

Letter

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INSTITUTIONAL SUBORDINATION is the placing or keeping of minorities in a position of inferiority by means of attitudes, actions, or institutional structures which do not use color itself as the subordinating mechanism. Rather, other mechanism related indirectly to color are used. Hence, a clear definition of institutional subordination becomes particularly elusive due to the very essence of its indirect nature, which consequently, makes it difficult for others to recognize. This is due predominantly to racism's relative longevity in American life.

For more than 300 years, overt racism was a central part of American life. Thousands of overtly racist laws, social institutions, behavior patterns, living conditions, distributions of political power, figures and forms of speech, cultural viewpoints and habits, and even patterns of thought continually forced Americans of color into positions of inferiority and subordination. Even after the bloodiest of American wars to a b o l i s h l e g a l subordination--slavery--many other racist laws and institutions remained in force. These included legally segregated schools, restrictive agreements forbidding nonwhites to live in certain neighborhoods, laws prohibiting interracial marriages, required racial separations in public facilities like buses and restaurants, and the denial of the right to vote.

Admittedly, some progress has been made in so far as striking down the legal supports for forms of overt racism and this in turn, has reduced some of its pervasively detrimental effects. Indeed, conscious and deliberate subordination by color is now considered wrong by most Americans. Consequently, many whites BELIEVE that overt racism--the only form THEY recognize--is disappearing from America. On the contrary, the deliberate exclusion of blacks, Mexican Americans and other Americans of color from labor unions, private social clubs, and all-white residential neighborhoods, just to name a few, must be viewed as none other than overt racism.

Three hundred years of overt racism has not disappeared overnight. In fact, many whites recognizing the injustice accruing as a result of overt racism now say: "OK, we realize the injustice of overt racism. So we will stop using color as a basis for decision-making. Instead, we will use other factors which are clearly and reasonably related to the activities and privileges involved. We will use skill levels in relation to jobs, place of residence in relation to school attendance, ability to score well on entrance examinations in relation to higher education, self-confidence and leadership in relation to job promotions, and savings plus present income in relation to buying homes." These factors then, will be free from overt racism. And this brings us to another point--"merit employment."

"Merit employment" is supposedly based on skill and ability without regard to race or color. Nevertheless, even "merit employment" programs can conceal many forms of indirect institutional subordination by color. As a matter of fact, such programs do NOT destroy or even significantly weaken the continuing racist effects of past overtly racist behavior. This is

due to the fact that many of those effects are embedded in institutional structures that no longer APPEAR to be related to race or color. For example, in a work situation, institutional subordination of nonwhites by white supervisors, who out of their own basic insecurities or other personality deficiencies (indeed, many whites, irrespective of their credentials, feel genuinely threatened by blacks), may be rationalized on the grounds that job performance is not "outstanding" or, certain duties may be "transferred" thereby justifying the elimination of the job classification altogether, which, thereupon a new position involving possibly menial duties may be created. Thus, if the nonwhite employee perceives the newly created position to be a demotion or an insult to his level of skills and abilities, then his only other alternative is to leave the organization.

Admittedly, the employer's actions were not overtly racist in nature or intent, but nevertheless they had racist effects, that is, they subordinated a nonwhite individual because of his color. These effects occur because the seemingly "reasonable" and "unbiased" behavior of the employer takes place in an institutional context that still contains profoundly racist elements remaining from three centuries of overt racism.

Other examples of institutional subordination is the geographic exclusion of minorities from all-white residential areas, and the perceptual distortions in the way people see themselves. Overt racism is the main cause of geographic exclusion of nonwhites from all-white residential areas, the vehicle of which is the deliberate discouragement of blacks and other minorities from buying or renting in all-white neighborhoods. This is practiced by white realtors, renting agents, landlords and homeowners. Consequently, out of fear of getting "the run-around" or hostile treatment, minorities don't even try to find homes in these all-white areas, in spite of laws and court decisions to promote the contrary.

Zoning laws or local actions to discourage or prevent the building of low-income housing are defended on the grounds that they "maintain high community standards" of housing in the suburbs. Yet many of the best quality schools, housing developments, recreational facilities and general residential environments are found in the suburbs. Consequently, minorities find themselves cut off not only from the most rapidly growing sources of new jobs, but also from the best amenities offered in American society. This is clearly institutional subordination, or, to discard the euphemism--racism. Yet, very few acts of overt racism are carried out by a very small number of people. But these are then supplemented by millions of white suburbanites who are completely unaware of the subordinating aspect of their behavior. In fact, many people conscientiously avoid any actions they believe to be overtly racist. Hence, many whites become righteously indignant at the charge that American society is "racist." They have purged their own actions of overtly racist behavior and honestly believe their communities "have no race

problems" because there are practically no minorities there in the first place. And institutional subordination that caused this exclusion remains completely invisible to them.

Perceptual distortion comes about as a result of the deeply rooted mental image of "normal" society as consisting of only white people, and of all "colored" persons as "strange" and "different." Due to the introduction of many more blacks into television forms however, an improvement has been made along these lines. But in situation shows and cartoons, a largely segregated society is still projected, and the same distortions that make whites unconsciously feel "normal" and superior in relation to nonwhites has the opposite effect upon the latter. Television, school textbooks and other educational materials convey to children of color the impression that they are inferior. Therefore, it should not be surprising that many minorities unconsciously come to believe he is inferior, he starts to lose confidence in his ability to overcome any encountered obstacles. This often causes him to reduce his efforts when confronted by such obstacles--which in turn produces failures that confirm not only HIS feelings of inferiority, but also justifies his perpetual subordination by others. Thus, geographic exclusion plus perceptual distortion combine to produce largely unrecognized psychological and behavioral effects upon both groups and these in turn perpetuate the institutional subordination of nonwhites because of their color.

The point of all this has been to beg the question: If in fact racial paranoia does exist, then given racism's relative importance in the American historical and contemporary perspective, is there any reason why it should not exist?

Moreover, this writer should like to ask one question of editor Boswell: What are YOUR credentials which qualify YOU as an expert in race relations??

E. Janet Reid

Note From Boz: I am, like you, a human being.

Student PSEA Meeting

There will be A Student PSEA meeting TONIGHT at 6:30 p.m. at the New Birth coffeehouse, 946 A Kirtland Ave., Meade Heights.

Discussion topics include upcoming organizational elections, insurances and other important items.

Editorial

PIE IN THE FACE---NOT A MERRY PAGE

by R. W. Bonaker

Long ago, a wise sage said "There's a reason for everything but everything is not reason."

So be it at Capitol Campus.

Last week, what started out to be great fun turned into a childish display of emotion and resulted in embarrassment for all of us in the Capitol Community. The Beta Chi society sponsored a Pie-Eating Contest last Thursday in Vendorville during the lunch hour. The activity was a part of the Social Committee's Nostalgia Week. The fastest pie-eater, who turned out to be Philadelphia's Bruce Strauss, would receive a five dollar prize.

Just as Strauss was putting the finishing touches on his 12 inch blueberry merangue pie, a couple of idiots began tossing the remaining pies at adversaries across the table. Whether they did it because of the T.V. cameras, I do not know. But innocent bystanders were splattered with pies, among them SGA President Mike Dini and Social Committee Chairman Don Snyder. Their clothes were ruined!

WHP News telecast the event on two separate programs that night. The 6 O'clock newscaster subtly mocked the actions of the "nasties" and made it appear those few jerks were representative of our student body. I say they most certainly are not! People with that type of mentality should not be classified as a college student.

I suppose many of our readers may differ with my criticism of those previously mentioned. You may argue, "what the hell; they were just blowing off some steam." All right. I guess they were. But they still failed to consider those innocents who while calmly eating their lunch at a fairly distant table were hit with a pie. And you might say I did not mention that one of the pie throwers assisted Beta Chi members in the clean-up operations. Well, I just mentioned it.

The solution was simple. First of all, Beta Chi should have staged the competition in the Student Center in the evening, and participants and spectators would have been prepared for any such action. Then, and I'll admit it, I would have been one of the first to start tossing pies.

SECURITY

TASK FORCE REQUESTS OPINIONS

The Security Task Force which Provost McDermott activated last term is in need of opinions and suggestions from the Capitol Campus student body, faculty, and staff regarding deficiencies and improvements in the following areas.

1. Regulations for parked vehicles.
2. Enforcement of moving vehicle and parked vehicle regulations.
3. Penalties for violators of vehicle regulations.

If you have any opinions and suggestions with regard to the above listing, please put them in writing and deliver them to anyone of the Task Force members listed below (the unit the Task Force member represents follows his local address).

- Dr. John D. Antrim, Room W-262 (Chairman)
- Mr. George Dressler, Room W-205 (Administration)
- Mr. Edward Ganssle, 938 A Mars Drive (Student Government Association)
- Mr. John R. Grimm, Room W-101 (Student Affairs)
- Prof. Clifford A. Mason, Room W-252 (Faculty)
- Mr. James Yorgey, 938 A Mars Drive (Meade Heights Board of Governors)

The Task Force is NOT asking for complaints but rather it is asking for constructive thoughts which can help it achieve its goal of finding out the best way to handle such matters on the Capitol Campus.

Joys of the Sabbat

Students, faculty and staff are invited to the "Oneg Sabbat" (The Joys of the Sabbat) festivities at the Bnai Jacob Synagogue, Nissley and Water Streets in Middletown.

The event will be staged on Saturday, March 3 from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Cultural and religious and musical themes will be featured. A fellowship hour culminating in a Havdala (Ceremony of the Separation of the Sabbath), will follow.

Rabbi Jonathan Brown, Congregation Ohev Sholom, Harrisburg will officiate and Dr. David Langmyer of Capitol Campus will play the banjo.

Refreshments will be served.

Master of Public Administration Student-Faculty Seminar

Speaker: Dr. Howard E. McCurdy,

American University

Topic: 'The Philosophy of Public Administration'

Friday Feb. 23

7:30 PM

Gallery Lounge

Speaker

Discussion

Refreshments

Husbands & Wives Cordially Invited