



Rebeschini

as I see IT

By ED MICHELIC

ROARING PRESSES have turned out the last Technology News of the semester and the twenty-sixth of the year. It has been a great privilege for me to be editor-in-chief of this publication. It has been a rich experience to work with a staff of students representing a good cross-section of academic and social interests, and it has been great fun to share ideas with what I proudly feel is the most original and spirited group on the campus.

Many organization officers are in the same spot as I am right now, handing over to their enthusiastic successors worn, scarred gavel and grimy account books; I can't help but feel that our thoughts are markedly similar. We are wondering how successful have been our programs and policies and how bad our mistakes, whether or not we were effective as leaders as we might have been and how much our studies have suffered in the process.

We can all chalk it up to experience and feel mellowed as individuals and members of a group. We know we can never repay in mere "thanks" the debts we owe to faculty, students, and school administrators for counsel and for help given as personal favors.

To close my writings, I'd like to give you my ideas about what this newspaper "really is." People I've met about the campus have been gratifyingly frank in their opinions; many have definite ideas about what the paper "is," whether complimentary or otherwise.

Primarily, the newspaper is an organization of students, not a journalistic definition. Matters of taste and newspaper content are arbitrary ones that the staff must decide and accept if it is to be truly said that the staff produces the paper.

For this reason, you who must witness further issues will notice changes in news approach, editorial policy and personality in the staff responsible for the newspaper makeup. Your newspaper will reflect you to the extent that you support it and participate in it, editor or reader; it is yours with which to experiment and by which you may learn life's real values; it will change with you, broadening and growing as you do. It's all yours. Good luck.



Slipstick

1st Coed: "That boy friend you were riding with has trouble with his vision."

2nd Coed: "Yes, he keeps seeing parking spots before his eyes."

* * *

Overheard: You never kiss me anymore. Why can't you be like the man next door?

* * *

"What do you think of my fur coat?" asked the first chorus girl.

"Gee, Sadie, it's a beauty. You must be ruined," replied the second.

* * *

Take the parrot into the other room, son. I'm going to show your father the clothes I bought.

* * *

Then there's the bachelor who got thrown out of his apartment when the landlady heard him drop his shoes—twice.

* * *

Doctor's Holiday

Orthopedic Specialist: "The girls at these Florida beaches have beautiful legs, don't they?"

Lung Specialist: "I hadn't noticed, I'm a chest man, myself."

* * *

This may be the machine age, but love is still being made by hand.

* * *

He: "Is my face dirty, or is it my imagination?"

She: "Your face is clean: I don't know about your imagination."

'Bye 'til fall, fellows,

* * *

A serious thought for the day,
Is one that may cause us dismay.
Just what are the forces
That bring little horses,
If all big horses say "Nay!"

* * *

The reason that marriage is so popular is that it combines the ultimate in temptation with the maximum of opportunity.

* * *

"I'm going to have a little one."

Said the gal, gay and frisky;
But the boy friend yawned and fainted
Before he knew she meant whisky!

* * *

Those who think our jokes are rugged
Would straightaway change their views
Could they compare the jokes we print
With those we did not use.

Carbolic Gussie.

Political action leads to political know-how

In response to the editor's request, Mr. A. Biderman of the political and social science department contributed his ideas on student political activity.

Shortly after VE Day, the Allies undertook the tremendous task of "democratizing" Germany. I was one of many occupation soldiers who received some valuable education in the fundamentals of democracy by being able to participate in this task.

Greatest weight was attached to the "denazification" and "democratization" of the communication media of Germany—its press, radio, theater, etc. The Germans who were to man such activities, it was firmly held, must be the most un-Nazi of the un-Nazis. Extreme care was to be taken in picking personnel for these "information" activities. The usual reliance upon questionnaires could not be trusted sufficiently to separate the sheep from the goats in these crucial institutions. Social science techniques were enlisted to insure against the possibility of some anti-democratic characters worming their way into strategic positions. One technique used was an interview cleverly designed to penetrate through disguises and reveal the prospective employee's innermost political and social attitudes. This screening procedure was called "vetting," from the word "vet," meaning "to subject an animal to examination and treatment."

I was such a "veterinarian," probing into the social values of people, and into the minds of individuals whose values had become so corroded that the name "animal" could have been very well applied to them, and "veterinarian" to my role. I think that my experiences have some relevance to the question Technology News has asked me to discuss—political activities on campus. I'd like to relate one of these experiences since I think it forcefully aids the understanding of what had happened to the political attitudes of many Germans, and why.

The "vetting team" to which I was assigned was given the task of screening the personnel of the Wagner Festival house at Bayreuth. In this outfit, which had been so close to the heart of Der Fuehrer himself, I was rather surprised to come across a seemingly fervent democrat. This chap, a musician in his early thirties, had a passable political record. He had belonged to the Nazi Party, but then who hadn't? Our informants reported nothing else derogatory concerning him. During my conversation with him, he was strong in his affirmation of democratic principles.

"Nazism has been a fearful business," he told me, "Why did the Allies make war upon Germany?" I asked him. "Hitler, the power-mad fiend, brought on the war," he answered.

"Do you think Nazism was a bad idea, or a good idea badly carried out?" I asked, picking another question from our stock battery.

"It was a horrible idea," (followed by a string of expletives) was his emotion-laden response.

Only because such a genuine-sounding anti-Nazi was such a rarity did I press the interview further. "What kind of government do you think should be the government of the Germany of the future?" I asked him.

"A democracy," was the quick, firm and sincere answer.

I popped another of our stock questions: "How many political parties do you think should be allowed in this democratic Germany of the future?"

"Only one, indeed, and that the democratic party," was the quick, firm, and absolutely sincere answer.

Further questioning revealed that the man conformed rather completely to what we had learned to be an attitude type rather characteristic of his social class. We had a name for it—"the apolitical type." These were the people who claimed that they had never been interested in politics. No, they had never participated in any political party activities. How did they vote during the period of free elections in Germany? Oh, they didn't vote for any party—they weren't interested in such things. Did they go to political meetings or at least read the stories on politics in their newspapers? No, they didn't understand such things, and anyway, it was all lies, meaningless slogans, propaganda. Anyway, they were just "little men" and what influence could they have upon such things?

But "apolitical" was in large measure a misnomer for people of this type. They were truly apolitical during the short period of German democracy to be sure. But they were the informants, the "Heilers," the Blockleiters, and worse during the period of German demagoguery. They couldn't "understand" politics, but they could feel the beat of the drum. They couldn't influence the affairs of their city or nation, but their egos could swell as the Wehrmacht grew. Political campaigns were all lies and filth, but the voice of their Fuehrer stirred their souls. When they had been called upon to be responsible men, they could not understand, they could not choose, they could not think, they were helpless. But as a mass, they could feel, they could shout, they could hate, they could destroy.

I know it's a long way from Bayreuth to Chicago—it's almost as far as from Wagner to Wayne King. But I know that political apathy means political ignorance. Political ignorance warps our reason and saps our strength. The feeling of political impotency corrodes democracy.

Student political activities on any campus, consequently, should provide a social climate in which political apathy does not develop; which insures against political ignorance; and which allows the student to demonstrate for himself that the citizens of a democracy can influence their political surroundings.

These objectives are frequently thwarted on campuses which do have political organizations with off-campus affiliations. In many such cases, "campus political organization" comes to be associated in the minds of the majority of the students with the eager-beaver crackpots of the lunatic fringe—the ineffectual combatants in contumacious contests. The overwhelming majority of students on any campus has little desire to participate in these furious verbal battles toward completely symbolic objectives.

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