

Letters to the Collegian Editor

Up From Slavery Not So Easy

TO THE EDITOR: I also strongly support the black students from the Douglas Association who had enough courage and healthy self-respect to voice their discontent to the proper University authorities. My purpose in writing is to vocalize my support and to indicate how I feel two of the Letters to the Editor in Wednesday's Collegian fell far short of a proper attitude and perspective toward the racial situation.

The two letters in question evidenced the attitude that the Negroes' status in society is and has been no different from that of such minority groups as Italians and Polish. It is true that, when the Italian and Polish immigrants first came to this country, they were discriminated against and occupied the lower rungs of society.

It is also true that these immigrants were later accepted as equals because they had proved their unmistakable worth to society, mainly through hard work. I likewise believe that much bootstrapping and self-initiated constructive action are necessary for the black community to "deserve" acceptance by the American society. However, self-help is hardly sufficient to elevate a people from slavery to social equality. To put it simply, "up from slavery" is not as easy as "up from poverty."

Historically the whites are responsible for forcibly bringing the Negroes as a group to this country. Therefore, I contend that whites as a group are morally responsible, at least partially, for resolving the racial issue now. If, for no other reason, each white person should be very concerned about the plight of the black race because of the ominous threat to our cities this summer. That in itself should be motivation enough for any white person to become actively and constructively involved.

Let me clarify a few points. I do not necessarily fully support the methods that the black students employed in accosting Charles B. Lewis. In fact, I suspect that the motives of the members of the D.A. are not untainted by racist feelings. There are always two sides to any issue and I believe that the finger must be pointed at both whites and blacks in locating the blame for the present racial strife.

Furthermore, I do not fully support all of the 12 demands that the D.A. presented—but I do believe that some special consideration must be given to the black community by the University for the sake of social betterment in general. Of course, the acceptance of some poorly qualified black students into the University must be coupled by some remedial program to prevent a wholesale flunkout.

The University must recognize the initial conditions of the problem in order to arrive at a workable solution.

James Gray, Graduate

Solving Racial Problem?

TO THE EDITOR: I would like to make a few brief comments concerning the demands presented to Dr. Lewis by the Douglas Association.

Just why do our Negro students propose a separate section in Pattee? Do they expect the library to change its carding system so that books are carded according to color or nationality? If not, why should the library discriminate against Negro authors by placing them in a special section?

The Douglas Association should also note that applications for admissions do not require those applying to indicate race. The application is based on determining ability, not color. It must be then that either the Negroes who apply are lacking in ability, or that they do not apply due to conditions at Penn State, conditions not corrected by the list of demands presented to Dr. Lewis.

We cannot accept Negroes simply to create a racial balance. It's then a case of discriminating against other qualified people.

If the Negro would like a scholarship for Negroes, then let them endow it; it is not the right of the University to discriminate against me by taking money to benefit one specific group of students.

The Douglas Association also demanded a Negro literature course. Do they propose that it be required? If so, why should the University discriminate against other minorities and not offer courses concerning them that would also be required, so that we could all have majors in minority literature.

The Douglas Association should re-evaluate its list of demands and ask if the demands really solve the racial problem at Penn State, or simply create more problems.

Walter R. Loder '70

Uninvolved Student Govt.

TO THE EDITOR: In the past several days a strange (no, foreign) thing has hit the Penn State community: controversy. For three days students have been discussing an issue. The Collegian's letters columns have been filled with reactions and reactions to the discussion of the black students' demands.

There were the demands, then replies, satirical

Italian power ultimatums, the "joy-ride-is-over, whitey" statements, and the "don't-push-me-nigger" threats.

In addition to letting these comments get out of hand, the Collegian has encouraged them with editorials and page one coverage.

And even the Administration has added to the pandemonium by issuing one of its not too frequent statements, hinting that they might concede that segments of the student body are capable of thought: Vice-President for Student Control Charles Lewis clarified his "contaminated" statement, revealing that "Harlem is not adjacent to the campus."

It is heartening to note that, amidst this horrible furor, one campus agency has refrained from kindling the fire. It is none other than that keeper of the student's trust, the group that is "not objectionable to anyone." USG.

According to a spokesman, all the members of Penn State's student government have been so busy with other matters, no one has found time to comment on this issue.

After all, USG can't be expected to deal with something just because a minority of 200 black students have provoked discussion among everyone else. Right?

In its wisdom, USG has remained silent, perhaps to tackle this insignificant problem at a more opportune moment. Maybe this summer.

Yes, it's reassuring to know that there is still one restrained group on campus. Congratulations to Penn State's Uninvolved Student Government.

Jay Grossman, Graduate

Solution Lies in Harrisburg

TO THE EDITOR: Judging by the comments in this paper, it appears that there is little understanding of the petition of the Douglas Association to Penn State's Uninvolved Student Government.

De facto segregation is a fact of life in Pennsylvania's publicly financed higher education. The confrontations at Cheyney and Penn State represent a demand that this Commonwealth fulfill its obligation to assist young blacks in the realization of their individual and collective potentials.

By maintaining a second-class educational facility at Cheyney our politicians presume to meet their obligations; the people from the ghettos of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia know otherwise. They are demanding, above all, a quality education; they are no longer satisfied with such substandard opportunities.

While applauding the recently announced project "Upward Bound," it must be realized that given the nature of public higher education in Pennsylvania, no action by Penn State's Administration can come fully to grips with the problem. Larger socio-economic factors inhibit a local solution. The facts are that next year it will cost even more to come and live here than it does now, making it extremely difficult for the bulk of black youths to attend this institution. Financial aid from state sources under PHEAA does not really reach such prospective students thanks to the biases and politics built into that program. In short, the entire structure of Pennsylvania's publicly supported higher education is founded on hypocrisy.

The Douglas Association seems to have stolen a page from Hamilton and Carmichael's Black Power in their effort to dramatize this absurdity. Their objectives should not be condemned by a literal interpretation of the twelve points of their suit.

Their purpose here has been to force this institution—its students, faculty and administration—to define its future course: they have made it clear that they will not serve as "showcase Negroes" to save our consciences. They have brought the problems of Black America here and they deserve an honest answer both here and elsewhere.

For myself, I feel the immediate solution lies in Harrisburg. Only there can de facto segregation be met and dealt with. It is up to the Governor and the General Assembly to realize that public higher education in Pennsylvania must be committed to social justice.

Jacob W. Kipp, Graduate

In the Blacks' Interests

TO THE EDITOR: The demands presented by the Douglas Association is a reflection of one of two things. Either the Black community at Penn State is unable to find real problems which exist within the University, or else there are no significant issues.

I cannot believe that the latter is so, and therefore I am forced to look on the Douglas Association with some regret. It was in their power to attack meaningful issues which permeate the Penn State campus and unite the student body behind them. Instead they have accomplished the impossible task of division and defeat.

If the Douglas Association stands behind its present demands it will fail. Failure in the sense that even if its demands are enacted they can only be considered totally irrelevant to ending the central problems of prejudice and student suppression.

It would have been infinitely more constructive if, instead of demanding quotas of Black stu-

dents they would have made themselves available to go out and recruit some of the hundreds of Blacks who are academically and financially capable of attending Penn State and yet do not out of their own choice. Likewise the issue over a course in Negro history misses the point in that they should have demanded that majors and curriculums be established and controlled by professors and students.

It then would have been possible to institute a school of African and Asian studies as well as to make constructive changes in existing areas of study. But the central problem is none of these; it is the use to which research money is applied. What is really relevant would be a movement to force government grants to be applied more to the social sciences so that the problems of prejudice and poverty could be adequately studied. Related to this would be the creation of an Institute for Negro Studies which would effectively use students to study the social and political problems of America.

Such proposals as these are relevant not only to the Black students but the whole academic and social community. It would thus be in the Black students interest to attend Penn State and at the same time the whole community would benefit.

Leslie Sherman '68

Don't Favor Blacks, Baby

TO THE EDITOR: Sure, I'm in favor of equal treatment for all students on this campus. Yesterday's editorial argues that wholesale pro-Negro favoritism is one way of immediately "eliminating the effects of 300 years of bigotry." Somehow this one-sided treatment sounds like Goldwater saying extremism in defense of democracy is no crime.

The real point is, baby, grossing me out with vulgar sayings on placards won't earn you the respect you need for a cause which is right. Old Chinese saying: "Nothing to excess."

J. Garihan, Graduate

Negative Efforts, No Results

TO THE EDITOR: Douglas Association — If you are striving for integration and equality, why are you trying to promote segregation and hostility? I honestly don't see how negative efforts can bring about positive results. By negative efforts I mean that you are deliberately trying to antagonize the white community and you expect them to reward you for it.

Let's face it — some of those demands would do you more harm than good. One that sticks out like a sore thumb is that a section of Pattee Library be devoted to black authors. If this demand isn't outright segregation, I don't know what is! Another is that a course in Negro history be offered as a permanent part of the University's curriculum. Why? To show how much the Negro people have suffered and how much they deserve?

All the demands concerning the increase in black enrollment, more black faculty members, more black graduate students, more black athletes, black coaches, and more black literature in English courses can be answered with one statement — A University should be concerned with quality, not quantity.

Some of your demands are good, as well as interesting. It wouldn't be a bad idea to name a building after the Rev. Martin Luther King. The entire nation suffered when he died. A Martin Luther King scholarship fund is an excellent idea. There are many qualified Negroes in the country who can't continue their education simply because they can't afford it. A rather interesting idea is the introduction of an African culture study program.

Douglas Association, please reconsider and re-evaluate your strategy if you hope to get anything worthwhile accomplished.

Alexis Chontos '69

Time To Take Action, Not Talk

TO THE EDITOR: The cry "Students Arise" is finally being answered at Penn State. Unfortunately, it's by the smallest minority on campus.

The recent abundance of letters to the editor concerning the black students' demands is so typical of Penn State students it's sickening—all voice, no action! We sit around with pen in hand crusading against such important issues as the IDA which is almost non-existent here.

Look at the real problems that face us. Now is the time for Penn State to emerge from the shroud of apathy that dulls this campus. It's going to take action my friends—not talk.

Bob Shuman '70

Some Are Black and White

TO THE EDITOR: Under the new, highly efficient "Ethnic Classification System" proposed for the Library, where do we put Pushkin and Alexander Dumas, both Pere and fils? Or, for that matter, "Yes I Can," by Sammy Davis, Jr.?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Pushkin's mother was a Negro given to the Czar as a curiosity. She married one of the court nobles later giving birth to the famed writer. Similarly, Alexander Dumas, Pere, was the child of a Haitian and a white noblewoman from the French court.

Film Critique

'Will Penny' Shines Like Brand-New Coin

By PAUL SEYDOR
Collegian Film Critic

Of the post-Oscar batch of films, "Will Penny" is the best American movie I've seen. The story, written and directed by Tom Gries, tells of Will Penny, an uncouth, uneducated, sympathetic cowboy who falls in love with a married woman from the East.

The highlight of Gries's direction in his beautifully, brutally realistic depiction of cowboy life. The highlight of Gries's script is that he draws unabashedly upon, indeed, his film seems to be a virtual re-capitulation of several basic themes that run through American literature.

Will himself, for instance, harks to the prototype of the American hero, as exemplified by James Fenimore Cooper's various transmutations of Natty Bumppo in the Leatherstocking Tales.

Will is a Loner. Like Natty, Will is a loner—tall, silent, a man of the wilderness. The irony of this hero is that he lives outside the mainstream of the advancing American civilization. He has too long been governed by his own code, has too long traveled his own way, to adapt himself to a change of environment. Thus, Natty keeps moving west; his job it is to find a path, his means of survival, by slaying a deer.

Similarly, Will is one of the last of a dying breed of cowboys. When the trail drive is over, he goes his own way, avoiding people; his only concern is to survive the threatening winter. When Will at last finds a new job, it is as a line-rider. He is forced to live in an isolated cabin, where he guards the border of a Ponderosa-type ranch—a metaphor, perhaps, for civilization.

The essential difference between Will and Natty is the latter's incapacity for romantic love. Will does fall in love, but, tragically, it happens too late. "I'm almost fifty," he says. "I loved one way my whole life, and know no other." Consequently, he must leave the woman, and run scared, like Natty, from the creeping impingement of civilization.

Theme of Violence

Philip Young, professor of American literature and noted critic, points out that violence is an important theme in American literature ("The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "The World and An American Myth," from "Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration"). Will's life, too, is full of violence. But like the American hero he is a

non-violent man. He walks away from a fight, if he can. He kills only when his own code of honor tells him that the only alternative is disgrace. ("Grace under pressure," Hemingway once wrote.)

Gries sets his story in the poetic framework of the "spatial concept," as his camera captures the resplendent grandeur and magnificent ruggedness of the sprawling western plains and mountains.

If, for the record, one must set down the weaknesses in the film, he might say that the plot, in an effort to tie together the loose strands of the story, becomes contrived, albeit it, exciting. He might also smile at Gries's inability to resist introducing a stock villain, right out of the fanatic-bible-beaten mold. Yet he might note that this weakness is almost transformed into a virtue due to the satanic zeal with which Donald Pleasence invests the role.

Frontier Favor

Joan Hackett, a fine actress too long ignored, lends a distinctive frontier-flavor to the woman Will comes to love. Blessings, also, to the make-up crew for eschewing the full Hollywood-type treatment of this heroine.

But, the real star of this show is Charlton Heston, as Will. If you regard Heston as a second-rate actor in third-rate parts, prepare for a pleasant surprise. Heston literally owns this film. There isn't a note he fails to get in tune, a chord he fails to strike with unassailable rightness, an inner voice he fails to illuminate.

To cite a specific: There is one scene which, it seems to me, is a poignant summation of Will's alienation from American culture: the woman asks him to join her and her son in singing Christmas carols.

Of course, Will can't, not only because he doesn't know any, but also because he probably never celebrated a Christmas in his life. In this scene, you have only to study the abject, liquid sorrow of his conveyed in Heston's eyes; the utter frustration suggested the perfectly-timed awkward movement of his body; the pathetic eloquence projected through his crusty voice—and you shall witness the goods of which great performances are made.

As He Says Good-Bye

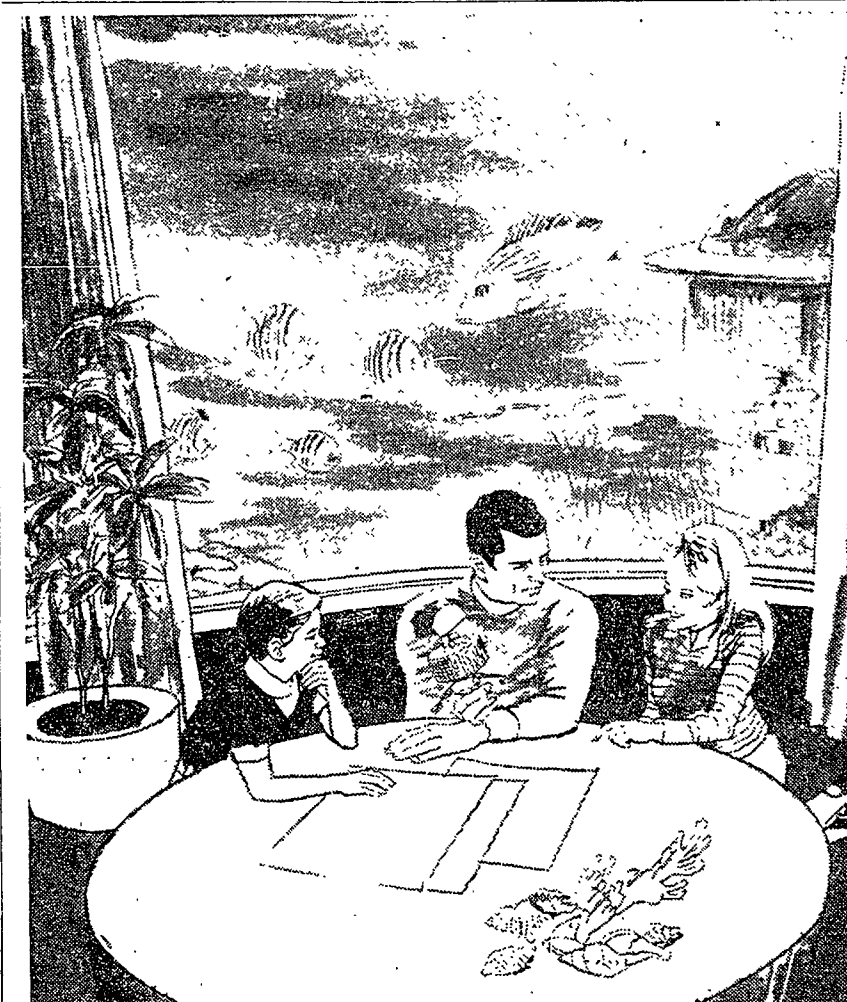
Or, just listen to the elegiac tenderness Heston calls forth in Will's summation of his life, as he says good-bye to the woman.

Elegiac is, I believe, the best word; for an elegy is what this film is, a memorial to the dying subculture of the cowboy, and, with him, a peculiarly American hero. Gries is to be commended for presenting this theme with neither apology nor affectation, but with genuine sympathy and empathy.

Although "Will Penny" is, admittedly, forged from some pretty well-worn alloys, thanks to Heston's conviction and Gries's artistry, the film shines brilliantly, like a newly minted coin.



SEYDOR



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The Sisters & Pledges of
Alpha Sigma Alpha
wish to congratulate their
sister Denise Le Mar
for being chosen Star & Crescent
Queen of Kappa Sigma Fraternity

\$2.00 --- Clip and Use --- \$2.00
This Coupon Worth
\$2.00
Towards Any Watch Overhaul
from May 14th to May 25th
\$2.00 --- Clip and Use --- \$2.00

SUNDAY WORSHIP
Methodist
EISENHOWER CHAPEL
11:15 a.m.

East Hall's Council Presents
"The Palace Jammy"
Featuring a Thousand Piece Orchestra
and Stuff Like That
9 - 12:30 25c
Girls Admitted Free 'til 9:30

THE SPOTLESSNESS OF (GASP) MY
TROUSSEAU CAN ONLY BE ASCRIBED TO (SOB)
THE INGENIOUSNESS OF CAMPUS CLEANERS.
ISN'T THAT (CHOKE)
CIRCUMLOCUTORY?