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FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 1957

Charlotte Politicians Share False Fears

NOTHING, not even the bracing scent of stogie smoke, violated the decorum of the City Club this week when James S. Smith's campaign for mayor was launched.

Was this a political meeting? The disclaimers were numerous, emphatic, and not without an occasional trace of hauteur.

Candidate Smith: "I probably know less about politics than anybody in the room but..."

Campaign Manager James A. Palmer: "I'm not a politician but..."

One might have imagined that it was a sin to be a politician. One might have supposed that politics in its "practical" application was incapable of virtue, and therefore suspect. Thus, to be an honorable office-holder or an untainted advocate of a popular office-seeker one must first divorce himself from the craft.

This approach is as misleading as it is unfortunate. The wholesale condemnation of public men known as politicians actually has an undermining effect on the real functioning of democratic institutions.

The politician is the man who makes democracy work. In a real sense, its success is dependent on him. He is the practical navigator, the expert in human emotions, prejudices and prepossessions, the one judge of whose ideas will work in their broad application.

His role was probably best described many years ago by Frederick M. Davenport in the HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW.

Mr. Davenport pointed out that the able and useful type of politician is the man who persuades people "to behave like rational human beings when they are in danger of mulling around like muddle-headed cattle," something that now and then happens in even the best-regulated democracies.

Not every politician fills the role. We have had our share of villains. As a result, many people view politicians in general as scheming, brawling, unprincipled wardheelers who deal in graft and corruption and fatten at the public trough.

The character and essential goodness of certain politicians present at the City Club the other evening—gentlemen who shun the label so fervently—will testify to that.

The South: Opportunity In A Burden

ACROSS the page a brilliant young southerner explains why he is coming home again. It is a case of the heart having reasons.

Too many young men of comparable talents have left the South for good. Others who have sojourned in distant places and then returned came back out of love or compelling nostalgia. These are unable to answer with intellectual conviction why they returned.

It was not that no place else could be home. They came back—not convinced that they should, not certain that the South merited their love, but only because they had to come back in order to feel whole again. It was a physical love they thought; a need to be close to the land and to have a large enough space on it to accommodate the demands of individualism; a desire to be unmanicured, unmassed and unnumbered; a wish to be free of the benign, dusting and scurrying of the metropolitan market places.

The land itself would satisfy these wants, and they would not think about the South's morals and manners, of which they were ashamed; nor of its future, in which they had no faith; nor of its past, in which they had no pride. They had come back to live in the South,

but to be separate from her at the same time, to live on their own little islands of idealism.

This particular young southerner is turned homeward both by love and conviction. The South needs and deserves his wholesome pride in it.

Admittedly, idealistic toms stump easily in the South. There is violence, injustice and unreason scattered across the landscape.

But most of it flows from a vastly important human struggle in which the resilience and flexibility of democracy itself is being tested. There is far more ultimate meaning—even justification—in some physical violence than there is in picket line violence in Pittsburgh or Detroit.

All Hail Charlotte's Polyglot Irishmen

ALTHOUGH the sight of all that expensive originality rising from poor Carolina soil still startles us, the day doubtless is coming when we'll be able to pass the Coliseum without gaping.

Familiarly finally makes everything commonplace. Happily though, Charlotte is not running out of intriguing incongruities. The first annual renewal of a St. Patrick's Day parade will be held here tomorrow.

It will have all the appropriateness of a moonlit Bunny Hop in the middle of the Gobi Desert, or an Elvis Presley concert before a Woman's Missionary Society.

For that very reason, we hope the local "Irish" paraders—representing varied complexions of religion and race—will overflow Tryon St. and sweep onlookers with them to the Barringer.

rehabilitated calloppe provided an old-time flavor, all right, but a Dixieland "marching band" did all its marching and playing on the bed of a moving truck. Typical.

People who with that parade was that it had a purpose. It had been planned, rehearsed and outfitted so well that it gave off all the spontaneity of a dead mackerel.

Charlotte's St. Patrick's Day parade is nothing like the one in Boston.

People just get out in the street and walk together. Going nowhere for no single reason. Just parading on a day that may or may not be the birthday of a man who might or might not have driven all the snakes out of Ireland.

We salute the marchers, and offer one suggestion.

Since Charlotte's Irish are such a polyglot lot and since nobody's sure about St. Patrick's birthday anyway, why not hold next year's parade during Brotherhood Week?

That observance could use a little spontaneity.

Brotherhood itself could use a lot of spontaneity.

From The Wall Street Journal

'LIKE I SAID'

THE morning mail brought us a letter from an English teacher in New Britain, Conn., who accuses us of contributing to the degeneration of the English language because every now and then in our columns appears the use of "like" instead of "as."

We suppose we might try to explain away these slips by pointing out that Francis Bacon, who accused Oxford, or whoever Mr. Shakespeare was supposed to have been, sometimes did the same thing, as when he wrote "Like an arrow shot from a well-experienced archer hits the mark."

Or we might fall back on the story told about the time one of Sir Winston Churchill's speeches was corrected by a

secretary who was something of an English purist. The reason the speech was corrected was because a sentence ended with a preposition. Mr. Churchill noted the correction, changed it back again and wrote on the margin something like, or such as: "This is an impertinence 'up with which I will not put.'"

Then, too, we might say, like Dr. Johnson is reputed to have said, "When the English language gets in my way, the hell with the English language."

What the crusty old individualist plainly meant was that as long as he was going to be bound by restrictions like rules of English grammar,

Confessions Of A Confederate

Why The Wayfaring Southerner Can Go Home Again

By EDWIN M. YODER

Editors Note: How can the southerner reconcile himself to the differences that set the South apart? Rhodus Scholar, Yoder, a Hecla, Okla., writer, phrases a provocative answer, prepared especially for The News.

ABSENCE makes small friends and great loves greater," the French ironist La Rochefoucauld once wrote.

My moving from the South to foreign soil has convinced me, not only that La Rochefoucauld knew whereof he spoke, but that the South falls under his second heading. The great loves which absence makes greater.

We southerners find ourselves in the minority among Americans at Oxford. But we find that our patriotism has been borne before us by the race problem, and we deny the South. The mythologies surrounding it, all the thick catalogues of splendor and gloom, have carried off.

The Glimt Is There

It brings a special glint to the Englishman's eye when you tell him you are from Dixie. You suspect that behind that glint may be the gleam of a cotton field hooded by darkies in chains, a Simon Legree cracking his whip and calling up his bloodhounds, perhaps a Faulkner's "Big Daddy" — or even a hoghead being rolled down Erskine's ladder from the top of a hill. In exceptional cases, the glint may have behind it a curiosity stemming from disbelief that any real reason can be given for the South's secession. It is to borrow a phrase from the late W. T. Polk. All the same, the glint is there.

This intense interest, found in foreign parts, has made me do more serious thinking about the South than I've ever done in one short period before, and I can't deny that those thoughts have been colored by a certain degree of nostalgia. In detachment, the insignificant things seem to fade away, the real landmarks to loom larger.

How To Go Home

Being out of the South has different effects on different people, though. A few weeks ago, I received a letter from a friend who has left the South — if for different reasons, and if to go a shorter distance.

"If there's any real social problem for the educated white from the South," my friend wrote, "that is the migration of the Negro."

The migration totals from the South, particularly among younger college graduates, prove the wisdom of those words. It is a problem—going home; but for me it is not a problem without an answer.

Is Dixie Retarded?

Too many contemporaries, I think, look on the South as retarded. In the rest of the nation and the world, and still retain the identity and the provincial characteristics that southerners cherish in common.

There is no greater question in the nation than whether the South is a nation in the making, or a province of the United States. The question burdens the South. But it also provides it the opportunity to prove democracy and individualism can co-exist.

The Real Problem

The problem, then, is not so much how can the southerner go home again? But: How can the southerner reconcile himself to the differences that set the South apart, and learn to appreciate what is good in those differences?

Southerners may move away. But the odd thing about those who leave is that in so many cases they look on their departure as a mere geographic move. No matter where he goes, the southerner never stops thinking of himself as a southerner, and he never tries to keep his drivel, though that is only a superficial mark of being a southerner — if still one of unadmitted complexity.

A Guilt Complex

The departed southerner does maintain his identity. But along with it he feels a certain guilt. I call it "guilt" because he somehow feels that he must apologize for having left. The migratory guilt complex is especially strange in a country where people are proud to be Americans.

There are some things to remain an invisible magnet of tradition, fond memory, "kinship," which won't be denied. The natural question is, of course, why southerners move away if moving makes them uncomfortable.

WASHINGTON

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

THE public doesn't know it, but Israel has been a long time in the making. American diplomats in private talks against the move of Col. Nasser to set up a civilian administration in the Gaza Strip.

Personal Okay Given

What the public doesn't know is that the statecraft by the Israeli foreign minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, in the U.N., setting forth the conditions under which Israel would withdraw from Gaza and accept a ceasefire, was approved and agreed to by John Foster Dulles. It was also read by the French and by various State Department officials. They even made



Wistful Visions Of The Plantation South Linger On.

And it does seem uncomfortable. Robert Penn Warren, the southern novelist who has left to teach at Yale, gives an unambiguous answer to the Citizens' Councils, and not least for all her Pharaonic outside critics say. The South has made no progress in its race relations. The way of a bi-racial society has never in history been easy, and the South has made a good job of her own personal feelings between white and Negro as any region cursed with racial tension ever has.

'Surge Of Relief'

"Out of Memphis, I lean back in my seat on the plane, and I watch the darkness slide by. I know what the southerner feels going out of the South, the relief, the expanding vision... I feel the surge of relief. But I know what the relief really is. It is the relief from responsibility."

Regional Paradox

To say this is not to apologize for legal discrimination, poll taxes, the big government, and similar acts of barbarism. But it is to say that while our red-galused politicians have screamed "Nigger" from the county courthouse steps, while our own bigoted declarations have made it hard for us to live civilly together, we have done so — in an inevitably feudal way. Despite our advertisement that we consider the Negro an inferior human being, we have believed that advertisement in personal dealings and in the government.

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I have talked a lot about differences, vices and virtues, but one of course wants to know where they come from, and why. The first temptation is to attribute the South's distinctiveness to the Civil War, to say: "Well, we are the only people who have succeeded and fought the rest of the country."

But the Civil War only cemented a feeling of sectional identity which really existed long before the years just before the war, but as far back as the beginnings of the Union.

Southerners are notorious talkers about tradition. But tradition can mean all things to all men. It can be a sacred, not only included, differ radically about that tradition from, say, Sen. Eastland, to judge by appearance, believes the southern tradition has its stronghold in a powerful and noisy layman and the intolerance of the Negro. If so, I think Eastland and others like him miss the depth and greatness of southern tradition.

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South Must Now Answer

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