

From Our Readers

Yes, There's A Machine

Dear Editor:

In the next few weeks the students of the University of Alabama are going to be faced with SGA elections, which, if the past serves as any indication, will be nothing but a parody on democratic process.

Today, on the University campus, selections to certain honoraries, including Druids and Jasons, are based on nothing more than political agreements made in the past. Many qualified students have been passed over in selection to these honoraries, merely because they committed the unpardonable sin of not belonging to a fraternity, or perhaps belonged to one which wasn't "in with the crowd."

I am a member of a fraternity on campus and a member of Druids, but in my opinion, this situation is as flagrant an example of "dirty pool" as may be found anywhere.

The fact that political life of this campus is run by a "machine" is a very ill-kept secret. Many students know of it and many others suspect its existence. Yet year after year no protest is made of this fact. We, who as college students supposedly represent the intellectual and political leaders of the future, have allowed ourselves to be led around like bulls with rings in our noses by this oligarchy of some 20-30 "little gods" who have set themselves up as masters of our political destiny.

If several members of the faculty tried to dictate the editorial policies of the C-W and tried to dictate the selection of student leaders, a protest would be made concerning this "encroachment upon student liberty" which could be heard from Maine to California. However, evidently the student body doesn't mind having its "political rights" encroached upon by other students. Personally I can see no difference.

The worst thing which proceeds from this aforementioned political farce is not so much the loss of efficiency in Student Government resulting from the lack of stimulus due to open competition, but is, rather, the contempt for democracy and politics in general which this situation engenders among the members of the student body.

Student values and spirit could be

tremendously enhanced if this cynicism did not exist. If there was open competition among students in political affairs and there was opportunity for students to achieve success on this campus regardless of fraternity affiliation or non-affiliation, a respect might be created by the students for each other which does not exist at present.

With the forces of totalitarianism threatening our very existence, we cannot afford to relax our vigil against those forces, at any level, which are detrimental to the promulgation of political freedom. The students of this campus must rise from their apathetic slumber and must, by the supporting of capable, independent leaders, destroy this "machine", which has such an evil, stultifying effect upon the "growth" of our students. Winston Churchill said of England after her desertion of Czechoslovakia "we have been weighed in the balance, and found wanting."

The same thing could apply to the U of A students.

W. A. North.