

The Mercer Cluster

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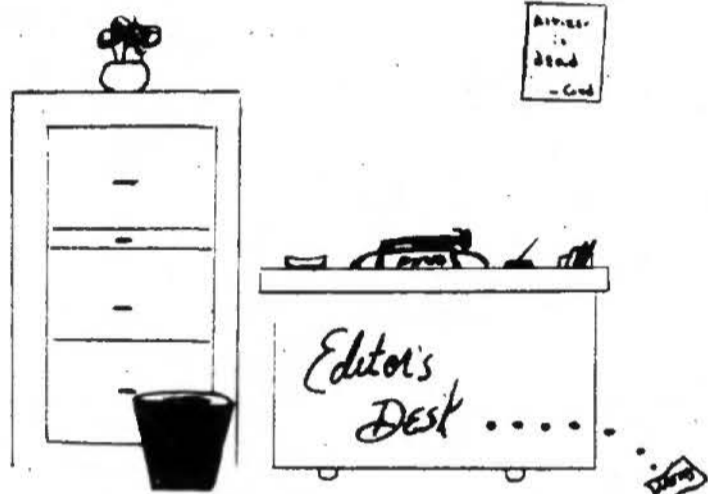
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By Tom Cauthorn

This academic year is almost over and I suddenly find myself in a position which I have looked forward to ever since I arrived at Mercer last fall. I guess to many people I have often seemed impetuous and presumptuous but now that I can sit at my desk and direct the *Cluster's* course I find the job entails everything but my personal feelings.

The editor of any college newspaper finds that he must follow a constant course in news work to maintain the interest of his readers. And because this news course must be constant it must always have an air of freshness in content while still preserving its high standards. But if one finds the news angle to be a bit difficult I am afraid that he has disregarded the highlight of the university paper: That is an editorial stance on controversial issues which has continuity in its efforts to show facts and opinions that should lead to change.

At all times the *Cluster* will stand behind the SGA on issues which directly affect the day to day life of the individual student. I will constantly be open to opinion and will print all letters of important bearing. But now I have arrived at an important point: What is the *Cluster* going to do during the next twelve months?

Indeed, this is a difficult question, not because I have not made some progress toward its answer, but because if I naively announce the *Cluster's* intentions I will be disregarding student opinion and also betraying any climax that the editorial staff might be building up to.

It is very simple to realize change in Mercer this year. The students have been willing to back their representatives and have wrought change in the library and cafeteria. But more changes are needed in the cafeteria so that not less than fifteen percent of the students eat there but rather most of the students eat there.

Women at Mercer all have to be familiar with a rule book that is made ridiculous by its many pages. Mercer students are controlled by drinking rules past the age of twenty-one which are more than the state of Georgia deems necessary. Fraternity lodges are owned by the university but a simple addition or change of shrubbery necessitates much red tape. Freshmen in good standing after their first quarter are forced to conceal their automobiles (but there is no parking problem as extreme as the University of Georgia's). Macon police delight in lurking in the shadows and bestowing traffic summonses when Mercer maintains its own security force. Students are required to attend Chapel twice weekly when a tremendous percentage never regularly attends until their senior year (percentages to be in next week's *Cluster*). The mines have been closed to student larks and games but Mercer still has no plans to provide a place to swim. The administration often gives lip service to the academic atmosphere and liberal expression of thought but has really never open a true communication toward changes that are everyday taking effect at universities all over the nation. And finally we students pretend to criticize the conditions but often fail to carry through demands for reforms because we are going to Georgia for the weekend, are going to transfer, feel too sophisticated to take part in nasty little sit-ins, or feel that we will be aggravating some administrator because we want a change which would in reality make that very administrator free to build a better Mercer.

The answer is not short nor is it an easy one. It is complex and never will end because once a problem is righted

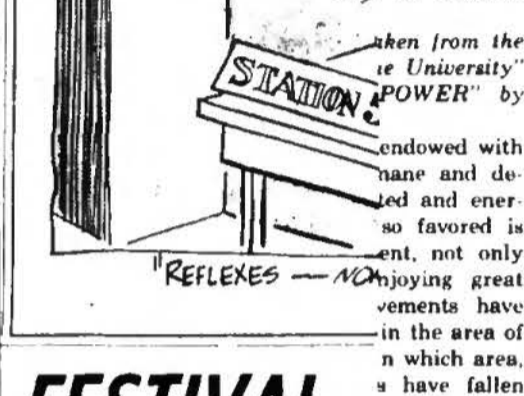
THE CITIZEN AND THE UNIVERSITY

By Senator J. William Fulbright

First In A Series Of Four Articles From The Senator's Book "The Arrogance Of Power"

To criticize one's country is to do it a service and pay it a compliment. It is a service because it may spur the country to do better than it is doing; it is a compliment because it evidences a belief that the country can do better than it is doing.

In a democracy dissent is an act of faith. Criticism may embarrass the country's leaders in the long run but in the long run it is a service. Criticism, in an act of patriotism, is an act of national faith.



FESTIVAL APRIL 29

will be open to the public without charge. It will be held in Mercer's Willingham Chapel.

On Saturday at 3:00 p.m. the folksingers will gather for an informal song swapping session and a seminar on folk music in Room 314 of the Connell Student Center. They of public is invited to attend.

Dormitory rooms will be provided for all visiting folksingers. Anyone interested in participating in the festival is urged to register with Dr. Griffith, Department of English, Mercer University. There will be no charge for the registration.

King Named To AAUW

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) has named Martin Luther King Jr. as one of the most significant figures in American history. Profound changes have occurred since *Democracy in America* first appeared and yet it may be asked whether recognition of the right of dissent has gained substantially in practice as well as in theory. The malady in Tocqueville's view was one of democracy itself: "The smallest reproach irritates its sensibility and the slightest joke that has any foundation in truth

renders it indignant; from the forms of its language up to the solid virtues of its character, everything must be made the subject of encomium. No writer, whatever be his eminence, can escape paying this tribute of adulation to his fellow citizens."

From small-town gatherings to high-policy councils Americans are distressed when a writer or a politician or even a private citizen interrupts all this self-congratulation and expresses himself with simple, unadorned candor. The problem is worsening, among other reasons, because more and more of our citizens earn their livings by working for corporations and other large organizations, few of which are known to encourage political and other forms of heterodoxy on the part of their employees. The result is that more and more Americans face the dilemma of how, if at all, an individual can safely exercise honest individual judgment, indeed, retain his capacity for it, in an environment in which the surest route to advancement is conformity with a barren and oppressive orthodoxy.

The problem is acute in the federal bureaucracy, whose congenial inhospitality to unorthodox ideas, were its dimensions only known, would allay the anxieties of the most agitated superpatriot. This is unfortunate indeed because the most valuable public servant, like the true patriot, is one who gives a higher loyalty to his country's ideals than to its current policy and who therefore is willing to criticize as well as to comply.

Some time ago, I met an American poet, Mr. Ned O'Gorman, who had just returned from a visit to Latin America sponsored by the State Department. He said, and previously had written, that he had been instructed by American Embassy officials in the countries he visited that if he were questioned, by students and intellectuals with whom he was scheduled to meet, on such "difficult" questions as the Dominican Republic and Vietnam, he was to reply that he was "unprepared." At a meeting with some Brazilian students he finally rebelled, with the following result as he described it: "... the questions came, swirling, battering, bellowing from the classroom. Outside the traffic and the oily electric heat. But I loved it. I was hell bent for clarity. I knew they wanted straight answers and I gave them. I had been gorged to sickness with embassy prudence. The applause was long and loud. The embassy man was furious. 'You are taking money dishonestly,' he told me. 'If the government pays you to do this tour you must defend it and not damn it.' It did no good when I explained to him that if I didn't do what I was doing, then I'd be taking the money dishonestly."

It escapes me totally why American diplomats should not be proud to have American poets and professors and politicians demonstrate their country's political and intellectual health by expressing themselves with freedom and candor. As O'Gorman put it, "... I spoke with equal love to the glory and the tragedy of America. And that is what terrified the Americans."

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An Analysis To Discover Cause of Campus Rebellions

(APC)—Commentators continue to analyze the "dilemma" of U. S. higher education as new incidents across the country tend to keep in vogue the impression of the campus as a seedbed of rebellion.

The self-styled off-campus experts usually center their analyses on such questions as "at what price academic freedom?" or "how much freedom should students

have?" Without once asking how much freedom students do enjoy or realizing that limits on free expression differ from campus to campus.

another will take its place. But I want the students, faculty, and administration to know that I will try to make the *Cluster* stick to facts in an effort to make real and responsible action. Too often the *Cluster* and its editor have been sporadic but I believe that Bobby Phillips has shown what can be accomplished in three months can be multiplied over an entire year. I feel that some of the things mentioned in this article can be changed and that many more can be discussed intelligently in an effort to reach a responsible answer.

Thank you for your trust and if you continue to give the *Cluster* support and provide it with thought and responsibility during the next year the students at Mercer will no longer feel that they are irritating someone with a change but rather that they are indeed building a better Mercer.

In an effort to give the heated debate factual perspective, E. G. Williamson and John L. Cowan, in *The American Student's Freedom of Expression: A Research Appraisal* (University of Minnesota Press), have used the methods of social science research to conduct a study "addressed to what is rather than what ought to be."

Williamson has been dean of students at the University of Minnesota for 25 years, and Cowan, the study's research director, is a staff member of the Student Life Studies program there.

To find out "what is" on the college campus, the authors went to the people who should know. (Continued on page 7)