

THE MERCER CLUSTER



"The South's Most Independent Collegiate Newspaper"

GARY JOHNSON
Editor

JOHNNY TURNER
Associate Editor



CARL BROWN, Business Manager

(Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the editors and should not be confused with news stories. Signed columns and cartoons are the opinions of the authors and not the editors.)



Columnist Larry Finkelstein

SDS Arouses Rebel Tradition In Mercerians

"A little rebellion every now and then is a good thing." — Thomas Jefferson.

Mercer was recently chosen as the next target for the SDS. For their advance men they sent three of the organization's most trusted lackeys: the National Secretary and the two stooges charged with his protection. Their mission was to invade the campus and arouse the students to rebellion against the Administration.

The first place they visited on their arrival on campus was the office of the Committee for Student Rebellion (on the fourth floor of the Administration Building), inactive since 1865, where they placed a wreath on the floor in the middle of the room and sat around smoking it the rest of the afternoon.

Later that day, as they were "floating" down the stairs of the Administration Building they encountered Dr. King, the distinguished chairman of our History Department, and thought to themselves how easy it would be to amuse themselves at the gentleman's expense. "When was the last time Mercer ever did anything to encourage rebellion?" demanded the three agitators. "I'll bet this place hasn't housed a rebel since the day it was founded!" charged the SDS National Secretary. But Dr. King knew better than to blow his cool. Instead he bade the three slovenly characters to follow him into his office, mistaking them for the campus' hippy population, and proceeded to correct them historically. "You gentleman," he explained calmly, "are in obvious need of correction. I would suggest that you read the chapter in my book, *Georgia Voices*, dealing with Reconstruction and you will find that in the post-Civil War period, Mercer housed its fair share of rebels." And more out of curiosity than respect, one of the stooges grabbed a copy off the professor's desk and turned to page 308 and began reading aloud. "Any soldier of the late

Confederate army," he read, "who is disabled from manual labor by reason of wounds, and who is unable to pay the expenses of education, is welcome to Mercer University as a student, and shall receive Tuition Gratis." — Mercer University, Catalogue, 1868-1869, p. 27. All the SDS people were impressed by this obvious receptiveness toward rebels and went off optimistically to their scheduled meeting in the Connell Student Center, where they hoped to found a Mercer chapter of their communist-anarchist rebellion preaching and practicing society.

The meeting room was full and the audience applauded politely as the speaker was introduced. After a few welcoming remarks, the SDS speaker announced that he was pleased with the rebel tradition at Mercer and wished to see it revived in the immediate future. Several KA's went wild over the idea. Then the speaker announced that we must discover the roots of our dissatisfaction so that we may actively rebel against the establishment. "How's the food situation around this place?" he asked. And Frank I room stood up and explained all about the cafeteria and our meal tickets and everything. And then the speaker looked really stunned. "You mean to tell me," he asked, "that all of you actually pay for those meals and then allow yourselves to be locked out of the cafeteria half the time because you missed the 'established' serving hours?" And then he launched into an attack on the dirty capitalist who were exploiting us mercilessly. And so on. And then he left and that was the end of it. Or so I thought until the other day when I overheard a conversation in which a couple of sophomores were complaining bitterly about the cafeteria's ridiculously short serving periods on days with no classes. . . and the cafeteria's ridiculously short and early breakfast hours on classless days. And I thought to myself that maybe the SDS has aroused some healthy Thomas Jefferson in us after all.

From the Editor

Delay of Involvement

Mercer '69 lives in an era when student voice in the administrative affairs of a university is within arm's reach. At most universities, although the era is present, the administration is non-cooperative and unresponsive to student demands. Students have thus resorted to violent protests, demonstration marches, and sit-ins. But at Mercer this need not be for we have an administration that will at least listen to our pleas and demands.

At a recent SGA meeting (April 21) I observed a rather conservative body refute the opportunity for increased student involvement in administrative affairs. Bugged down was a report (position paper) from the Student Steering Committee which recommended to alter the

present student-administration set-up and to take new approach with a new philosophy of the school of Liberal Arts. The theme of the report called for students to have more of a voice in the decision making process. Specifically this entails students on all faculty-administrative committees. Although in actuality the report was referred to another newly formed committee, the report and its ideas may eventually die. The former committee had put more than two months hard work into the report but unfortunately the SGA chose to delay its endorsement. The opportunity of increased student power our SGA missed could be lost forever.

The report of the newly formed committee will not be returned to the body for endorsement before next school



term and thus we Mercerians must suffer another year with administrative domination and control over our lives—Such as building a swimming pool without asking the students who wants one and at the same time neglecting an increase in salary and recruitment of top grade faculty.—Raising school tuition and cost and sending the student a notice of the raise two months later.

SGA, time is of the essence. We must move forward; it is important that we all strive together in undertaking this task of involving the students in decision making. Perhaps in this May, the spirit of this committee will not decline.



Columnist Ron Childs

Institutionalism Cancels Rights?

In view of the late controversy on chapel and in view of the many complaints I have heard about chapel, this week I have decided to address chapel in the context of whether or not it violates a person's rights. Does the right involved in tradition and institutionalism override the concept of a person's inalienable rights?

To begin, I must first insert here my great admiration for Dr. Otto. He appears to me to be a man who is deeply involved in his religious beliefs, a man who loves goodness and kindness, and a man who stands up for what he believes. I have cried with Dr. Otto as he led the mourning for John, Martin, and Bobby. What man can better express one's feelings at the death of such great men? Yet in one other area I really do like Dr. Otto, and I do mean he gets my whole hearted approval. Dr. Otto is the only preacher I have ever heard that really looks at religion in the pulpit as I like to see it. Please let me qualify this. In my infamous career in Moultrie I did, contrary to popular beliefs, go to church. However, I never heard the word black man mentioned in my church, and I would not doubt that if a black man tried to join the church, well, anything could happen. My preacher never told me of the poor people, the dirtily dressed people across the tracks, or the black man, for all I ever heard was a story about Jobah and the whale and somebody vomiting or something like that. He was afraid to face the issues of modern society through the eyes of an outdated religion. As for Dr. Otto, he lays the cards on the table, for I feel that he is as realistic about the Christian religion as one can get. Dr. Otto knows and speaks out when a group, such as T-Square Church, denies a man the right to be a church-member because he is black. He knows this isn't real Christianity, but yet he speaks out on the issue as so many Baptist preachers are afraid to do, or don't know any better. For showing some guts in this day and age over religion, again I salute you, Dr. Otto.

Yet on the other hand, I would like to raise this question: Should religion, good or bad, be forced upon people? There are some people at Mercer who I agree should be forced to go to chapel, yet these people should also be led by a harness to a trough to eat dinner. But, what of the sound intellectual person who is mentally mature, and who has developed and matured his ideas of religion.

Why should this type of person be forced to listen to any religion, good or bad? And another thing, if a person wants to go to hell, is it not his right to decide? Cannot a person decide

whether or not he wants to have religion or not? I agree that Dr. Otto had a right by tradition of Mercer University to hold chapel, but yet I believe a man has a higher right, a more sacred natural right of choice concerning religion, and to force a man to listen to one man's view on religion is wrong. I cannot help but draw a parallel between Mercer's Chapel and the Army which marches men in order to listen to the good chaplain; here one obeys higher commands regardless of one's own personal opinion. Oh yes, another little factor, have you looked around in chapel and noticed how everyone is paying attention, how everyone is worshipping, or do you notice people sleeping, reading, studying, talking, and laughing? It is inherent in human nature not to be as close and involved in something that is required or forced as one is to a service that is

attended voluntarily. Even if chapel were to be discontinued because of lack of attendance, this would, if the system were voluntary, still allow people their freedom of religion. Dr. Otto, why are we denied our freedom of religion?

I must add here in my conclusion that even though I am not in favor of required chapel because it takes from one's religious freedom, I spent time in prayer and deep deliberation over this article. I say this because what Dr. Otto says is good, I believe he speaks the words of God, and some people whom I have already referred to as pigs need to be in contact with thoughts that Dr. Otto throws out. Yet even in light of this I cannot justify no matter how hard I try to in my mind, that it is right to take away a person's natural right of freedom of religion.



Wallace's Collage

Relevancy

For various reasons I have in the past few months found myself embroiled in numerous discussions, many of which degenerated into simple contention. This has not been unrewarding, however, for I have discovered a method to end almost all arguments, especially those which I begin losing.

It is really quite simple. When your "opponent" makes a particularly decisive point, simply ask (slowly and carefully stressing each word): "Perhaps. But is that really relevant?" (It is all but essential to draw out the word "really.") If you opponent is sharp, he will not permit himself to be placed on the defensive but will ask you: "Relevant to what?" Now you have him. Reply very matter-of-factly and rather pedantically: "To the whole of our existence." Even if you have not "won," you have at least clouded the issue beyond recognition.

Those students who have had Mrs. Wilder for English II might contend that this approach is fallacious and illegitimate. They would probably be right, but I would have to ask them if their point were really relevant.

As an English major I find it distressing that people use words as if they were going out of style. Certain words are used so often and under such differing circumstances that all denotative meaning has been lost, and what is left has meaning only to the individual using the word. The word "relevancy" should come instantly to everyone's mind; both radicals and reactionaries use it with equal aplomb. When a person demands relevancy, he is able to feel safe and secure behind this nebulous terminology. He refuses to accept the responsibility of coming to grips with the situation and formulating some

concrete method of operation. And in those instances where he does offer suggestions, they too are often couched in vague or ideologically meaningless verbiage. Take, for example, the person who says: "By relevancy I mean recognizing the necessity of a meaningful and teleological approach to our existence such that life can be purposeful, directional, and fraught with understanding." He can now be content to lean back in his chair and say: "Okay, now that you know what I mean, give me a relevant education." If this "relevant education" is then not offered to him on a silver platter, he cries loudly to the world that no one in the Establishment cares about him or mankind.

Let I be misunderstood, perhaps I should make it clear that I am not against the concept of "relevancy" per se; it is using the word itself as a flag around which to rally that I dislike. I am cognizant of the fact that there are persons who are responsibly studying the situations with which we are faced and are seeking ways to improve them. They are the people who understand that relevancy does not mean immediate applicability; they are critical, but analytically so; they understand that idealism must be tempered with realism. It is only by striving toward some workable solution that a problem can be alleviated if not solved; clouding the issue with verbose rhetoric should never be confused with discussing a problem in an intelligent manner.

It is often very difficult to express an idea in concrete terms. So if you disagree with what I have said in this column don't be concerned; it is probably rather irrelevant anyway.

Editor's Note

Due to financial reasons this will be the final issue of the Cluster for the school year 1968-69. The staff and myself have worked diligently for the past two weeks to produce this tragedy but failed in our efforts. But with the two issues that have been printed, I think that a partial improvement of the paper is evident. But this is only the start of something big. Looking for even a greater day in 1969-70 school year.