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The Student Voice

Forrest G. Cooper Jr.

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Mississippian 11/21/63

The Student Voice

Dr. Silver

Dear Sir:

This letter is in reference to the "challenge" presented by Dr. Silver's statements before the Southern Historical Society.

It is significant to me that none of the responses to his speech has included a denial of the accuracy of his assertions. The reason is simple: there were too many charges, any of which would have required a full edition of your paper to answer.

BUT FOR NOW, rebuttal is irrelevant - other historians will do that - what is relevant now is that to Dr. Silver the justification for his statements is not in their truth, but in the purpose for which he made them, i. e. change. The speech was neither more nor less than a psychological trick calculated to induce precisely this response: "A challenge to our tolerance has been hurled at us. Beware, the eyes of the nation are upon us!"

And, considering the frame of reference in which Mississippi has been cast so consistently over the past quarter of a century, he could well expect success! If a modicum of guilt can be injected into the scapegoat's mind, then withdrawal, in the name of magnificence, is a predictable response to the overwhelming.

We must face this fear, then leave it behind. The scapegoat has no choice but to go his own way, for whatever the alternative, to fear is to "die," at all events.

NOW, AS TO "our way," I submit it can be neither silence nor subversion.

First, if the accreditation of a university is to be dependent upon who is re-

tained, and not solely upon the general quality of the staff and facilities, then the power over academic freedom is merely shifted away from the vote.

And, by the next step, the people become the inheritable property of the government, without the right to define their welfare. Besides, we all know what the Pope did to Galileo, don't we? And this without a generation of crises to fog his judgment or Galileo's even tacit opposition to His Highness.

ACCREDITATION is not worth that much! This is our University.

Now, Representative Williams has recommended the dismissal of Dr. Silver among others, I believe. Any intellectual laziness evident on the part of Rep. Williams notwithstanding, if he wishes to press the college board for dismissal of that intellectual prehensile and replace him - and anyone who chooses to leave with him - with an intellectual, than this suits me just fine.

AND IF REP. Williams no longer wants to, I do. The farce on individuality has been hanging on the podiums of this university for 27 years and sooner or later, if he hasn't already done so, he is going to lose his sense of direction, slip, hang himself, and we will get the investigation.

I believe the personal courage and instincts of Rep. Williams deserve our support. If we succumb to the fear of being a social failure and grasp at the wispy notion that if we are sweet enough, then everything will somehow be all right, then Rep. Williams will lose - through our omission -, in drawing up and circulating a resolution supporting Rep. Williams, please send your name and address to me at

the address below and i will contact you. It will be held in strictest confidence.

Sincerely,
Forrest G. Cooper, Jr.
Box 1515
Campus