will again square off against each other for the Presidency — may the best man win.

Speaking of Henry Wallace, twenty-five years ago, he was advocating a soil-bank plan to meet the problems of agriculture in our economic world. Now the Republicans are talking of one. During the thirties, he was "cussed" for wanting to slaughter surplus pigs to help the farmer get a better price for his pork. Today that staunch Republican senator, Bourke Hickenlooper, of Iowa, suggests (See Back Page, 1st Section)

town and county have ideas that may be helpful and would certainly clarify our attitudes and thinking. We need this mutual exchange. Possibly we can organize a "town meeting" to discuss and argue the issue. Or, perhaps we could select a representative group from the organizations we have in Macon County to discuss this most timely and serious matter. If we can come to some level-headed conclusions we might well establish a basis for action. We might even become a help to other parts of the state facing the problem with bitterness.

At any rate can we pool our resources to face the challenges and dangers of desegregation? Can we do it courageously and without prejudice? Can we reach fair and democratic conclusions in regard to this issue and then act on them? Sometime we are going to have to answer such questions. We would be wise to do our studying now for that examination.

Sincerely

(REV.) S. B. MOSS

Franklin.

Others' Opinions

Wouldn't You?

(Pana, Ill., News-Palladium)

You'd think that a nation smart enough to produce H-bombs could provide a shoe string that wouldn't break.

Why States Lose Their Rights

(Burlington, N. J., Press)

The states have lost many functions to the federal government. They will lose more if they do not take a good look at themselves and cure some of their deficiencies. This message was brought by Meyer Kestnbaum, President Eisenhower's special assistant on federal-state relations, to the American Assembly sponsored by Columbia University's School of Business.

According to Kestnbaum the states handle many tasks which they should delegate to the cities. He said further that the states are not adequately equipped to perform their proper duties. They should give cities more home rule; redistrict their legislatures so that they represent people and not acres; give their governors more power; and modernize their constitutions.

The Carnegie Gospel

(Peterborough, Canada, Examiner)

The late Dale Carnegie's message was contained in his title: everybody — well, almost everybody — wants to be more personally powerful and successful than they are. The secret was simplicity itself; be friendly, don't argue and find fault, and never, never tell people that they are wrong. There is a good deal to be said for this technique, but as a philosophy of life it lacks substance. There is something cynical and opportunist about agreeing with people and buttering them up simply for what you can get out of them. And in order to carry out the Carnegie Gospel you must be very short of opinions of your own. You must be careful not to develop any convictions or principles for which you might feel it necessary to fight. You must take care not to develop any personality which might offend somebody, and you must be ready to swallow a good deal of dirt in the hope that, at last, it will prove to be pay-dirt. Millions read the book; thank Heaven, few have acted on its counsel.

Is This 'Free Enterprise'?

(Harry Golden in Carolina Israelite)

In Chester, South Carolina, the folks sold bonds in small denominations to the citizens of the community, \$50 and \$100 bonds, and they raised \$150,000 with which they are now building a factory for a couple of Northern carpetbaggers, operating under the name of the Fuller Shirt Company.

I know nothing of the Fuller concern and they may be fine people. However I do know of several fellows who did not put up a red cent of their own money but who were put into business by Southern towns—in South Carolina and in Mississippi. Not a red cent of their own money. The people of the town gave them a plant, wired the place for them,—and one fellow even got his help FREE for the first week while they were "learning".

What kind of free enterprise is that? And what will happen to the moral fibre of the Fuller brothers and the other manufacturers?

Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The roads are putting on their usual winter costume—and that is bad wear—and our mails are beginning to grow more tardy in arrival.

The people of this section awoke Sunday morning to find the ground covered with snow to the depth of two or three inches, the first snowfall of this winter. It is somewhat remarkable that the appearance of snow was delayed until the very last day of the year, as we usually have half dozen snow storms by this time of the year.

Messrs. G. P. and John White, of Flats Township, were here Monday, the former to put his son, Charley, and the latter, his son, Lawrence, and daughter, Ada, in Franklin High School.

25 YEARS AGO

Prof. O. F. Sumner and F. C. Hentz arrived Sunday afternoon, after spending the holidays in Pomaria, S. C. — Highlands item.

Dr. W. A. Rogers, representative from Macon County, and Mr. Robert Patton left Monday for Raleigh.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Higdon have moved from Dillard, Ga., to the house on Bidwell Street recently vacated by Dr. and Mrs. R. M. Rimmer.

A square dance was given at the home of Fiddlin' Jim Corbin at Mountain Grove on Tuesday night, in honor of Mr. Corbin's birthday.

10 YEARS AGO

Miss Jean Keener has returned to Atlanta to resume her business course, after spending the holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. M. Keener, on Flat Mountain. — Highlands item.

Bowden Dryman, who has been serving in the armed forces in the European theater for several months, has received his honorable discharge and has returned to his home near the Cozard Roller Mill.

Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Mielke and son, Charles, who have been visiting relatives and friends in Pittsburgh, Pa., have returned to the home of Mrs. Mielke's mother, Mrs. Martin Jones, on Bonny Crest.