

Opinion

Two wrongs equal no rights

Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream of a society in which every man was to be judged by his character and abilities and not by the color of his skin. He led a crusade to overturn the inequality of blacks before the law that had existed.



Brian Frederick

His crusade was

successful — the unjust laws were repealed. The same law was to apply to every American. But the civil rights activists have not been content with the mere removal of the offensive laws and the establishment of equality before law for all Americans. They have sought affirmative action programs in order to achieve what they feel to be an 'equitable' representation in the work force. In so doing, they have cut the moral high ground out from under their own feet and become guilty of the same offense for which they sought

redress. Preferential hiring and promotion are not new, but earlier this year they received strong sanction from the Supreme Court in two 5-4 decisions. On Feb. 25 the court approved a one-to-one promotion scheme for black and white Alabama state troopers. On March 25 the Court approved the promotion of a woman over two men who scored higher on an oral test. The way now lies open for legal discrimination against white males. A Stanford law professor says "If

someone doesn't suffer in the picture, it's not affirmative action." In this case, it's the white male who suffers. Of course, these injustices have their proper justification. It is said we need an integrated society and that temporary reverse discrimination is required to counteract historical discrimination against minorities and women. Thus, social justice is to be achieved through injustice. This reasoning is seriously in error and is not applied consistently. Consider professional basketball. Blacks comprise 12.1 percent of the general populace, but 80 percent of the NBA. Why is no one seeking to achieve the proper proportion of whites to blacks? Have we no pity for those aspiring white boys who have failed to attain the skill to beat out the blacks?

It becomes a moral, not a legal, problem. Attitudes and beliefs cannot be changed by law. Beliefs can be changed effectively only by persuasion and the example of those who know a better way. And the best way to reward ability is through a color-blind free market. Contrary to popular opinion, rights of those not hired due to prejudice have not been violated when a right is not violated because another refuses to deal with me, regardless of reasons for that choice. If he is prejudiced against blue-eyed blonds or German surnames despite their qualifications, he will be the loser. Affirmative action seeks to give a law that which often has not been merited by ability. The free market, however, rewards the deserving in the long run. If we desire that all of us be judged by merit alone, affirmative action must be ended. If we do not, we shall all suffer. Many of the best-qualified white males are kept from maximum productivity. The operation of the market at this time. The biggest quarrel today is over the lack of proportional numbers of women and minorities in high positions. Executives are not born, but are made. This does not happen overnight. If we consider where minorities and women were 30 years ago, it is not surprising that there are not more in high positions today. They have not yet matured to great numbers. But their numbers are growing and will continue to do so as the market rewards their newly acquired skills. Affirmative action refuses to wait for the market to reward ability and insists on seeking to obtain the rewards of developed potential before that potential is developed. The result is economic stagnation and social strife as long-term peace and prosperity are sacrificed for the name of a transitory 'social justice.' Outlawing discrimination is not the way to end it.

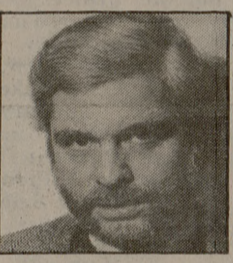
Brian Frederick is a senior history and Russian major and a columnist for The Battalion.



MARGULIES
© 1987 HOUSTON POST

Taking accountability to heart

In 1983, Menachem Begin resigned as prime minister of Israel and returned to his apartment on Zemach Street in Jerusalem. There, he sees only two people (both former political associates) aside from his son and has been out of the house only five times — twice to go to the hospital and three times to visit his wife's grave.



Richard Cohen

Recently, the *New York Times* wrote about Begin, about his self-imposed exile and the possible reasons for it. His beloved wife, Aliza, had died in 1982. His war in Lebanon, which his generals had promised would bring quick, relatively easy results, had turned into a debacle. Outside his house, protesters had daily posted the latest casualty count, and every day Begin saw the numbers mount. In his mind, the dead were daily placed at his doorstep. The old heart of an old man broke.

The last time I was in Israel, I went to the street where Begin lives. I just wanted to see it. I had called the two associates with whom he still meets, but there was little they could tell me. As for meeting with Begin himself, that was out of the question. He even recently refused to see Jimmy Carter. My credentials are, of course, less impressive, but my task was different. I wanted to write about accountability. Maybe no one knows the reason for Begin's almost total seclusion, but if the reason had anything to do with Lebanon, then Begin stands as a benchmark for contemporary political figures. He may be the only political leader who judges himself accountable for nothing. An example: Richard Nixon conducts himself as if Watergate were the work of someone else. He has distanced himself from the protracted presidential crisis of which he is the cause and has metamorphosed into a foreign-policy wise man. There is no hint that the useless deaths of Vietnam visit him in the night. If Begin can be compared to anyone,

it is Lyndon Johnson. The Vietnam War woke Johnson in the night and sent him down to the White House situation room to ask for the latest information. Effectively denied another term, he went home to Texas to smoke forbidden cigarettes. His heart just stopped as if with a sigh. The real end had come a lot earlier. As usual, the Greek tragedians were right: Defeat came through victory. Washington could bring electricity to the Texas Hill Country, but it could not win the hearts of Vietnam villagers. What had worked — what had always worked — suddenly could not. Something like that happened with Begin. He never cut his idealism with sentimentality. He was criticized for his role in the 1946 bombing of the King David Hotel, which killed — deliberately or not — 91 people, some of them British officers. But the bombing had the desired effect: It provided the British yet another reason to pull out of Palestine. Begin defied world opinion by permitting Israeli Jews to settle on the West Bank. When the protests ceased, the deed was done. Lebanon must have seemed yet another area where the bold use of violence could succeed. But it did not. The PLO fought better than expected; the world howled in protest at the bombing of Beirut and the tragedy of Sabra and Shatila. What was possible for a guerrilla leader in 1946 eluded a head of state in 1982. Once again, what had worked — what had always worked — suddenly could not. There was no success to explain away the bodies. Begin appointed no commission of inquiry. He wrote no book of justification. He could have said he listened to the wrong people. He could have rationalized, sought exoneration at the polls, overwhelmed questions of accountability with a showing of popularity. Instead, he closed the door to his apartment. He seems not afraid to utter the word "I." I was wrong. I am responsible. No one else.

At the end of his life, Begin instructs. Neither his prescription nor his example is for everyone. But maybe alone

among contemporary political leaders, he holds himself responsible for his mistakes. Behind his door, he awaits the final accounting. Meanwhile, he prepares.

Copyright 1986, Washington Post Writers Group

Mail Call

Wasting a free education

EDITOR:

I'm a senior in health education planning to go to physical therapy school. Admittedly, health ed is not one of the toughest majors, but I enjoy it. I work and play hard and make good grades. My parents pay \$2000 a semester for school.

I make this point because I have classes with the football boys. (I apologize to the guys that don't deserve what I'm about to say, but a few bad apples always spoil the bunch). They are virtually given a free education and a few other luxuries, such as being catered to in classes, among others. Some take advantage of this — others don't.

Kevin Murray is a case in point. The article in the April 30 *Battalion* peddling him above Roger Staubach, Joe Theisman and Joe Montana is a bunch of bad bull! I have no sympathy for Murray; he was given the chance for a free education on a platinum platter and threw it away because his ego convinced him he could go anywhere with his "attitude." Face it — he got what he deserved because of his vanity. I just hope others learn from his mistake — not everyone can be drafted, so don't let your head get so big that it can't fit through a doorway.

I've had that on my mind for three years and finally got so fed up with all the catering to the football boys that I finally found the courage to say it. Think about it Ags — it's all true. Again, I apologize to those undeserving.

Lisa Battles '87

All rights deserve respect

EDITOR:

In reply to Mark Bednar's letter of May 1, I will not resort to using an immature personal attack as Mark did. Instead, I would just like to make a few points that will, I hope, clarify my point of view.

I was raised by a single mother who held down two jobs and had four sons. She received little or no funds from my father. I supported her then and now support her in any endeavor to augment her rights as a human being against the womanizing oppression of male chauvinist executives. I condone any movement whose goal is to obtain, for women, economic and social rights that are equal to those of men.

I think that when someone criticizes the actions of a group, he is automatically assumed to be in contempt of those individuals in the group. If you look at my letter of April 29 objectively, I do not think you will find the kind of chauvinism that Mark Bednar sees. When I referred to "pride," it was obvious that I was not referring to school spirit or to healthy self-confidence that leads to success. I was referring to an ugly, self-centered conceit which is the

kind of pride that leads a group to oppress anyone who disagrees with the group's ideals. Pride has been the cause of the Ku Klux Klan's prejudice against minorities and has driven labor unions to become the oppressors rather than the oppressed.

If NOW pickets that man's business in Bryan, not only will it be violating his right to publicly disagree with them, but they will also be hurting his business. It would be the wrong thing to do and I do not think the man is hurting them with his sign. My suggestion is simply for these women to reconsider the particular prideful, vain action that they are planning. I apologize for calling them "ladies."

For Mr. Bednar's information, my girlfriend is a lady and I am chivalrous toward her. I like an attitude of mutually serving one another. Please forgive me for my ignorance.

Darrell Dotson '88

Aggie inferiority complex

EDITOR:

Why does the Texas A&M War Hymn contain the words "Goodbye to Texas university," and other derogatory references to the University of Texas? This is a question most Aggies have asked themselves at least once. (I must say "most" because — believe it or not — there are those on campus who will eat everything that is fed to them).

Why should one university occupy our thinking so? I think it is an inferiority complex this University has had for many years. I think it would be better for the fight song to speak highly of "Texas A&M and the home team" rather than cutting down UT.

It also feels extremely silly to sing this song when guests from other universities are present.

For whatever reasons the song was written, now is the time to lay this tradition down to rest. I have two suggestions:

1. Commission someone to write new words to the fight song for each opponent.

2. (This is the one I prefer) Commission someone to write this "World Class University" a real fight song (or maybe have a contest.)

For die-hard Ags, the old song could still be sung when we play UT. Until the new song is written, I suggest we whistle or hum the melody for the present war hymn.

Mike Montgomery '87

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board

- Sondra Pickard, Editor
- John Jarvis, Managing Editor
- Sue Krenek, Opinion Page Editor
- Rodney Rafter, City Editor
- Robbyn Lister, News Editor
- Lloyd Brumfield, Sports Editor
- Tracy Staton, Photo Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4111.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.