

'When I rang up the total, she just passed out!'



## EDITORIALS

Never Forget That These Editorials Are The Opinion Of One Man  
And He May Be Wrong

### The Grandstand Play

Governor Bob Scott has made a typically bad mistake with his grandstand play involving five young colored men convicted a year ago of arson in the attempted burning of a Ku Klux Klan joint in Johnston County.

Scott has set all five free after they had served about a year of a 12-year prison term Judge William Bickett had imposed upon them in superior court and after his sentence had been upheld by the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Scott's decision was a mistake on several points: Primarily it was wrong in that it was a blanket clemency . . . extended to all five at the same time, although it is much more than likely that there were varying degrees of guilt involved among the five, and despite the fact that it is unlikely almost to the degree of impossibility that each of the five had behaved the same since their imprisonment.

Parole and executive clemency should be exercised on an individual basis. And to individuals who have earned the right to have their original, legal sentences shortened.

If Scott had studied, or if Scott's staff had given individual study to these five young men and then had extended mercy to them individually over even a reasonably brief period the act would not be tainted, as it is now, with every element of the grandstand play.

Secondly, Scott's blanket endorsement of arson is a further blow at the state courts. It is seldom, indeed, that any state court decision is left unfouled by the messy paw of federal judicial second messing, so when a state court decision is left untouched by this federal paw it is adding further insult to state judicial integrity to have that seldom occasion upset by executive log-rolling.

Finally, arson is one of the most cowardly crimes in the book . . . and it is a crime for which there is very seldom a conviction.

We have no special consideration for the Ku Klux Klan, because all too fre-

quently it is a cowardly organization that seeks to work its way behind white sheets and black masks. But society is in most serious peril when arson and other forms of terror are substituted for law and order.

Two wrongs never have, and never will, make one right. If Scott had acted selectively the public and each one of these young defendants would have accepted his action as a proper exercise of executive clemency, but his sweeping slap at the courts and his direct slur at the orderly paroles system will only serve to worsen a situation that is already too bad.

### Something Right in Denmark

With public education under fire from an assortment of directions and with a greater percentage of Americans than ever before doing some serious thinking on the matter of education the colossus of America might benefit greatly from analysis of something right in Denmark.

Denmark is a tiny nation of just 16,619 square miles and 4,839,000 people at the last official counting, ranking it about the size of North Carolina's Coastal Plain.

Denmark has had free public schooling since 1814 — much longer than the United States, but built into their compulsory education system is a check valve on majority pressures that would be a blessing beyond compare if that oppressive American majority would only tolerate such a blessing.

And that educational blessing is what the Danes call a "Free School", in that it is operated outside the governmental school system but with state funds for teachers and building and other general operating expenses.

Commenting on this system in the August 16 issue of Saturday Review Estelle Fuchs points out, "The Danes have shown how a modern nation can estab-

### On Boar Hog Tits

Among people versed in such affairs it has long been accepted that the most useless thing in creation is tits on a boar hog. It would appear that politicians and bureaucrats are trying to rewrite the rules of creation.

It now appears that legislative bodies in Raleigh and Washington are doing their best, or worst, to make county boards of commissioners even less useful than the aforementioned mammary glands on a hē hog.

Examples: Rumbings are coming from the bureaucrat belly of Raleigh that Forsythe County commissioners may be illegally acting in refusing to hold an election to determine if a 33 per cent increase shall be levied in the sales tax its citizens pay. Until recently it had been generally assumed that among the few basic rights and responsibilities of county commissioners was the levying of county taxes. But, apparently not so any more if the tax, tax, tax 1969 session of the general assembly was acting either wisely or legally — matter which is still under considerable debate.

And while the state's official concern with Forsythe dereliction is fresh upon us there is still left hanging in some area of the official limbo that excited concern of Welfare Commissioner Clifton Craig over the fact that Jones County's commissioners have also shocked official Raleigh, which is accustomed to sneezing on Washington's snuff-taking, because these brave Jones County souls have exercise what they had some reason to believe was a small part of their official prerogative in refusing to levy purely county taxes for a welfare program that was born in Washington.

Once upon a legal time it was presumed that if citizens of a given county, or a given state through their elective elders decided they wanted no part of a program they could turn it down, but in this latter day of the representative republic there is a pure purple passion for every mother's son to be fed same public gruel out of the same public spoon and it is the outer limits of outer darkness for any official who stumbles upon that ancient presumption which had to do with that cherished, but now perishing, principle of individual rights — for principalities as well as that lonely unit of the body politic, called you and me. Now it is conformity in the name of the "general welfare" that consumes too much of the thought of these in power.

lish standards of education required for national life and the protection of the young, while at the same time provide for the freedom of parents with special religious, ethnic, economic or pedagogic interests to oversee and direct the education of their children with minimal interference by the government."

Miss Fuchs points out further, "Despite the liberal financing and government cooperation in the formation of independent schools, they are used by only seven per cent of the children of compulsory school attendance age. The right to educate their children at home, outside the school, is also provided for by law, but few parents use this prerogative."

She says, "Of the group that does take advantage of right to use Free Schools, the majority clearly represents those who wish a particular religious education for their children other than that provided by State schools. Seventh Day Adventists, Catholics, Jews and Grundtvigians are among these. The German speaking ethnic minority also maintains its own schools, and in these the German language is used as a medium of instruction.

### PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS BY JACK RIDER

It is difficult to find a practical answer to some profound questions that have the most far-reaching effects on each of us as individuals as well as on the great drama of world history. Such a question is the one resolved last week in congress by the razor-thin vote of 51-to-49 which gave President Nixon the green light to deploy what is being called a limited anti-ballistic missile system.

I cannot avoid remembering another one-vote margin that kept the draft system going just before Pearl Harbor and in that same era another one-vote margin that permitted American merchant vessels to be armed before United States involvement in the Hitler War. Perhaps the only similarity these three great congressional debates has is that each was decided by that slender one-vote margin.

But I believe history will view this comparison to have other close kinship. In each instance the United States was, and is trying to say to those who might have doubts about our courage or our willingness to fight for principles that at least this thin majority of our leadership feels otherwise.

Undoubtedly the unpopularity of American involvement in Vietnam made this vote more close than it might have been in another circumstance, but politics do not function in a vacuum. Votes are taken and decisions are made in the heat of whatever controversy there may be to divide honorable men, and this vote accents how dedicated, intelligent, patriotic men can completely differ on an issue that each side believes to be vital. If nothing else this should serve to cause every average citizen — if there is such an animal — to be less dogmatic in our attitudes on matters that most frequently are of much less concern than national defense policies.

As one of nearly a total majority who would prefer to see the national wealth spent on more constructive things than guns and bombs I have to keep myself reminded that pacifism and disarmament are noble aspirations but neither is in touch with either the realities of nature itself or whatever refinements man may fancy himself as having made upon that plan of nature.

Violence is the order of life — all life, vegetable or animal, and sadly enough man has not been able to make any practical alterations of this cold fact of life and death. Of course, it is wasteful to spend billions on defense systems that are never used, but as a wiser person than myself has recently pointed out: "It is only when such weapons are used that they represent a failure." And it should be the prayer of all mankind that all items of military destruction become obsolete from lack of use rather than from combat experience.

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