

Friday, September 25, 1964

[4]

Steve Twining
Practical Discrimination?

An interesting fact one notices on the Ripon College campus is the small number of American Negroes. Percentage-wise, this number is less than one percent of the total number of enrolled students.

In this year's freshman class, only four Negro Americans applied for admission from a total of 840 freshman applicants. Of these four, three were accepted. It would seem then that the absence of Negroes at Ripon is due to the fact that there aren't any Negroes applying.

According to the admissions office, there are several reasons for this. Although the admissions office travels extensively and has many representatives throughout the country, there is no current plan for going after good Negro students and athletes. And, according to Mr. Volkman, the main problem lies in finding Negroes who can be successful both academically and socially.

In the social atmosphere at Ripon, the Negro "must be of a special type," Mr. Volkman said. Also, the Negro high schools in the cities are weak academically, and those who attend these schools cannot afford to come to Ripon economically. Those who are strong academically seem to get snatched up by schools such as Princeton, Yale or Harvard.

* * *

Due to the problem of Negroes being on the borderline academically, Mr. Volkman does not think it worthwhile financially to take a chance on the student. Volkman contends that if the student fails at Ripon, he will carry this feeling back to his Negro neighborhood. Ripon will be out of several thousand dollars and will also have its name hurt in these areas.

Even when a grant comes to the college such as the recent Lockwood Merriman grant of a \$1,000 four-year renewal scholarship designed for a poverty-area youngster, the economic problem is still very acute since the current price at Ripon is \$2350. Not only must around \$1,000 per year be given by the college to this youngster, but there is also the effort and cost of finding him. According to Mr. Volkman, the current policy of the admissions office is one of never selling a student on coming to Ripon; he must be motivated to come. With only four Negro applicants, it would seem that this motivation is lacking. In order to get them motivated, a plan would seem necessary to accomplish this purpose. Volkman sees that such a plan is unwise due to the social and economic questions.

It would seem to this observer that at this time in American history, the question is not economic or social; it is moral.

Friday, October 9, 1964

[2]

Senate Defeats Grant for Negro

Items for considerations before the October 7 meeting of the Student Senate included a motion about a Negro scholarship and a proposal for a used clothing drive.

The business of the meeting was prefaced by an address from Dean Harris, Senate advisor. In evaluating the importance of student government as a “gathering together of student operations and student concern,” Dean Harris stressed the need for significant issues. He stated that senate members must study the issues with an eye to facts, and apply some philosophy based on relevant circumstances in formulating decisions. Senate members must practice caution in arbitrating among subsidiary organizations.

[...]

[4]

Editorial

Big Nose Dive

We had the opportunity to view the actions of the Student Senate Wednesday night, and naturally we accepted the chance to see this great deliberatory body in action. It was unfortunate for the Senate that we were in attendance, because it soon became apparent that our efforts to rectify the various Senatorial foibles and shortcomings in the last two weeks had not been unnecessary.

The Senate was faced with an honest issue: “Whether or not to establish a scholarship for a Negro student.”

We are not going to take a stand in this controversy yet. The Senate apparently intended to do just that and fell flat on their deliberative noses.

After a short introductory speech by the Dean of Men, the Senate went about their duties of reporting the activities of their various commissions. After commission reports we came to the real event of the evening.

The Senate President, after restricting the debate and warning participants that they wouldn’t be heard if they dared to waver from his topic, asked for discussion.

One of the senators read a letter from the Chaplain of the College asking for acceptance of the measure, thereby providing the foundation for a discussion of the moralities of providing this scholarship.

After the letter had been read, the president asked (pleaded?) for a discussion. The great Student Senate, in solemn conclave assembled, shifted in their seats, stared at the ceiling and generally acted like people who wished they were somewhere else.

A vote was called for, the Senate decided they opposed the Negro Scholarship. But this wasn’t the real issue.

For the first time in years, the senate had been confronted with a genuine issue. A question had been raised; a question of definite contemporary value. The Senate had their chance to prove their worth as a genuine body of debate and deliberation. They had their chance and they failed.

Our sympathy goes out to those who had faith in the Senate's mystic powers. Our sympathy also goes out to the pretty young Senator who, after her cause had been soundly defeated, belatedly raised her hand to vote with the minority. She didn't look too happy; no one else should have either.

[5]

Letter to the Editor

A PR Man With A Ph.D.

There is a glaring need for more Negro members of the Ripon College community and a great need for more Negro applicants to the college. There is indeed a strong financial problem for Negroes who wish to attend Ripon. This financial problem is on the whole much more acute than white applicants. For those who doubt this they can consult the Almanac or drive from South 30th Street to South 85th Street on Halsted Street in Chicago. And if you do you had better lock your door.

If this isn't proof enough for you, you can go to Gary, Indiana and drive from 25th Avenue down to Fifth Avenue on Washington, Adams, Massachusetts, or Virginia Streets.

And if you still do not believe your eyes you can color your skin black and apply for apprenticeship at Ironworker Hall Local 295 in Hammond, Indiana and then tell me that Negroes have equal opportunity.

But when the rumblings coming from the Student Senate reach my ears concerning giving a scholarship each year to a Negro applicant, I can only see one thing: discrimination in reverse. The members of the Senate are to be applauded for supporting the motion AGAINST giving a scholarship each year to a Negro solely because he is a Negro.

This does not seem to be the answer. Quotas, special funds that are discriminatory in nature would not remove a situation that is discriminatory.

If the Senate wants more Negroes on Campus, then get more qualified ones to apply. If you say there none applying, then what is needed is effort to get them to apply. Not a scholarship for one Negro!

Steve Twining.

Friday, October 23, 1964

Tougaloo and Ripon to Exchange Students

At its most recent meeting the Ripon College faculty approved unanimously a Tougaloo-Ripon College full-semester exchange program. The program was previously approved by the Educational Policies Committee.

Student exchange will be on a one-to-one basis, that is, one Ripon student will go to Tougaloo for every Tougaloo student who comes to Ripon. Each student will pay the regular fees at his home college, rather than the one he is visiting.

The courses taken at Tougaloo by the Ripon exchange student will be approved by his major advisor and the Dean of the College. Students from Ripon will get full credit for courses taken at Tougaloo.

A similar program was brought before the faculty three years ago but was not approved. However, rapid improvements in Tougaloo's curriculum have recently begun; largely due to Tougaloo's "adoption" by Brown University and a related half million dollar grant.

Swarthmore, Oberlin, and Beloit, to mention a few, have similar exchange programs with Tougaloo.

Friday, November 20, 1964

[1]

Tougaloo, Ripon to Exchange Liberal Arts Colleges Will Trade One to One

Next year the Campus of Tougaloo College, in Jackson Mississippi, and Ripon College will exchange students under a new plan that was approved by the Ripon faculty Friday.

The recommendation for an addition to the educational policies stated "... that the faculty sanction a semester exchange program with Tougaloo College, with the understanding that the exchange be conducted on a one-to-one ratio, that the exchange student pay tuition to his home college, and that the Ripon student's Tougaloo program be approved in advance by his major advisor."

Students at Ripon are all able to take advantage of the exchange. There will be as many Tougaloo students sent to Ripon as Ripon sends to Tougaloo. The Ripon half of the exchange is handled through Chaplain Thompson's office. The

Under the program approved by the Ripon faculty, Ripon students will be concerned mainly with a continuation of their studies. They, however, undoubtedly will encounter some of the pressures of the white citizenry of Jackson, possibly even to the point that they will find that, as Jim Hess has said, "The much talked-about Southern hospitality has developed into Southern hostility." Ripon College, nevertheless, will be taking an active interest in one highly important national problem – educational freedom. Chaplain has said that Tougaloo offers basically the same curriculum that is available at Ripon. Students interested in the social sciences or in anthropology will find the Tougaloo curriculum strong in these areas.

During spring vacation of last year five Ripon student joined several Lawrence College students in an exchange with Tougaloo. The Ripon contingent, Paul Meyers,

Dick Grimsrud, Reid Spencer, Les Heard, and Jim Hess, was chaperoned by Dr. Alexander of the psychology department. These students “enjoyed” the budding life in one of the South’s finest cities. They returned with first hand experience of mass Negro meetings and police brutality as well as with knowledge of the stress a predominantly Negro college undergoes in a “Christian minded” (?) city of the Deep South.

Friday, February 12, 1965

[1, 6]

Exchange Two With Tougaloo Mississippi

This is the era of cultural exchange; a Russian balletis traded for an American jazz band, Da Vinci’s Pieta comes to the New York World’s Fair, and students at southern and northern liberal arts colleges trade places for a semester. This academic transition, then, is the one in which Ripon is involved, along with Tougaloo College, Jackson, Mississippi. The program was initiated last year when eight Ripon students visited the southern school during spring vacation. Tougaloo, in turn, sent six representatives to Ripon at the same time.

The plan has been following up this year by sending Rima Miller and David McDermott to Tougaloo in exchange for Willie Anderson and Marvin Plamore, who are studying at Ripon the second semester.

The exchange provides that each student will pay his regular tuition and other expenses to his home institution. Any scholarships or loans will also be continued, and students are still responsible for their own personal expenses. Object-wise, the program, in the words of Chaplin Jerry Thompson, is designed “to give concerned students an opportunity to live and study at an educational institution existing under a contracting cultural milieu ... thereby (making them) more sensitive ... to critical socio-cultural problems.”

Both Tougaloo students were able to add a little more to the chaplin’s [sp.] explanation and to tie

[6]

it more personally to themselves. Plamore, a junior and an English major, said that he wanted to see how Tougaloo “related to other schools.” Anderson expressed the same desire and added that “I like new situations and excitement and wanted to do it regardless of financial barriers.”

Willie Anderson first became interested in the program through an NSA co-ordinator on his campus. Because he wanted “insight on how Tougaloo rates with other schools,” he applied and was accepted. A math major in his second year, he is carrying 14 hours at Ripon consisting mostly of a rigid math program. Academically, he has nothing but praise for the school. He finds the atmosphere “intense,” a greater number of better facilities, and a faculty who makes one want to study.” In particular, he enjoys his physics class.

Although planning on going into graduate work and eventually into civil engineering, Anderson has a strong interest in painting. He particularly admires Degas and also finds amusement in nearly every sport.

Marv Plamore, from Picaucy, Mississippi, rates his interests as being James Baldwin, political science, basketball, music, and good conversation in general. An English major, Plamore plans to teach English in the South after doing graduate work. His classroom comments, too, are favorable. Here, he finds, "students bring more into class ... and there is depth. There is emphasis on really thinking at Ripon while at Tougaloo there is more of a regurgitation of facts."

Although both Anderson and Plamore find Ripon to be extremely friendly and sincere, both likewise observe more conformity here than at Tougaloo. They also both noted less intellectual atmosphere outside of class and Plamore stated that students at Tougaloo were not as interested in a place like the Spot. The recent intensity of fraternity-sorority rush period likewise seemed more hot and heavy on the Ripon campus than on the Tougaloo, according to Plamore.

Although both Anderson and Plamore already have very definite views on Ripon College life, they feel that it is too early to form any concrete theories on the basis that they haven't had a chance to see it all yet." However, in the line of general observations, Anderson had this comment: "To me, Ripon absorbs an individual and you automatically become a part of it."

Friday, April 9, 1965

[6]

Tougaloo Exchange Students Spend Spring Vacation Here

Four Tougaloo college students have been spending this week, their spring vacation, here on the Ripon campus. This is the second year of the exchange between Ripon and Tougaloo, a small liberal arts college just outside Jackson, Mississippi. The four students arrived in Ripon after a thirty hour bus trip on Sunday. The two girls, Hazel McGee, a junior from Indianapolis, Mississippi, and Shyrl Miller, a senior from Vicksburg, Mississippi, both stayed in Johnson Hall. George Cole a junior from Meridian stayed in North hall. O. B. Farish, a senior from Hazlehurst, Mississippi, stayed in Merriman. Khalidoun Babaa, a junior from Tulkarm, Jordan, stayed in Scott Hall. Hazel commented the atmosphere at Ripon is very much like that of Tougaloo, being a small school and located in a small town. She said the few classes she attended aren't very different from Tougaloo, with about the same amount of class participation. She said several students have asked her what she is doing here, indicating that perhaps there should be more publicity about the exchange among students.

Shyrl mentioned that Ripon puts much more emphasis on sororities and fraternities. At Tougaloo only seventy-five out of five hundred students are Greek. She said she was surprised that people haven't asked her about Mississippi.

O. B. said that the Greeks at Ripon seem to serve no purpose, although they certainly could. At Tougaloo the two sororities and three fraternities are more academic. He feels that there is more academic competition at Tougaloo. Anyone at Tougaloo with less than a "C" average may not participate in any organization. Most students at Tougaloo see the need of attending graduate school and want to go. He thinks the

facilities such as the dormitories and especially Farr Hall, are superior to those at Tougaloo. He found the classes he attended quite interesting. He noticed that Ripon students took no initiative in getting to know the exchanges, but the boys in Merriman, where he lived, were very friendly.

George found that people here seem to be ignorant about Negroes. He urges any Ripon student interested in seeing what an integrated society is like to apply to Tougaloo for the summer session when Harvard and Brown Universities send professors and special students to teach at Tougaloo. He says there is no reason to fear physical danger. He feels the students here are quite conservative and more apathetic than at Tougaloo. He feels that the young Tougaloo faculty is quite liberal but that the Negro professors tend to be more conservative than the white ones. The girls at Tougaloo have an honors dorm. Juniors with a B average and seniors with the equivalent of 2.5 and a recommendation from the assistant dean of students may live in the dorm.

Khaldoun said he found the facilities good, the professors capable, the classes interesting, but the students anti-social.

Bob Martin

The White Man's Image

The 100 years of segregation of the Negro and White in the United States have not only affected the mind of the Negro; they have affected the mind of the white, and affected it to such a degree that it presently can't adjust itself to today's circumstances.

* * *

These 100 years have affected the white man to such a point that he has been able to create, because he has been separated, his own image of the Negro which, as far as he is concerned, is universally applicable. This is the image of the Negro as a shiftless, happy-go-lucky, joking, dirty, smelly, irresponsible, thoughtless, ignorant, unreliable, criminal, wasteful, watermelon-eating "Nigger." And it is the 100 years of segregation which has brought this image about in the white man's mind.

Interestingly enough, segregation has allowed this image to function. The white man, in his impersonal relation with the Negro, has been able to create his "Nigger" simply by observing one Negro's actions, and generalizing from this point that "They're all this way." But because this might be the only Negro the white man during a day, a month, or even a year, he can use this instance to prove his image of the Negro.

* * *

Occasionally throughout these 100 years the white man's image has been destroyed. Men like W. B. DuBoise, Booker T. Washington, Roy Wilkins, and Ralph Bunche have hurt the white man's image because they have done unstanding things both for their race and for their country. The white man, unprepared for such a situation, can only explain such an unthinkable case as "Some foolish Nigger getting out of his place." This new expression is something the White man can't comprehend; he can only call such Negro actions "Foolish."

With the image firmly in mind, the white man now creates his system of "keeping the Nigger in his place." Because the White man thinks such a system necessary, he finds ways, no matter how absurd, to maintain this order. To him, police brutality, Ku Klux Klans, illicit voiting tests, murders, lynch mobs, threats, and court injustices are all

justifiable and reasonable means. To him, Negro demonstrations, protests, petitions, negotiation committees, and boycotts, or any actions toward gaining equality are unreasonable and lawless. The White man feels his system, this system of bigotry, supremacy and injustice, logical; he feels the Negro's drive for equality a complete absurdity which must be suppressed by any means.

* * *

Consequently, the White man, in being segregated from the Negro, has created his own image of his Negro, his "Nigger." With this word he feels he can destroy any negro, no matter how great. This is his verbal weapon of fighting back against any Negro advances. It is his weapon of leveling the entire Negro race, and making this race one person. It is this force which he yields blindly to overcome the forces of a drive with foresight, a drive which asks for constitutional, natural, and civil rights, already guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, yet not enforced. It is the White man who, through this system, has sunken into senselessness.

A common feeling among Whites is that "The Negro is not yet prepared for his rights, and he must be educated before we can give these rights to him." A better statement of this would be that the White man is presently not prepared to understand the Negro movement, and he must become educated to understand such a thing. The first thing the White man must do is to forget his image of "The universal nigger," and examine a much greater part of the race. He must realize that if he, say, sees a Negro spitting on a sidewalk, he can not say that all Negroes are filthy because he saw one spit on a sidewalk. He must stop calling men like Martin Luther King "Crazy, foolish niggers," and ask himself if these men are not, in actuality, brilliant people. He must end his fear that Negroes are going to take over the United States "If they get the vote," and question himself of his justice in denying the Negro the vote in the first place. Such a fear by the White man is a fear of himself; a fear that he has created a system which he himself now can't handle. The White man must finally realize that the Negro does not wish race supremacy, but that he wishes to be treated as a human being. He wishes to live, eat, and work wherever he wants to, and he does not want to be restricted simply because his skin is brown. He doesn't want to have to think always as a Negro, judging every act on the premise of whether its either good or bad for Negroes; he wants to think of what may be good or bad for himself, the individual. He wishes to be himself before he is anything else, and this is what he is presently striving for.

* * *

The White man, then finds himself presently in a situation which he can't adjust to; his old image, the old "Nigger," has been destroyed; the new image of the diversified Negro he can't understand.

[p.4] Friday, April 23, 1965

Jim Reed

A Civil Rights Editorial

There are few Northerners who would openly argue against the civil rights cause as such. The basic rightness of the Negro Revolution is pretty much beyond dispute. The plain

fact is that the Negro, particularly the Southern Negro, is being denied basic American freedoms and constitutional rights. Few people dare to come out openly against the Negro cause, but there are nonetheless, somewhat more subtle ways of obliquely attacking the movement. One of the standard arguments heard during the week of the Selma incident runs as follows. "Well, I don't have anything against civil rights, but I just think it is a Southern problem, and it should be left to the Southerners to solve. After all, they have been living down there with it and we haven't. We don't have any right to go meddling in their affairs. We have never lived down there, and we don't really know what the problem is like. We Northerners don't have any right to go meddling in other people's affairs." It is this argument that I would like to consider – first of all because it is widespread in the North, and secondly because it sounds reasonably plausible on the surface. It is an argument that is used especially against Northern civil rights workers and people who participate in demonstrations like the march on Montgomery.

* * *

The really cruel issue here is the question of what one's affairs are. In the early colonial days it would have meant at least some sense in talking about political [political] right as "New York affairs," or "Virginia affairs," or perhaps even "Southern affairs." But the world has changed, and in our complex society it is no longer reasonable to talk in such provincial terms. Today there is good social mobility. Retired people move to Florida, and students often travel thousands of miles from their homes to attend college. Furthermore, economic complexities bring an even greater mutual involvement among our people and our states. Companies have branches in many states – and there is a free exchange of goods and services across state lines. Now, there is certainly a sense in which one can rightly talk about state "affairs" – such as public education, roads, and utilities. But these are all clearly within the domain of state government –and such is not the case with constitutional rights.

Our common life so complex, our individuals, states and groups are so bound up together in inter-relationship, that affairs that may seem local or focused are in reality "national affairs." Thus the problem of Negro rights is really a national problem, a problem of national significance, because we are one nation and one people. And the denial of the right to vote in to Mississippi Negroes can be a legitimate concern of someone living in Chicago. And if this individual is sensitive to the demands of the situation, he has every right –legal and otherwise—to "meddle in Mississippi affairs."

Perhaps the basic reason that the problem has been so bad for so long is that sensitive people in the North have felt it was none of their affairs. But the social, economic, and political problems of every area are relevant to every American, however far away he may live [live] from them. He should not of course, become so preoccupied with the sins of others that he forgets the evil at his own doorstep. But it seems undeniable that what is going on in the South today is our problem as well as the South's. When it is seen that Northerners and Southerners alike all share in one common life, and have certain basic rights because of this fact, the civil rights cause can not help but gain a sense of immediacy hitherto unknown.

Richard Keane Singer

Money Can Buy Us Love

Hey Gang! Wadaya say we have a Negro scholarship. Dont ya think we oughta do it? Wouldn't it be peacy-keen?

Remember when Dean Harris told the man from UPI that some of the one hundred or so not-very-interested students who demonstrated against the Selma march appropriation really wanted the money to go for a Negro scholarship? Let's make that neat statement a reality.

* * *

You aren't hot for the idea? Well I think for a second. Imagine the glorious day of the first Negro Scholarship Award. Picture the scene as a proud dean and a proud Negro stand high above an eager throng and the dean says:

"It sure is a big event here today as this black boy and I shake hands. For too long we here at Ripon have sat back thinking of nothing but ourselves. We have forgotten about the lousy, scummy, cheap, dirty, filthy, rat-infected place that Tom here lives in. But now we have given this fine Negro boy a new suit, free tuition, and even some spending money. Why, we are even letting him live in our dormitory for free. We are a real credit to the human race."

Soon Tom will begin classes here, and we will all get to know him well. Soon we will forget that his skin is black. We will think of hm only as the Negro on Scholarship who is a fine man but could not make it here on his own. We will all be on BIG HAPPY FAMILY. Unfortunate wretch that 666 he may be, Tom WILL fit in here at Ripon

* * *

Tom, we have bought ... er ... brought you here for two important reasons: we want our college to look good and we want you to forget you are a Negro from the slummy, lice-infested place that you are from. Go now into the academic world, and remember, Tom, we love you, not because you are black, but because your skin is a ... er ... a ... different color.

Wouldn't that be keen?

[p.5]

Three Who Were There: The March to Selma

Nancy Cox –

A picnic with a purpose

Expression of such a complex experience as the Washington trip is difficult because emotional atmosphere is not readily definable in words. To understand the trip at all, however, one must recognize that, above all, it was an emotional experience and that it involved a complexity of reactions, always personal and tied to the confusion which pervaded the whole trip. This is my attempt to recapture a mood.

Madison was bewildered, but out of the general disorder we managed to get on one of the three buses headed for Alabama. Then we were held up in Chicago while SNCC decided to send us to Washington, feeling it was too dangerous to continue demonstrations in Montgomery. Everyone was tremendously disappointed. The Ripon delegation decided to continue, still wanting to go to Alabama amid indescribable confusion: promises that the focus of the whole movement was being shifted to Washington, lack of communication, and the desire to “do something.”

* * *

I remember arriving in a Washington snowstorm feeling thwarted, as the demonstrations in Montgomery were continuing full tilt. The Negro church where we were to stay was a muddle of students, sleeping bags and cartons of sandwiches. Obviously, SNCC didn't quite know what to do with us.

They finally decided to demonstrate against Alabama police brutalities by a sit-in on the White House sidewalk. We Riponites were less than enthusiastic but decided to participate. Motivated primarily by curiosity, I went on the 10:00 to midnight shift that night.

Picture 20 or 30 students wrapped in sleeping bags sitting in the slush against the White House fence in the middle of the night, surrounded by policemen and reporters. The students were singing and moral was high. CORE members were marching with picket signs, shouting “Freedom!” It was melodramatic, yes even humorous, but it was strangely touching, too. These were students from all over the country, united by a shared ideal. They were dirty, tired, and gay. The scene had a picnic quality, but it was [a] wet, cold picnic, a picnic with a purpose.

* * *

I must mention a few incidents which to us, were meaningful. For example, the Wisconsin group never paid one dime in taxi fare around Washington – the cab drivers are Negro. A white man walking by the White House took off his overcoat and put it over a Negro demonstrator. An anonymous donor brought 30 raincoats to the church; others gave food and blankets. To me, these gestures mean that we were not wasting our time.

The White House demonstration has significance in two ways. First, it is a segment of a powerful national movement for civil rights. No I did not accomplish what I set out to do, if my objective was solely to demonstrate in Alabama. But if my objective included personal insight, it exceeded my expectations.

Gary Yerkey – Toward Something Unknown

Among the avalanche of comments presented for scrutiny during the Ripon-Selma madness, one stands out as most interesting, and above all, telling: “Why students to Alabama? A check for three or four hundred dollars would be just as well received.” Why people and not money? The civil rights workers now in Alabama, Mississippi, and throughout the South need financial support to continue their existing programs – political education, voter registration, etc. The question still remains, why more people?

The Selma, Alabama which I experienced for three tension-filled days was sick with hatred. Although the city of 29,000 is evenly divided between black and white, the white community has created a tragic, paradoxical situation by refusing to recognize the constitutional guarantees of the Negro. On the one hand, the Southern white acknowledges the superiority of the white caucasian. Yet their hatred is directed at most intensely at the white community in sympathy with the civil rights cause – the majority of the country’s white population. In recent years, the injustices, caused by the neglect of the Negro have become strongly apparent to the Southern white’s response to the concern expressed by the rest of the country is one of hostility and fear directed toward something unknown even to themselves

* * *

With what weapon must the majority of the nation reply to the open hostility of the Southern racist? Even if little was actually accomplished by the Montgomery-Selma march, one lesson must be well taken from the Negro population there. If the struggle for civil rights is to be in any measure successful, the Southern white’s brutal hatred must be met with non-violence and real understanding to those people and those people and those feelings we consider to be injurious to justice everywhere. The Negro has used this tactic time after time. Hopefully, we have learned something about its use in Selma and conscientiously will exercise its power in the future. We cannot challenge the Southern’s hostility only with financial support to those dedicated individuals now working in the South. The power of non-violence and love is well understood by the South today through the efforts of people concerned enough to stand up and be counted. No dollar can replace the mass of humanity expressing their interest in the Negro cause through non-violent demonstration. The Southern white understands such action, because hatred countered by love is new and shocking to their too-long “closed society.”

Dr. James R. Bosditch – A Month After Selma

A hundred and four years ago this month, the first shot of the American Civil War was fired and the nation was plunged into a seering conflict. The issues at stake were many and complex, but one thing is clear: social order was violated to insure human dignity. Of that time Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote:

Through our good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given to us to learn at the outset that life is a profound and passionate thing. We were permitted to scorn nothing but indifference ... Life is action and passion; therefore it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time at peril of being judged not to have lived.

The lines, personnel and weapons have changed, but the Civil War is still with us. Human justice and human dignity are still at issue – and “we are permitted to scorn nothing but indifference.” Yet one month after the Selma to Montgomery march, the Ripon campus seems to have decided that little of importance has happened or is happening in Alabama and across the nation. Perhaps if we sit tight, ignore the Mdger Evers the Jimmie Lee Jacksons, the Reebbs and Liuzzos, the bombings an cross burnings (we are so isolated, you know), the whole mess will disappear. If we can persuade Ourselves that those who cause disturbance by trying to integrate a public restaurant, enter a white church, register as full citizens or march to call attention to systematic and deliberate injustice are merely rabble-rousing exhibitionists, then perhaps we can turn our attention to less painful matters. Above all, if we can convince ourselves that the true patriot is he who keeps his nose out of others’ affairs, then perhaps we can really enjoy the coming spring
Perhaps.

* * *

Too long ago to be any longer relevant, a Roman statesman wrote: “Justice will not come about until those who are not injured are just as indignant as those who are.” And somewhat later, but still in the misty past, Edmund Burke warned that “all that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing.”

The more one refuses to think, feel and act, the steadier the boat ride (temporarily) – ripples are okay, waves are dangerous. The Selma march was a wave, impressive and frightening; it flooded Alabama and for a moment the nation. It is too early to say precisely all that it left in its wake: anger certainly, fuel for the bigot’s fire, apprehension and death. Yet an Alabama governor, for the first time in history, holds a petition presented by the Negro community. Twenty groups of leading Alabama businessmen

have gone on record urging compliance with the civil rights laws. President Johnson has publicly rebuked Governor Wallace and denounced the Ku Klux Klan. Negro voter registration has picked up gradually (merely a smoke bomb or two dropped in protest) and a few Houses of God in Selma have for the first time admitted colored children of God. Thousands of Negroes have re-experienced the smell of fear and many have discovered the taste of pride and hope; hundreds of ministers and students have demonstrated that they have demonstrated that they value commitment above comfort, that concern may begin, but need not end, in the pulpit or library.

* * *

The nation has been reminded of a rare but perpetual [sp.] phenomeonon: [sp] that men of all regions, professions, faiths and colors can and will join in active pursuit of human dignity and freedom.

“Life is action and passion.”

April 30 & May 7 Editorials: Discrimination