

# Sewanee Purple

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## Sewanee Crisis Illuminates Need For Mutual Action

It is said that in Germany the students of a great many universities have a rather novel and invigorating method of displaying their approval of a professor's lecture—they stamp their feet rhythmically on the floor when he makes a particularly scintillating point and loudly applaud him as he leaves the classroom at the end of his lecture. On the other hand, a professor who insults their intelligence by presenting a dull, repetitious lecture which has all the polish and vivacity of a second-hand brick is rewarded with a unanimous guttural raspberry. As a group, German professors and their students have proved to be among the most creative, vigorous assemblies of intellect in the world. Despite sedition, the University of Heidelberg still stands.

In America, of course, things are different. For all its supposed liberality, the American university system can have in places the vigor, unwritten, but omnipresent morality of a Pueblo Indian village. The personal insult of a student to a professor is an interesting example of this. At Sewanee, for instance, observation will indicate that a student does not insult a teacher when the student, during the lecture, draws arabesques on his desk with a faraway look in his eye. Some teachers are unmoved when a student or several students catch forty winks during the French Revolution. But when a student in the ignorance and rudeness of youth suggests to the same professor, who is insensitive to a snore, that his lectures or his grading practices might leave something to be desired—the professor is likely to flutter down with indignant gasps like a pigeon wounded by a malicious boy. Or more often he reacts like a nervous mountain lion whose tail has been tweaked. Thus in some cases in Sewanee the constructive fire of student praise and criticism has been quenched by foggy air and foggy lectures; and in its place have appeared the offensive snore of the blase student and the obsequious whine of the grade-hound.

Sewanee has been for some time past a dark battlefield with shifting lines of professors and students, knives in various socks which elicit from their owners various soft but decorous groans, and generals (sometimes incognito) who insist they can't see anything at all. Fred Jones, Bruce Keenan and Henry Louttit have thrown, perhaps unsuspectingly, a parachute flare over the whole confusion. Now at last come sounds, even voices: "Let there be dark again! Let there be obscuring dark!" This could be a comical scene except that all of us, students and professors, are on the same battlefield.

Yet there have been some other kinds of light over Sewanee this past year. The curfew situation has phosphoresced: the dining hall has flamed somewhat less furiously than usual—but hardly a spark has come from the academic candle whose flame is supposed to be the chief illumination of the University. It looks as if Sewanee students are going to burgeon into a new generation of quibblers over farm prices and the religious sentiments of the presidential candidates while Russia chuckles hungrily.

I have been told by several professors that the continuing existence of Western democracy depends on the quality of intellect of her college generation and that consequently the university, not the army, is the hidden bulwark of America. Now that Sewanee for a moment has become aware of the fact that it actually is an academic institution, are the professors and the students going to slide back into apathy again by arguing about personal insults like a degenerate oligarchy? Isn't it time for some to dry their eyes and some to open them and all to take a look around?

JOHN STUART

## The Facts Of The Case

On Sunday morning, May 1, black X marks appeared on the doors of thirteen professors in three buildings. The events leading up to this act and the results of it have formed the subject of a great deal of misinformation argument in the past week.

The events, as they happened, follow:

After supper on Saturday, April 30, Fred Jones, Bruce Keenan, and Henry Louttit agreed to mark the professors' doors, and they drew up a list which they posted on the bulletin board of Galtier.

Between two and three a.m. Sunday they marked the doors with enamel paint from their fraternity house.

Tuesday evening they called Dean Webb's home, but were informed he was out of town. They then turned themselves in to Chaplain Collins.

Wednesday night, they went to Dean Webb and reported themselves. The Dean asked them to come back the next day, as he was unable to make a decision at that time. When they returned Thursday, Dean Webb told them he would refer the case to the student Discipline Committee.

Sunday night, May 8, Jones, Keenan, and Louttit drew up a fifteen page apology, containing seven pages of detailed criticism of five professors.

Monday night, they submitted the apology to the Discipline Committee, which, after careful

consideration, recommended disciplinary probation and the publication of their apology. It also requested a formal apology to the student body for the use of the words, "We, the student body . . .", which introduced their list of professors to be "marked-off."

The decision was made Tuesday morning to print a special issue of the Purple devoted entirely to this matter. To correct the prevalent opinion, neither Jones, Keenan, nor Louttit participated in any manner other than answering questions and submitting their apology.

Tuesday evening, at supper, an ill-worded petition circulated in Galtier. Neither Jones, Keenan, nor Louttit had any previous knowledge of this petition.

Tuesday night, at 8:00 p.m., the Faculty Discipline Committee, composed of Dean Webb, Dr. Dagan, Lt. Col. Powell, Chaplain Collins, and Dr. Owen, met in the Dean's office. After a long debate, from which the three were excluded, the decision was reached that: Another formal apology would be submitted to the Dean, since the apology (printed in this issue) was adjudged inadequate; the three would be placed on social probation, accompanied by loss of pawns for all and Jones' loss of editorship of the Purple. Finally, Fred Jones, Bruce Keenan, and Henry Louttit will leave Sewanee immediately after completing their final examinations and will receive their diplomas in absentia.

TSC

## A Possible Solution

There is little we can add to the statement prepared by the once-anonymous X-men to express disgust with their act or to second their ultimate motives.

Student reactions are varied. The all too-typical Sewanee man is unmoved, beyond mild amusement and renewal of complaints and grudges against this or that teacher. Other students are stirred up and talk wildly of "doing something."

Several dangers are inherent in the present situation.

First, any student may think he now has an excuse to use any professor as scapegoat for his poor grades, laziness, and stupidity. If Sewanee classes are dull, the student body must bear much of the blame. Very few teachers are exceptional enough to inspire a class composed largely of the gold-bricking deadheads found at Sewanee.

Second, the University administration has been actively exercising its fanciest footwork in squelching this grass-roots movement. Administrators to glare over by ineffectively embarrassing and difficult situations. We hope the University heads will have the regard to at least consider sympathetically the issues. And, please, sirs, let us not fall into an exchange of musical chairs and buck-passing.

Third, the entire matter may remain in its present homogeneous state of faculty hurt feelings and amused indulgence, and students' juvenile excitement and collegiate apathy.

Fourth, the manner in which present deplorable faculty-student relations were brought to light is obscuring the issue at hand. We can imagine few things more stupid than painting doors black in the dead of night. Is there more

here than the neuroses of three students? Can we overcome the obstacle of their clumsy apology?

We challenge the College to submit its faculty to student opinion via questionnaires. We also challenge the student body to arouse itself in its mental sterility and act in the manner of its near-mythical mature self.

We suggest that copies of this questionnaire, accompanied by envelopes be distributed by each professor to each of his students. The students could then fill in the questionnaires and deposit them in a central receptacle with the name of the professor and course marked on the envelope. Review could be conducted privately by each professor or by an administration committee.

Approached with the right attitudes the questionnaires could possibly render worthwhile results. As student doodle-beets or faculty trashcan liners they would be worthless.

If Sewanee is really a down-hill affair, we feel that much of the problem can be traced to the monumental complacency that permeates the entire mountain. "WE ARE GOOD, OH, WE ARE SO GOOD, WE ARE THE BEST!" And because we are the best (by what miraculous process of doublethink I do not know), we have no room to improve. The Development Office says so, the alumni say so, the administration says so, the students at least think themselves so, and there are several very charming rating services which say so; this clinches it.

Sewanee may indeed be good, but it could be a lot better if: we would remove the lead from our vestments, take the bananas from our ears, and try to improve instead of slipping blades in each other's backs while patting dead grooves in our own.

DBH

# Honor

THE HONOR SYSTEM of the South is on hallowed traditions commencing with the history of the school. It is the highest sense of the ideals of her founders. Time at Seawane has been since the early 1870's, and time has continuously as sense of trust, honor, among the student body.

The System is fostered by the students' responsibility for its own is the moral obligation of the man. The admins Honor System is vested representatives duly elected to the honor Council.

## I. THE HONOR

Students of the Univer upon entrance, to an H which makes possible based on mutual trust a student conscious of his desire to place ourselves determined to uphold this to maintain that high standard which it demands; and it resolved:

## THE HONOR CODE is

.....

WHEREAS, We, the at University of the South, the fullest sense of the great tradition of Honor handed from the noble past of his for his own acts. The report of the HONOR CODE has meant the protection student from the unfair casual wrong-doer.

FIRST: That any adque of Honor demands that a lie or cheat or steal, and his promises without gain

SECOND: That memt student body carries it responsibility for punctil of those standards of a govern an honorable man of life.

THIRD: That since it the degrees granted by t must in large measure de HONOR CODE, every 2 class must regard alike'ly bound by his honor, in any form, and as like honor not fail to report that comes to his know!

FOURTH: Every stu entrance to the University is required to affix his s; foregoing HONOR CODE, his acceptance of the sae upon him. Furthermore, t specifically implies his ob following resolutions gov ernment of the HONOR

A. That, as evidence of every student write up paper that it is to grade s on the following pledge:

I hereby certify that I



WINNER RECEIVES A FREE STEAK!

# Text Of X-Men's Statement

TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

DEAR SIR:

We, Fred Jones, Bruce Keenan, and Henry Louttit, wish to make a formal apology to the University of the South for several aspects of our deed of the night of April 30, 1960 and to try to explain the motives for it so that its serious intent and may be recognized along with its unpardonable thoughtlessness and malicious meanness.

We wish to apologize for anonymity which made it difficult for people to recognize in our efforts anything but a malicious prank and which gave an air of suspicion and mutual mistrust to the people of the University. The anonymity of our deed, coupled with a number of other happenings on campus, added more worry to the students and faculty than we feel a school of this type can stand. In addition we want very much to apologize for the deep personal injuries which some of the faculty members involved seem to have felt. The act was, as we have said, thoughtless, and it is apparent now (although we did not see it a week ago) that there was only one way for a black anonymous X mark on a professor's door to be interpreted. The professors could only see a terrible, public, and personal insult, and this is to be expected of any such anonymous act.

Our act was impulsive and irrational. It was done as a release of the steam of frustration which had been building up in us for at least three years. All we can do now is to make as sincere a search into our motives as possible in trying to explain the causes. What we did was an explosion. We had not thought about the consequences of it, but were so possessed by the excitement of having something to do about an issue which had troubled us for so long that we did not allow for thought.

The point should be made that we are not the only men at Seawane who question the contention that she is striving for the ideals set forth in her catalogue. It might, in fact, be said with assurance that a good solid majority of the students here are disillusioned by this great idealistic statement.

We think that the majority of Seawane students come here at a intellectual and spiritual stimulation. What else can a Freshman expect when he reads in the catalogue, "the establishing of a Christian University by our Church is a compelling necessity, for intelligence and moral sentiment are the support of government. . . ?" And what is to be then to feel when a high officer of the University says that the fact that Seawane has any connection with the Episcopal Church is an accident?

The catalogue of the University of the South furthermore has the following paragraph: "This function can best be performed in a small college through the medium of a faculty of character and distinction maintaining intimate personal contact with a carefully selected group of students."

The average Seawane student doesn't even know, really, what this means, and the ones who do, don't believe the University is being true to itself by maintaining simultaneously the above and a faculty which does not inspire the symbolic custom of student-faculty intimacy: Sunday night visiting. On the whole Freshmen do the most visiting. But Freshmen have the most difficulty in budgeting their time. It is not, then, a matter of time but a matter of stimulation and intimacy. It is a fact that very few professors have any intimacy with the students. Sunday night visiting has degenerated into a coffee hour for eager Freshmen who soon learn that inspiration is not to be found there.

Of course there are a few professors who are visited quite frequently and for intellectual stimulation, but what percent of a student body of 600 can become intimate with ten or twelve professors?

What does a Freshman do when he reads in the catalogue "to seek positively and consistently the correlation of the various branches of knowledge by referring to a fundamental principle the light of which can be seen in mathematics and physics reaching up through philosophy to the knowledge of God" and then comes

upon a professor who seems to recognize no other discipline? What does a Freshman think who has to put up with a professor who has him "teased" by C and doesn't even discuss the trouble a grade papers or discuss the student's problems? Why can't more people be stimulated?

There is quite a considerable number of men in each class with exceptional abilities who drop out or founder around for one to four years and complain of no intellectual invigoration (if they realize the situation) or simply get lost down the road in a glass of draught beer (if they don't). Some of the worst atrocities which have ever been committed on this campus were done by men of exceptional ability, who had lost all interest in anything but getting by; and it is a known fact that many of them did not come here in that frame of mind. (We can cite examples unofficially if anyone so desires.) Besides that, there are even more who are in the same intellectual category who have maintained a respectable disciplinary record, but who either become absorbed in grades for grades' sake (or graduate school's sake) or in the social aspects of campus life. And there are a few who are so brilliant that they cannot help making high marks, but who have little or no inspiration and certainly make very little if any academic effort. We feel that the number of sincere intellectuals which function for more than the first semester of the Freshman year is astonishingly low for a university which professes such high ideals and standards.

With regard to last week's "crossing off," probably frustration was the immediate cause. In

## Apology

We should like to apologize for our set and for the personal insult that was inevitably caused by it. We should further like to apologize for the use of "We, the students" in the original list.

Sincerely,

FRED J. JONES, JR.

BRUCE S. KEENAN

HENRY I. LOUITTIT, JR.

all of the student's relations with the faculty and administration, although the student is always listened to, he rarely feels as if the member is really concerned or gives any thought to the student's ideas whatsoever. The student is made to feel that there is no acceptance of valid complaint. The opinion of the student usually doesn't count. (Concern for social problems is an exception to this.)

As far as a student criticism of the faculty is concerned, there seems to be a myth propounded by the faculty, that students are in no position whatsoever to evaluate professors. We believe, however, that the students are in a better position to evaluate a professor's ability to teach and inspire than are either other members of the faculty, or the administration, or the Board of Trustees. But whether criticism is permissible or not, there is criticism from every quarter of the student body on every professor good and bad, and every lecture, even. There IS criticism, but it does not transcend the ball screen level. No student would dare to be completely candid with one of his professors without fear of serious after effects. So, the fact that criticism is not sincerely considered is one source of this frustration.

It cannot be denied that job stability is a healthy attribute to teaching positions at Seawane, but it is simply false that nothing can be done about instructors who are not performing competently. And it is downright unethical for a professor to take advantage of Seawane's big heart by continuing to do an inadequate job. It will be granted that not every professor can be as gifted as a few men at Seawane. But every professor can make an effort. Anyone can try. And a professor should not draw a salary for doing nothing.

An ideal for which Seawane is striving is stated in the catalogue and Seawane not only is a long way from a goal in nearly every phase of her life, but is not actively striving to reach

it. The ideal institution described in the catalogue is, in actuality, dull, stagnant, and unstimulating. The credo which is believed and practiced by Seawane students is:

Believe in nothing.

Stand up for nothing.

Take the easiest way out; i.e.

crisp courses, etc. The intellectual stagnation of Seawane is a sad image of the glorious picture painted by the speakers at alumni banquets, of the so-called Oxford of America, of the realization of the Kingdom of God, which is the ultimate goal of the University.

Seawane can be very great, but until it returns to the notion that the University exists primarily for the cultivation and stimulation of young men—primarily for that—Seawane will never amount to any more than its present mediocrity.

With regard to the list of persons "crossed-off" we are aware of the frailties of human nature. The sorry act of last week is testimony to that fact and we realize that no one can ever attain the ideal state of the "perfect professor." The only professors on the list which we have heard defended are those which are a snap. We are afraid that there were a few mistakes on and off the list. But we feel that a large portion of the responsible student body agrees with a large portion of our list. We believe that Seawane must be more than just a "trip."

The reasons for our committing the act, therefore, came out of a very real frustration, of feeling compelled to act in some direction or another. And this compulsion to act might have been the result of a final disillusion with Seawane and a desire to somehow voice an opinion of Seawane's intellectual stagnation, cynicism, and failure on the part of the faculty and administration to face the real problems at Seawane.

At this point, a detailed criticism is given of five professors.

The document closes with the following:

## CONCLUSION

After having made our apology we feel that we must once again admit the disgracefulness of our act. Were it possible to turn back time, we would somehow seek more propitious means to express ourselves. Nevertheless, it is impossible to possess moral integrity where intellectual integrity is lacking. And when moral integrity is destroyed, Christianity becomes a farce.

Sincerely,

FRED J. JONES, JR.

BRUCE S. KEENAN

HENRY I. LOUITTIT, JR.

Ed. Note. At the suggestion of Deans Lencaster and Webb a few minor changes were made prior to publication of the foregoing statement. The major points and wording remain as originally read before the Student Discipline Committee.

# Suggested Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is submitted for consideration by College officials as illustrative of the type the Purser is supporting.

1. Why are you taking this course?
  - (a) interest
  - (b) credit
  - (c) erp
  - (d) other reason
2. Do you feel that the text is adequate and interesting?
3. Do you feel that the professor comes to class adequately prepared?
4. Do you feel that personal communication is possible with this professor?
5. Do you feel that there are any inequalities in the professor's system of testing or grading? If so, what?
6. Do you feel that you have been able to answer this questionnaire without bias caused by your personal achievement or lack of it at this course, or by your personal opinion of the professor?

... goes Catullus, there Racine, there Camille, there Sophocles—making a sad sight and a good blaze.

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"Cowan's Most Interesting Store"

J. F. MERRILL, JR., CLERK

YOUR BUSINESS APPRECIATED