

letters

Supplement articles racist, wrong

To the Editor:

I was very disappointed with two of the articles in last week's Black History Month supplement. The article "Thoughts on Jungle Fever" was, in my opinion, obviously racist. The writer, Colwyn Burchall Jr., suggests that black men who "consort" with white women are somehow betraying the struggle to eliminate racism. If any white person suggested that whites who have interracial relationships were betraying their people, the statement would be taken for exactly what it is — blatant bigotry. I do not see how the occasion of Black History Month should make it acceptable for any writer to express similar sentiments.

The statement that black men who become involved with white women are "voluntarily consorting with the enemies of their people" is nothing more than shameless hyperbole. What is Mr. Burchall suggesting, if not racial segregation, at least in matters of the heart? What is racism, if not judging people by the colour of their skin rather than their individual merits? If two people are able to have a romantic relationship despite differences in race, does that not mean that they have overcome any personal prejudices? Mr. Burchall would suggest that these people are hindering the struggle against racism, rather than advancing it. I do not believe that racial peace can be achieved through racial war. What is Mr. Burchall's article, if not racism?

Secondly, the article "Whites are Liable," while not as offensive as "Jungle Fever," is simply senseless. The analogy between incurring the financial responsibilities of your parents and being morally responsible for the sins of your ancestors is obviously false. The same reasoning would suggest that I should be imprisoned if my parents or grandparents committed tax evasion. Slavery was a terrible injustice, but one for which the whites today can hardly atone. The writer suggests that "Whites today should repay [blacks] for the legacy created and passed on to them by their ancestors." Should other cultures have to pay Europeans for developing Western medicine? Suggesting that all whites should be held responsible for the sins of a few individuals is like suggesting that all whites should be given credit for the works of William Shakespeare, Isaac Newton, or Frederick G. Banting.

I do not think that racism can ever be eliminated until people stop trying to judge an entire race instead of judging the actions of individuals. *Individuals* should not be judged by whether their ancestors were slaves or slave traders. Look not at sex, race, religion, or culture, but at the worth of each person individually. Look at the faults and accomplishments of each person, not of others who look like them.

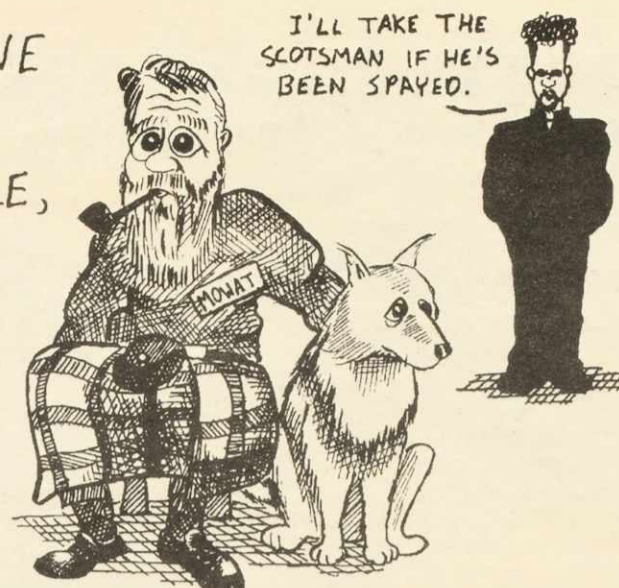
James Worrall

To the editor,

This letter is in response to the article, "Whites are liable." This blatantly racist article demands a response, to "set that Black man straight."

Slavery was abolished in the United States more than one hundred years ago, in Canada, it was much earlier. How long are Blacks going to continue to dredge this issue up? It is convenient to have a ready made excuse for all of life's failures. Is it convenient to have someone else or, as in this case, an entire race to lay responsibility on? All that can be asked of anyone is that they accept responsibility for their own actions. No one can be asked to repay centuries-old debts, and no one should. There comes a time to bury old grievances and get on with one's life, and in this case the time has long since passed. Furthermore, Black History month

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FARLEY SAYS: SAVE THE WOLVES!

editorial

When the moon hits your eye...

Alright, it's two days past my deadline, and it also happens to be Valentine's Day, so of course, I have to write the traditional bitter Valentine's Day Editorial...

Valentine's Day sucks, does it not?

The whole idea of this wonderfully special day seems to be that you devote your day to that special someone in your life.

There are a couple of flaws in that theory. What if you don't have a special someone? I know many people who's winter depression is at its peak on February 14 because they come to the conclusion that they are alone, and don't feel that they live up to our society's commercial ideal of Valentine's Day.

Or even if you do happen to have that special someone to spend the day with, it still sucks. We're in school, it's the week before break, so of course this week is the midterm hell week of the year, and who has time for romance?

And even if it weren't midterm time, then we're students regardless, and with tuition the way it is, roses are just too damn expensive.

I think my Mom has the right idea. For her husband — nothing special. For her kids, however, she's got it all figured out. My brothers and sister and I are scattered across the globe. Literally, we've got it covered, from Hong Kong to Halifax, and Mom uses the day of commercial romance as an excuse to send us all care packages. The first year I was in boarding school, for instance, she sent me and my roommates five pounds (I'm not exaggerating, we weighed it) of jelly beans and cinnamon hearts

plus a wicked assortment of useless toys. I'm not quite sure why she sends the toys, but who doesn't need silly putty? The other great thing about Mom's packages is, if by some weird fluke, I have someone I should be spending Valentine's Day with, I can just give some of Mom's care package to that person. It's wicked, I come off looking kind and thoughtful, but I don't have to think about it at all, or spend a cent.

The conventional limitations of Valentine's Day make it impossible to be satisfied with whatever happens. It's similar to the phenomenon that you are expected to have a wicked party on New Year's Eve. On Valentine's Day, you are expected to have a wonderful significant other, and a romantic evening with all the trimmings.

My plan? To redefine Valentine's Day. The conventional definition sucks? Fine. Valentine's Day can be several other things. Use it to consider that there are more manifestations of Love than those typically portrayed in the media. Or make it a day that you can appreciate all of those people who have shown you their love throughout the course of your life. Send a card to your Mom, or Dad, or sibling, or co-worker, or someone you met a year ago but haven't had a chance to stay in touch with. Redefine it to suit your needs. Don't be bitter, fill yourself with Love.

But I'm bitter, so reword this editorial so that it doesn't sound as though I'm not being genuine, and take it to heart.

Happy Valentine's Day.

JEN HORSEY

should be a time to celebrate Black achievements, not dwell on the past mistakes of a small number of people. It is time to let go of the ghosts of the past, and get on with living in the 1990's. If the unnamed author of this article would like to end racism and come together with Whites to make this country an even better place to live, then the first thing to do is stop blaming all Whites for actions over a century old, and stop writing racist articles like "Whites are Liable."

Sincerely,

Colin Mason, Grant Loveland,
Stuart McMillan, Mike Jerret,
Mike Bigelow, Ryan Churchill

Dear Editor,

In response to the article, "Whites are Liable:"

Injuries of the past have no place here. All of us have histories and some not as pretty as others. No landed gentry here.

I do not hold German youth and various others responsible for the almost extinction of my family tree a scant fifty years ago. Yet...do not forget; but all new generations should be forgiven, for we are all born innocent. Otherwise, We are as guilty as anyone else.

I will Never Forget that members of my family adorn endtables as lampshades, or make up the stuffing of chairs, sofas and pillows. Just like others, in earlier times, we too were branded as sub-human chattel. But I forgive those who were not yet born; though I have no mercy in my heart for those who stood by and watched it happen.

But rather than blame others for the injustices of an imperfect and oft cruel world; I am thankful for my grandfather surviving long enough for me to eventually come to be. And I try hard to fix the wrongs done to All people, in the here and now.

P.S. I don't blame you that the world stood by.

Name withheld

Supplement had point

To the editor:

I'm writing to respond to Colwyn Burchall Jr.'s article in last week's Gazette. I agree wholeheartedly with Colwyn that "We besieged daily by capitalism, homophobia, classism, sexism and racism, all of which serve to distort our perception of ourselves and others." I disagree, though, with the root cause of racism assumed by him, namely white people. Therefore I have no problem with whites and blacks loving each other; in fact, in the context of this bigoted society, I see interracial coupling as something of an act of bravery and defiance.

I think that racism is a product of capitalism, that it began as a justification of black slavery which was central to "the primitive accumulation of capital" leading to the growth of industrial capitalism. As wage slaves (workers) came to replace slaves outright as peasants, racism continued to serve capitalism's interests by dividing workers and (thus) providing a downward pressure on all wages.

It's been shown in the States how, though black workers earn less in either case, white southern workers earn less than black northern workers because of the lower level of workers' solidarity and union organization in the south due to the racist legacy of slavery.

White people as such don't benefit from the special oppression of blacks — quite the opposite. Working class whites, blacks and every colour in between have a common objective interest in overthrowing a system founded on our common exploitation and oppression.

It's all too true that a lot of white workers and students are racist. They must realize the error of their ways. Especially in struggle, say on a picket line against the boss or a demo against health care, etc. cuts, backward, divisive ideas are directly challenged.

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