

Crimson-White Editorials

The Machine

Some will charge, we have no doubt, that the rather full treatment given The Machine in today's issue of the Crimson - White is for purely expedient political reasons.

We approached the business of The Machine warily, gingerly, checking and double - checking facts, making sure that what we publish is the truth. We are certain — as certain as is possible in an uncertain world — that our facts are accurate.

But, more, we approached what had to be approached with a heavy heart. For we realized that in doing what had to be done we would deeply hurt, perhaps even mar the careers of certain of those we have exposed as being members of a clandestine political order. Certain of those we consider to be our friends.

We thoroughly believe more than one of those identified as members of The Machine detest The Machine and all its workings.

*The Machine is bad for this campus. Obviously, it steers control of student activities into the hands of its members, leaving those outside its ranks to do as best they can against serious handicaps. The Machine is a source of much - talked - about student apathy, as Joe College sees positions of leadership going to the same clique year after year. It is a clear breach of the democratic ethic, secreting much of the working of student government.

But unnoticed are its ill effects on its own members.

One could hardly blame a young politician, eager to find the way to the top, for quickly accepting Machine membership. Machine members find doors opened, things taken care of, a power base. But, once The Machine has its hooks into a person it is reluctant to let go.

It has been pointed out that the state of politics in Alabama can in part be traced to The Machine, and its traditions of seeing-which-way-the-wind blows — politics. A tradition of how best to skirt the issues, rather than clearly facing them. A tradition of fooling the public until it is too late. A tradition of slapping backs and shaking hands, rather than seeking the answers to public questions.

We believe this to be true. And however much enraged at such a conduct of public affairs as members of the public, we yet cannot help a notion of pity for those trapped in such a system.

We know there have been attempts from within the membership of The Machine to bring it into the open. They have not been successful.

Though not by its own volition, The Machine is now in the open.

The Crimson - White hopes, sincerely, that The Machine will now reform itself into an open political party. That it will take the opportunity to lay aside its fondness for manipulation and intrigue and childish initiations and secrecy and politics for politics' sake, to join the University community as a responsible element of student government.

The Machine will not dissolve after now having met the light of public notice. We are sure of that. But what direction will it take? Burrowing deeper into its own secrecy, or laying aside the Game to take a needed place as an open political party?

If it would take the latter course, one truth would be more evidently true: That because a candidate is Machine - backed, or an official put into office by Machine votes, does not necessarily mean that he would be, or is, a bad office-holder.