

SKANDALON

Vol. 1 No. 10

March 23, 1963

As our campus expands and moves to the new site, we have been compelled to redefine ourselves in terms of the new university. The change in function of our college has not meant that a university community has been formed. Recently these issues have been posed anew. Many organizations have had to assess their roles on the new campus. There has been the realization that it is not enough only to have a well rounded social life or to do well in one's studies. For if we were to accept these as the criteria for success in our college years, then we would be making a great mistake.

The real challenge in the university is that its members become involved in the world around it. Also, all should involve themselves in community problems instead of remaining aloof from the circumstances around the college. It is imperative that we become involved in the life of Albany or of where ever we may find ourselves. It is not enough to give slavish devotion to a particular group or to our studies while the rest of life goes on around us. It is our responsibility to sort the trivia from the significant. Hopefully, the ability to discern develops with education and maturity.

It is not enough to make pious judgements on current social problems. We must make our beliefs known, and be prepared to defend them. We should utilize our intellects to seek the important issues of our times. It is no longer possible to remain neutral. Most of the boons of mankind arose from someone's concern for his fellow man and his attempt to implement these concerns. All good things have emanated from those who refused to play the role of the spectator and who willingly took sides.

The student must be unencumbered by all the petty loyalties which distract and divide him. Our loyalties need to be to worthy ideals, strong and unwavering. Stephen Bayne wrote, "the goal (of a university) is to teach men how to make up their minds and choose their sides and build their lives, and if need be give their lives for the unneutral truth."

While our campus mulls over its own weighty problems, it should keep in mind that much of its social divisions arise from the inability and total lack of desire of its various social groups to try and understand each other. As long as reconciliation is non-existent, we will be able to perpetuate all those ridiculous and inane issues which divide us now. -Editor-

THE INSIDE STORY ON "SKANDALON"

In the first issue of this journal it was suggested that anyone interested in the meaning of the name Skandalon might turn to the New Testament verse, "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block ('skandalon') to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (I Corinthians 1:23). A certain faculty wit, here nameless, is reported to have asked "Does this mean Skandalon is to be anti-semitic?" It must be obvious by now his fears, however fleeting, were needless, but it may not yet be clear why the name was chosen or what it really means.

The word is not an uncommon one in the New Testament, actually. Mathew and Luke use it as well as Paul, although most translators manage to hide the fact. For example, on one notable occasion, when Jesus is forced to rebuke Peter (who thoughtfully enough would save Jesus from the fate which awaits him in Jerusalem but in the process cause him to betray his whole mission), he cries out, "Get behind me, Satan, you are a 'skandalon' to me" (Math. 16:23). Unfortunately, this gets translated as "hindrance," which is decidedly anemic, rather than "stumbling block or at least "offense."

But in the passage from I Corinthians, it is the "Cross" which is the 'skandalon.' And whereas Peter has no business being a stumbling block to anyone (it is only because he has such a hard time in getting the point about Jesus), the "Cross" must be just that. For men look for a messiah of a very different sort--a king in fact and not a rabble-rouser from the country; a man of position and dignity, not a crucified peasant. They did then and they do now.

So it is that any journal which attempts to speak to relevant issues from the standpoint of the Christian faith will be a 'skandalon'. It cannot but cause offense if it challenges the hypocrisy of society which is merely bored by the race question or the shibboleths of a community which thinks man can solve the problem of the self by rational reflection and diligent inquiry, to illustrate the point.

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Of course, the use of 'skandalon' as a title may prove to be a rather major mistake. If this journal becomes negative by disposition or tries to play the hero's role, it will merely show itself another "Peter." But if it tries to examine issues and ideas sub specie crucis, and does so with some grace and skill, it will be of some service in suggesting men watch their step.

Frank Snow, Campus Minister

FROM SOUTH MALL TO...SOMEWHERE !

One year ago the State of New York appropriated 98.5 acres of land in Albany's South End to be used for government office buildings. There were two reasons for this action--to acquire space so that the cramped and decentralized conditions under which many state departments currently operate might be relieved and to involve the State of New York in the urban renewal of its capital city. The action from either standpoint is laudable, but Albany Mayor Erastus Corning II called it "ruthless," charging lack of consideration for the 6800 people living in the 40 block area. The problem of relocating these people to satisfactory housing is great indeed and the Mayor's alarm is understandable.

The Mall area is generally recognized as a slum section, part of Albany's "inner city." Residents are primarily Italian and Negro. Last December, State Housing Commissioner James Gaynor issued a report calling 52 per cent of the housing in the South End substandard. In the Mall area itself 15-20 per cent of the housing is "dilapidated,...a hazard to health." Obviously renewal is needed.

The problem is finding satisfactory locations for the people to live. In the past Albany has not had a housing shortage. The Gaynor report noted a vacancy rate of 6 per cent compared with 4 per cent state-wide, but many of the vacant buildings are dilapidated or located in areas where many people don't want to live (e.g. the South Mall). However the report also stated that, "no privately owned elevator apartment structures had been built since the 1930's." (One is currently under construction on the former site of the Dobler Brewery adjacent to the Mall. This project however will be for middle income families and therefore not available to present Mall residents.) A large proportion of housing in Albany is "substandard" or "deteriorating." Of thirteen principal cities in New York State Albany ranks eleventh, above Troy and Utica, in percentage of "sound housing" with 82 per cent. Clearly steps must be taken to provide enough good housing for people displaced by the South Mall and other renewal projects.

Steps, of course, are being taken. The City of Albany has several low rent public housing units available. Others are under construction and still others are being planned. The state has an office in the South Mall to help residents in relocation. The State of New York also plans construction of 100 housing units. Mayor Corning has asked the State Legislature to authorize him to impose rent controls in anticipation of a housing shortage. Governor Rockefeller has indicated sympathy with this request. CURE, an independent political party, has urged that landlords be given subsidies so that rent controls will not prevent them from keeping their property in good repair.

But these steps may not be big enough. Available sound housing and housing projects being planned do not provide the necessary 3000-3500 units. Even if they did many would soon become unavailable because of the skin color of many South Mall residents. Unless the legislature, scheduled to adjourn within two weeks, acts on the rent control bill at this session, the housing shortage could lead to rents beyond the means of virtually all Mall residents. Both the state and the city must accelerate and expand planning and construction of public housing. Private builders must be induced to build low rent apartment buildings. Governor Rockefeller should exert pressure on legislative leaders to act immediately to authorize rent controls for Albany.

The development of the South Mall is potentially the best thing to happen to Albany since the city became our state capital in 1797. But, as Mayor Corning predicted a year ago, unless the housing problem is solved, the state's efforts will be "ruthless."

Tom Bartlow

taken from MOTIVE, Feb., 1963

...Luther was a great man of God and a great theologian. He saw the perils of conventional religion. He had the courage to state the paradoxes of faith in opposition to conventional piety with the whole force of his being. ...And just as Luther dared to say that "nobody in this life is nearer to God than those who hate and deny him," so today we should have the courage to consider the possibility that unreligious, even antireligious poets, novelists, and philosophers may have more to say to us about the deepest problems of faith than those who drove out the pious platitudes of conventional religion, or those who try to convert these platitudes into a cheery, self-serving gospel of "peace of mind" and "positive thinking." ...The one unforgivable sin is lukewarmness. The man of faith is sometimes less distant from Luther's "God-denier" than he is from the conventional believer, precisely because the former is passionately concerned with the ultimate and the latter is not.

THERE WILL BE PEACE...WITH OR WITHOUT PEOPLE

Conflict is a fundamental and pervasive feature of social life. It takes many forms, some beneficent in effects, some malign.

One of the most malignant forms of conflict is violence. Its cost can be reckoned not only in physical terms, which today have become overwhelming, but in social and spiritual terms as well. In a violent struggle, the victim may suffer physical damage. The victor suffers another kind of damage: He becomes infected with his own reliance upon propaganda, deceit and destructiveness. In the words of Niccolo Tucci: "What is a victor but one who has learned that violence works? Who will 'teach him a lesson'?"

In a bitter and protracted struggle, there is a strong tendency to regard the adversary as an absolute enemy, to be eliminated or rendered impotent. He is "outside the pale."

Christianity challenges this view by affirming the unity of the human family, if for no other reason than this: God cares for all his creation. The Christian is not entitled to withhold forgiveness from anyone, even the most depraved and debased. This view, apprehended through the eyes of the spirit, can now be seen as an unescapable social reality. "Loving one's enemies" takes on a new and unique relevance.

We can expect deep-seated conflicts to persist so long as there is growth and change. The more rapid the change, the greater will be the potential for conflict. How can a dedicated struggle against an adversary be carried on without becoming victim to the negative dynamics and corrosive impact of violence, of threat and counter-threat? Can one resist in a way that affirms the underlying unity of all parties to the struggle?

That is what nonviolent forms of resistance seek to do. Whereas violence symbolizes the broken or unrealized community, nonviolence--the willingness to accept suffering rather than inflict it--is a powerful symbol of the basic reality of man's communal life, that "we are all members one of another."

The implicit dynamics of developing societies push us ever more rapidly in the direction of a world society where there can be neither enemies nor aliens. Gross inequalities and injustices will no doubt persist. Great evils will confront us that call for resistance. As we discover more about the personal and social origins of violence, as we become more skilled in the control and management of conflict generally, and as the human race increasingly recognizes its inescapable and indispensable solidarity in spite of its disunity and its capacity for evil, we shall probably see the pathology of violence reduced to marginal proportions.

Issues will still be "soul size", as they always have been and always will be. Nevertheless, men will be able to pursue the meaning of the great issues of their lives without the frenzied outbursts of large-scale violence and mutual destruction. A new chapter in man's social and spiritual destiny will have begun.

Written especially for Skandalon by
Charles C. Walker
College Secretary, Middle Atlantic Region
American Friends Service Committee
1500 Race Street--Philadelphia 2, Pa.

STAFF:

Editor.....Alan Minarcik
Staff.....Guy McBride
 Dave Simington

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Wednesday, March 27, 12 noon, Chapel
Service, First Unitarian Church
(Washington & Robin).

Tuesday, April 2, 7:30 p.m., Bru; the
Rev. Randolph Nugent to speak on "What
the Negro Thinks of the White."

Wednesday, April 3, 12 noon, Chapel
Service.

RANDOLPH NUGENT
TO SPEAK ON RACE RELATIONS

The white liberal viewpoint on race relations has received much attention in the North. The Negro viewpoint has been almost entirely overlooked. The Reverend Randolph Nugent will speak on "What the Negro thinks of the White." Mr. Nugent is the director of the inner city program of the Albany Methodist Society and has much experience in this field. His remarks will be honest and challenging. All those who are at all interested in this crucial topic are invited to attend. The meeting will be held in Brubacher, at 7:30 p.m., on April 2.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

In early 1963 Charles DeGaulle, President of France, makes the famous "14th of January Declaration" in which he permanently shuts out Great Britain from the European Economic Community. This event marks the beginning of the era of European consolidation and the rise of the mighty "Third Force."

Throughout 1964 and 1965 the French government builds up her armaments at a spiraling pace and continues regular nuclear testing in the Sahara. While the totally integrated Common Market prospers with increased industrialization and world trade, the economics of Great Britain and the United States move ahead sluggishly and even falter as higher tariffs are set in Europe.

In 1969 France and West Germany effect complete political union by declaring themselves the Republic of Frangaulia. In a matter of months Spain, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Belgium, and Andorra scurry to annex themselves to Frangaulia or face economic ruin.

In 1975 the Western world rejoices when the satellite states of Eastern Europe revolt successfully against their communist regimes and immediately seek into Frangaulia. Intensive rioting breaks out in the Soviet Union. On July 18, Premier Nikita Khrushchev calls upon the United States to join in a Treaty of Mutual Peace and Friendship. After obtaining an agreement for total disarmament, the President of the United States, Robert Kennedy, asks Congress for a ratification of the proposal.

By 1980 the steps toward total nuclear and conventional weapons disarmament are completed and a Pledge for Peace is signed by the nuclear powers and Frangaulia, the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and Israel.

In 1983, Soviet and American statesmen and economist map out a long range plan for close cooperation in guiding their respective nations to socialism. During the summer of that year, three Russian exchange students are guests at the home of the American elder statesman, Barry Goldwater. Early in 1984, Nikita Khrushchev denounces Communism as a Stalinist conspiracy perpetrated by the "ignominious war-mongers of China."

A grave crisis occurs when in the summer of 1989 Frangaulia spurns the Pledge for Peace and conducts a series of nuclear tests off the coast of Haiti. United States forces mobilize in Cuba. The American President, Edward Kennedy, announces an economic quarantine of the area until the situation has been clarified.

Yet the world is further shocked in early 1990 when the army of Frangaulia invades Great Britain with lightning speed and defeats Her Majesty's forces in a day-long battle near Hastings. On the day Charles DeGaulle, Now Supreme Director of Frangaulia, celebrates his 100th birthday, Great Britain and the Commonwealth are declared provinces of the Republic. Later that year Frangaulia officially withdraws from NATO and American motion pictures are banned in all her territories.

As expected by many observers, Frangaulia announces a mutual non-aggression pact with China and both proceed to attack the Soviet Union on two fronts. The United States declares war on Frangaulia and China. The leader of the huge continent nation of Africana, now Emperor Nkrumah II, declares official neutrality.

No nuclear weapons are used in the 3rd World War. Within three months the United States is overrun by the Chinese. The American President sends China a stiff note of protest, but to no avail. The American war effort is hampered by a deadlocked nation-wide transportation strike of the Teamster's Union.

By 1992, the forces of Frangaulia and China are in effective control of the world. Charles DeGaulle is crowned honorary King of the Northern Hemisphere and the President of the World Assembly. In 1995 the minor reconstruction tasks have been completed. Few cities were bombed and the only metropolitan area severely damaged, Albany, New York, is never rebuilt. In 1996, President DeGaulle calls an end to all military occupations. But upon the urgent requests of American consumer industries, most Chinese, who now all speak English, remain in the United States.

In the grand year of 2000, the Republique du Monde is declared by the representatives of all the old nation-states. Later that year, however, the whole world mourns the death of the Father of Peace, Charles DeGaulle. On October 3, he accidentally falls from the second level of the Eiffel Tower.

But the peace and prosperity of the world continue under the administrative leadership of Frangaulian statesmen for 30 years. During this period, French is declared the world language, the sale of milk is outlawed, and a group of Israelis establish a kibbutz on Mars.

It isn't until 2082 that the peace ends and there follows a long gradual return to the state system. In that year world civil war breaks out when the area once called France successfully secedes from the world under the leadership of an obscure housepointer named Napolean Schwartz.

Ross Dunn