

The Daily Tar Heel



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Sunday, January 12, 1930

"Crack-Brained Professors" And "Baby Radicals"

In the December 26 issue of the Southern Textile Bulletin, an organ devoted to the interests of mill owners, the Daily Tar Heel receives some interesting publicity in an editorial entitled "The Baby Radicals."

Quoting from the Bulletin "Paul Blanchard, the Socialist, said in one of his articles: 'We must peg into the minds of the young while they are still plastic. One agency in America that is trying to get the students interested in Socialism is the colleges. They strive to bring in the most provocative speakers obtainable.'

"When he made this statement he certainly had in mind a group of radical professors at the University of North Carolina, and other Carolina colleges, for the most radical and provocative speakers are certainly brought to them and every effort made to 'peg into their minds while plastic.'

"A group of young boys, without business experience but with a prejudice against industry inspired by the teachings of radical professors, proceed to tell Mr. Gossett just what is wrong with the textile industry. Some crack-brained professor told them that labor unions would be a fine thing for Southern mills and he pegged into some 'plastic minds,' in fact some very plastic minds. In view of the statements made in the attempted reply to Mr. Gossett the use of the word 'plastic' is very charitable.

The article itself is of no moment or force but it is a clear cut illustration of the way in which college professors are

misleading the young men placed in their charge and are turning them into enemies of industry. An experienced cotton manufacturer who has always shown an interest in the welfare of his employees made an address in which he frankly gave a statement of the textile situation in North Carolina. A group of students without experience but with a fund of prejudice and misinformation as the result of "pegging into plastic minds" wrote a silly reply containing very few statements which they could substantiate.

"Every year thousands of young men who would, otherwise, develop into successful business men and manufacturers come under the influence of radical professors in our colleges and universities and have their minds so twisted that their careers are ruined."

We assure the Bulletin editorial writer that we appreciate tremendously his "very charitable use of the word "plastic." But even very young minds in all their plasticity cannot fail to recognize, without being subjected to "pegging," the extreme prejudice underlying the opinions of such journals as the Bulletin. Depending upon the good will of the mill owners for its very existence, the Bulletin must necessarily devote all of its energies to furtherance of their interests.

The Tar Heel editorial took issue with Mr. Gossett's assertion that reports of brutally low wage scales and terrible living conditions in cotton mill villages of the South are nothing more than the propaganda of outside agitators. It attacked the operation of the "stretch-out" system in several mills, where the ignorance of the operators has been responsible for failure to effect the efficiencies inherent in the system and has thus thrown heavy additional duties upon the workers, without wage increases. Mr. Gossett alluded to the efforts of labor in this state to organize as the work of "foreign and unsympathetic organizers" entirely; the Tar Heel editorial mentioned the Marion case, in which a group of employees petitioned the American Federation of Labor for admittance to the union.

Far from "telling Mr. Gossett just what is wrong with the textile industry," the Tar Heel editorial declared that he "admirably outlined the position of the more liberal and intelligent of the mill owners," and pointed out that "with evident truthfulness Mr. Gossett stated that higher wages can come only from larger profits. His remedies for the desperate situation of the cotton manufacturers are excellent, but in dealing with the labor problem he exhibits the rather natural bias of a mill owner.

Labor in the textile industry may be receiving its just share of the profits, but it is certainly not in a position to demand this share if it is not now receiving it. The mill owners should work out among themselves the solution to the problem of overproduction, but they should also allow the workers an opportunity to secure their rightful portion of the fruits of their labor. Through unionization alone can the interests of the workers be safeguarded adequately, and we believe that once labor is in a position to be assured its just portion of the profits in the textile industry, it will cooperate fully with the manufacturers in attempts to secure these profits."

The statements contained in the Tar Heel editorial are easily substantiated; to those possessing the slightest degree of familiarity with the textile situation their truth is obvious. It is significant that the Bulletin editorial does not mention specifi-

cally a single instance of incorrect statement in the Tar Heel editorial; it resorts to vague generalities and ridicule, the favorite methods of criticism with unintelligent and unprincipled mud-slingers. Rather than writing as "an enemy of industry under the influence of a prejudice inspired by the teachings of radical professors" we attempted merely to point out without hostility a few obvious inaccuracies in Mr. Gossett's statements through the utilization of the slight knowledge of the textile situation we have gained through conversations with workers and mill owners themselves and through newspaper accounts.

A University professor evinces strictly humanitarian interest in the welfare of a group of Americans living under deplorable economic conditions; he is branded a "crack-brained radical" by journals such as the Bulletin, devoted to the selfish promotion of the interests of those responsible for such conditions. Utilizing every form of scurrilous and cowardly attack, persons of the calibre of David Clark, the Bulletin's editorial writer, let no ethical considerations interfere with their determination to discredit those who would improve the conditions under which the workers live. College professors who exhibit liberal tendencies are represented as "twisting the minds" of their students, ruining their careers.

The methods employed by the Southern Textile Bulletin in its attempts to prevent the formation of strong public opinion in sympathy with the cause of labor in its struggles for organization in the textile industry are utterly reprehensible. Of these methods the series of cowardly attacks upon certain University of North Carolina professors is representative.

The Bull Session

One of the most widely featured phases of college life is the bull session. Of course there are bridge sessions, poker sessions, — even occasionally study sessions, but each of these has only a certain group as adherents. The bull session is common to all; a man may abhor bridge, he may have scruples against poker, he may be too indolent for study, but the all compelling lure of a bull session invariably possesses an insidiously fatal appeal. Before the temptation even the most rigid disciplinarian will relax; even the greatest grind will sometimes succumb and take part in that often absurd, usually vulgar, seldom intelligent, and never brilliant impromptu group discussion known in expressive campus slang as the bull session.

These discussions are never planned; they spring up at a moment's notice; offering no warning, they flower luxuriantly,—but their duration is short lived and their existence transitory. At the end the participants have made no progress; no one has put over his arguments successfully, and no one has received his opinion on the subject debated. There has been didacticism, dogmatism, sneers, jeers, and a great amount of "hot air." In other words everyone has "passed the bull" back and forth as a kind of uncouth conversationalist ball with which he has aired his opinions on the subject. But none of these opinions seem to circulate successfully; they come back to the individual expounder who, firmly believing his own dogmatic idea, is convinced that the others of the group are stubborn asses.

Not all bull sessions are heated debates; often they are more or less impersonal — or personal — discussions on any such ab-

stract subject as religion, immorality, girls (which topic is talked over vigorously form both an abstract and a concrete point of view, sex, psychoanalysis, — any number of questions often quite profound and for this reason illogical when introduced in a bull session.

It does no good to moralize on the bull session; it is one of the most natural outgrowths of campus life — especially in the dormitories where the boys, not being banded together as in a fraternity form their own groups, with numerous bull sessions as the inevitable result. Although one of these discussions often ends in horseplay, with resultant damage to the university's furniture, and although they afford an excellent means of wasting time, they are harmless when compared with the more vicious phases of collegiate life.

The bull session will probably go on forever as a weak perpetuation of the lost art of conversation. It affords an outlet for nature's desire to air its opinions, to argue, and merely to "bull" on any subject under the sun as a pleasant means of delaying the unpleasant prospect of getting down to work, and its popularity is assured as long as man is gregarious.

—R.H.

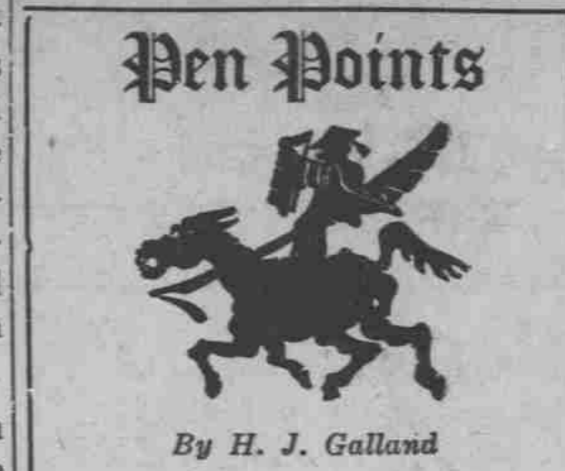
Student Intelligence

It is unquestionably true that the average intelligence of the students of this or any other standard university is higher than that of the rank and file of the American people. The writer of this editorial chose to discuss the matter of student intelligence after a rather lengthy conversation with a prominent faculty member whose attention has been called to the strangeness of the application of student intelligence to entertainments sponsored by the University, as well as to the programs of the Carolina theatre.

The mind of the average student seems to be manifestly carnal in kind. Conclusive evidence of this is the fact that several students hissed and whistled when the Isadora Duncan dancers appeared here last quarter. Numerous students failed utterly to appreciate the rhythmic motion of the performers because of an undue interest in what may be called their underpinning. This same carnal factor bore fruit recently when "The River" was presented at the Carolina theatre. One faculty member, whose name is here withheld for sane reasons, has aptly said "Carolina students would laugh and whistle if a mere table having four legs were placed on the stage of performance."

Such doings on the part of students are not only an insult to their intelligence, but also a drawback to the University. Dancers, singers, lecturers, etc., who are brought here by the Student Entertainment Committee and suffer the humiliation of having students whistle and squeal at them go away from this campus with an impression which is detrimental to the interests of the institution when narrated in other places. The evil of this kind of thing is that the aforesaid bad impression is due to the thoughtless deeds of a few, but casts a reflection upon the entire student body which is an insult to student intelligence.

The writer feels that unnecessary manifestations of carnal principles and thoughtlessness might well be discontinued. Certainly, they are disgusting to those who attend picture shows and student entertainment programs for reasons other than to scrutinize the underpinnings of the daughters of Eve.—J. C. W.



There are rumors rife on the campus that things are stirring among swordsmen. Fencing is a new sport at Carolina, about which little is known. It is also one of the most satisfying of contests, for it is as interesting to the spectator on the sidelines, and as exciting, as football or any other more modern sport.

For color and action, fencing is unsurpassed. A regular contest finds the spectators as tense and watchful as either of the swordsmen parrying and thrusting on the strip of mat. Every year the peak of interest in inter-collegiate fencing is reached when the finals are run off at the Hotel Astor in New York. On a long raised platform, under bright lights, the contestants are called together by the referee, and advance to the center. They are dressed in white trousers and white canvas jackets, buttoned closely at the neck for protection. The sword hand wears a glove, and a closely meshed wire mask and a light foil complete the equipment.

At a sword from the official arbiter, the fencers gracefully salute each other, touch swords, step back a pace, and are on guard in a crouching position. Then the action starts. A quick lunge, a lightning-like parry and return thrust, and almost before one is well aware of what has happened, a touch and consequently a point has been made. Up and down the narrow strip they fight, steel blade ringing upon steel blade, flashing, advancing, retreating. It takes an expert to judge when a fair touch has been made, an expert with quick eyes. The lunge is one of the prettiest motions in all sportdom to watch, the sword arm extended in front, the left hand and leg in a straight line to the rear. Each parry, thrust, riposte, and position has its name, every movement must be rapidly and unerringly made. It is no child's play, this matter of fencing.

There are five fencing clubs in New York, and numerous others throughout the country. At West Point it is part of the curriculum. In numerous colleges it is part of the regular schedule of athletics. It is by no means a dead sport. Fencers do not go stale, or reach their limit of usefulness at the age of thirty. At the Inter-collegiate in New York you will find the

crowd of collegiate on-lookers well mixed with gray-haired amateur devotees.

And so it seems that the fencing season is about to begin. Members of the team, we read, put on a fencing scene in the Twelfth Night Revels of the Playmakers, a novice tournament will be held here soon, and the varsity team gets into action in a few weeks. The D'Artagnan's of the campus should soon be giving us a few new thrills. Plans are afoot also for a co-ed fencing club. This is news. Hatpins and high heels will give way to real weapons, and we foresee the day when the conventional duels for the honor of the lady fair will give way to contests for the admiring glance of the much sought-after male. The world do change!

Post Office Receipts Fall Off During 1929

Although business at the local postoffice is \$2500 less than that of 1928, according to a report completed yesterday by Postmaster R. D. Herndon, the total for last year was \$47,465.34.

During the December quarter of 1929 receipts were \$13,511.96 as against \$14,360.47 for the same period the previous year. Postoffice employees, however, assert that work was heavier, owing to the large number of pieces.

"Readers of this report," said Herndon, "must not think the drop has been due to poor business and lack of prosperity here. Paul J. Weaver, who published the Music Supervisors' Journal, and G. F. Taylor, publisher of religious literature, are no longer mailing from this postoffice, and this fully accounts for the loss of business. Weaver, especially, was a heavy mailer, accounting for about 135,000 first-class, two-cent letters per year."

Library Receives Gift From Mahler

Thorough the courtesy of a friend of the University, Mr. Fred G. Mahler of Raleigh, the library has been given a three months subscription to the Boston Transcript.

This newspaper is one of the leading New England journals, devoting much space to news of Eastern colleges. The Wednesday and Saturday issues offer special pages of current book reviews, articles on the theatre, art, rare books, etc.

If the paper proves to be of sufficient interest to the users of the library it will, no doubt, be added to the library's regular subscription list.

The G. O. P.'s Young Guard, we are told, is "an organization that will endure." It will have to endure aplenty when the Old Guard starts putting on the pressure.—Arkansas Gazette.

Advertisement for a cafeteria with text: 'When to Economize Is a Pleasure..... You eat for less when you eat with us, but the food is such that economizing becomes a real pleasure. — Try Us — Welcome In Cafeteria'