

EDITORIAL

Victory For Academic Freedom

Upholders of intellectual integrity and academic freedom were happy this week to receive news that the Board of Higher Education of New York City voted 11 to 7 to uphold the appointment of Bertrand Russell to the faculty of the College of the City of New York.

The Cluster views this as a significant triumph for advocates of intellectual freedom and one which should have broad ramifications.

Personalities, we believe, should not enter into the situation. Editors of The Cluster strongly disagree with Mr. Russell's doctrine of "free love" and other theories which he holds. But it seems that Mr. John T. Flynn has hit upon the real issue with the following statement: "I do not agree with Bertrand Russell's theory of marriage, but he was not appointed at City College to teach his religious views, any more than the Episcopalian, Jewish and Catholic instructors have been appointed to teach theirs."

No less significant is the statement by Dr. Nelson P. Mead, acting president of the college: "We have invited Russell to join our faculty to teach mathematics and logic and not to discourse on his personal, ethical and moral views, to which, as an individual, he is entitled."

The crux of the issue, The Cluster believes, is just this: Shall a man's right to teach in an institution of higher learning be determined solely by his competence, as established by the faculty and administration of the institution involved, or shall there be a further requirement of conformity with the religious and social views of a majority of the community?

Not once was Russell's competence to teach philosophy and mathematics challenged throughout the controversy. In fact one opponent argued that "the fact that he is intellectually brilliant is certainly no excuse" for the appointment.

These brief but sincere comments might be summarized by a passage from Bertrand Russell's Conway Memorial Lecture on Free Thought and Official Propaganda:

"The habit of considering a man's religious, moral, and political opinions before appointing him to a post or giving him a job is the modern form of persecution, and it is likely to become quite as efficient as the Inquisition ever was. The old liberties can be legally retained without being of the slightest use. If, in practice, certain opinions lead a man to starve, it is poor comfort to him to know that his opinions are not punishable by law."

Mercer students should be interested in the reaction of undergraduates to the conflict raging over Russell's appointment.

The student newspapers of the College of the City of New York have vigorously defended the administration's stand from the start. On March 14, a mass meeting of 900 students sponsored by the American Student Union unanimously passed a resolution urging the Board to reaffirm the appointment.

A similar meeting of 200 students was held on the same day at Brooklyn College. Earlier in the week, a New York Herald-Tribune reporter conducted a discussion and poll among the 30 students in an introductory philosophy course at the City College; the interview revealed great enthusiasm over the prospect of Bertrand Russell's joining the faculty and a vote of 29 to 1 in favor of the appointment.

THE MERCER CLUSTER

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Subject: Exams For Seniors

By ANNIE WHEAT JONES

The Cluster does not operate under the assumption that its columns must be filled with unreasonable demands directed toward the administration, but on the other hand considers it a duty to present suggestions that may be of benefit to Mercer as a university. Several comments overheard in the past few weeks have brought to the forefront the suggestion that final spring term examinations for seniors be abolished.

Such a move at first glance may seem a trifle liberal but it is practicable. First, from the standpoint of the prospective graduate, the abolition of final tests would remove one worry from his overloaded calendar of last minute tasks. Of course there's always the chance that the student might slack up a bit in his daily labors after mid-term if he were aware that the final struggle for A's and B's had been shelved. But there can always exist special examinations for those few seniors who may have tired on the home stretch and turned up at mid-term with unsatisfactory grades.

Not so often does a sure-fire graduate turn up three days before commencement exercises with a failure in a final examination and a "not wanted" notice for the next few days' activity. When seniors put in their orders for the usual graduation paraphernalia, send invitations to the aunts and uncles back home, latch on to openings for jobs, and on top of all this, have satisfactory grades on their spring mid-terms, it's a thousand to one shot they'll be

accorded the coveted degree at the proper time. Would it not be a worthwhile idea to allow a future Mercer alumnus to spend his last few days at his Alma Mater in ease and freedom rather than load him down with hurried last minute worries wrapped up in final examinations? Such a change might leave an even better taste in the mouths of Mercer graduates than they already appear to have.

A lot of needless work on the part of the instructors would be eliminated by such a move. The registrar's office would be relieved of a portion of the summer work in compiling and listing grades. As stated in the beginning of this editorial, this is merely a suggestion and may be of course a strict student point of view. Yet the plan for final examination abolishment for seniors (those with unsatisfactory mid-term grades provide exceptions) appears both logical and beneficial. The Cluster submits the suggestion advocating such a change in the university routine to the administration for consideration.

WITH THE GREEKS

By FIELDS VARNER

Alpha Delta Pi . . . Tentative plans are being made for a formal dance to be held April 19.

Alpha Tau Omega . . . Plans for the annual Founders Day banquet, to be held in early April will be announced at an early date. Elmo Draughon, retiring president, and Roger Strickland, retiring treasurer, were recently presented with fraternity keys.

Phi Mu . . . An alumni luncheon was held Saturday, March 23, at the Hotel Dempsey Tavern. Turea May, newest pledge of the chapter, was guest of honor.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon . . . Initiation services were held Friday, April 22, for Tom Lattimore and Charles Brooks, both of Macon.

Pi Kappa Alpha . . . Bob Dutton is the guest of the chapter this week. Horace S. Smith of Atlanta, district president, visited the chapter Wednesday. Joe Rickenbacker was recently elected delegate to the national convention to be held during the summer in Chicago.

Phi Delta Theta . . . The annual Founders Day banquet was held last Monday night in the Walter

Little Room of Hotel Dempsey. During the banquet Golden Legion certificates were presented to the following alumni: Osgood Clarke, Sr., R. L. Anderson, Sr., David Hill and Edwin S. Davis, all of Macon. These men have been Phi's of Georgia Gamma from 50 to 61 years.

Kappa Sigma . . . New officers elected for 1939-40: Lamar Sizemore, president; Mickey Bersch, vice-president; Nathan Nolan, treasurer; Top Prescott, secretary; Pierce Anderson and Mickey Bersch, Pan-Hellenic representatives. Announces the initiation of Phillip Blanks and Bill Little, both of Macon, and Neal Allen of Albany. A district conclave will be held at the chapter house, 99 Coleman Ave., March 29, 30 and 31. Representatives from Auburn, the Universities of Miami, Alabama, Georgia and Florida, and Georgia Tech will attend.

Alpha Lambda Tau . . . Malcolm Thomas has been elected president to succeed Bill Howland who did not return to school this quarter. Andy McKenna and Ed Cassidy, both of Macon, were recently pledged.

Mud In Your Eye

By SALLY SLANDER

Little Commencement wore us all out but as usual it was worth it.

Prize terpsicorean artists of the week-end were WYLIE DAVIS and TONI REESE who almost did a parallel rendition of the current dance craze . . . Jitter-bugging. TONI is a versatile artist as was evidenced by her fancy rumba with ENRIQUE ALCARAZ.

Romance, which always seems to bloom more prolifically when spring arrives, is doing a fine busi-

ness. ROSCOE put that big, shining SAE pin on KATHERINE several weeks ago. We hear that there is really something serious going on in the REED and REID combination, too. DOROTHEA has worn a perpetual happy smile since the beginning of this quarter. The only reason for her behavior that we can figure out is that LEM is back at school.

We wonder why ALBERT HENDERSON had such a long face. Could it be that WYNOLINE LOWE, a certain Canton lass, was not at the dances?

SMALL TALK

By Harry Goldgar

SYSTEM A certain very popular Mercer senior the other day "told all" to a select group of companions he revealed the system by which he has gotten through four years of school with the utmost minimum of effort.

It all boils down to the way you write your exam papers, term papers, or parallel reports he disclosed. In the first place, you must always write your name at the top of every page of the paper. This gains publicity, and publicity is necessary for point two. Point two requires the use of a key word, preferably an adjective scattered generously throughout the report. From experimentation our past-master found the best word for this purpose to be "excellent." The association of that name at the top of the page with this key word is what turns the trick you see. Our informant once used the word "poorly" for his key word on an exam, just to see what would result—and flunked. He has also used words like "industrious," etc.

Point three details the organization of the concluding sentence in the paper. It must be a compound sentence and by all means must end with the word "excellent." The gentleman says this is positively the only word which will do here.

QUITS This column has received an enlightening reply from Miss Margaret Zeigler. Unfortunately lack of space prevents its being printed here. It certainly gives a down the country, to lapse into the vernacular and we're more than sorry we were so foolish as to attempt to argue with Margaret in the first place. What say we just call the whole thing quits, lady?

QUOTES "They've made so many changes recently on the Louisville Courier-Journal staff, every time a stranger walks in the city editor wants to give him an assignment."—Buford Boone, instructor, journalism 153.

"I think poetry is rather unfortunate."—Bob Sparks, junior, journalism major.

"Well, Roanoke's about the same size as Raleigh; only about twice as large."—(Somebody around here, we can't remember who.)

"If her speech had been a little less disgusting it would have been intolerable; as it was amusing."—Ward Pritchett, senior, economics major.

ORDER Speaking of the younger generation, we wish you could have seen the four Mercer men we saw ordering something to eat in a downtown joint the other night. A more unusual conglomeration of cuisine we've never seen, and certainly, never expected to eat. The dialogue, as heard by Grovina, waitress, ran somewhat as follows:

Student One: "I believe I'll have a tender trout with A-One sauce, and a glass of orange juice."

Student Two: "You can bring me some vegetable soup and a chocolate pie."

Grovina: "What will you have to drink?"

Student Two: "The soup, naturally."

Student Three: "Bring me a nice grape juice and I shall probably get an egg omelette a little later."

(The fourth guy didn't get anything. It was us.)

REMAINING POINTS IN CLUSTER PLATFORM:

1. Revision of political system with stricter qualifications for office as a pre-requisite to candidacy for major offices.
2. Adoption of honor system.
3. Inclusion of definite allotment for dramatics in the annual university budget.
4. Paving of walkways to buildings on lower campus.

ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED:

1. Establishment of adequate hospital facilities on campus.
2. Organization of student council to meet with president of university at regular intervals to thrash out problems involving student body-administration relations.