SMU Scoffs At American Mercury 'Leftist' Attack

By DENNIS ASHTON
Of the Thresher Staff

S.M.U. officials have stoutly refused to "dignify by comment" an article published in The American Mercury accusing Southern Methodist University of leftism, reports the S.M.U. Campus.

The article charged that S.M.U. in the principal base of leftism in Dallas and that the university and the Dallas Council of World Affairs pamper left-wing activities.

5,000 Reprints Mailed

Over 5,000 reprinted copies of the Mercury article were mailed to parents of S.M.U. students by a group called Texans for America, headed by J. Evetts Haley who unsuccessfully sought the governorship in the last election.

The first reprints were received during examinations and the majority of the copies had been received before registration began last Thursday.

Front Page News

Dallas newspapers, notably The Dallas Morning News, have been giving the story prominent coverage.

Although Willis M. Tate, in his official statement declared, "We have never attempted to dignify the article by comment because it is filled with abysmal and malicious deceit," S.M.U. student leaders have answered the Mercury article with increasing sharpness.

Campus Reacts

In an editorial in the January 3 issue of The S.M.U. Campus, Editor Jim Harwood had to say: "What prompted this tirade against our campus is the Mercury's peculiar talent of finding a little pink anywhere it chooses to look. Usually the kindest attitude one can take toward the Mercury is that it is a nut book, and like Uncle Alfred sitting on the veranda in his underwear, we should smile at his simple pleasure and hope none of the neighbors notice him."

Then in the February 3 issue of The Campus, eight of the top Continued on Page 4)
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students on campus presented the student’s view in a front page letter to the editor.

Academic Freedom

“It is our belief that university has the responsibility of creating an atmosphere where free exchange of ideas is possible. Only (in such an atmosphere) can an intelligent evaluation be made of the system in question.”

Student Countercharges

Finally, in an editorial in the same issue, the students got to the heart of their defense.

First, that the present owner of The Mercury was once convicted of fraud.

Second, that one of his aids had at one time been president of an organization listed as subversive by the Attorney’s General’s Office.

Third, that Harold Varney, Mercury’s political editor and author of the article, was once connected with the Klu Klux Klan.

Fourth, even conservatives like Fulton Lewis, Jr. and William Buckley denounce The Mercury as being “pathologically irresponsible.”

S.M.U.’s defence rests.