Forum Prepares Policy Statement In Reaction To Speaker Sanction

By PHIL GARON
Thresher Staff Reporter

The Forum Committee of Rice University, faced with a stalemate in attempts to bring certain controversial figures to the campus, is currently preparing a "statement of policy and purpose" to be delivered to President K. S. Pitzer.

Charles King, chairman of the group, explained that "the necessity for the existence of the Forum Committees lies in its ability to present programs on pertinent issues to the University."

Red Speakers

"The attempt on our part to restate our purposes in the form of a letter to President Pitzer has been brought about in part by our unsuccessful attempts to bring Gus Hall, the noted United States Communist Party leader, to Rice."

President Pitzer commented on this action that the Forum Committee had not come before him as a group or presented a written request to him for bringing a communist speaker to campus. "The last time that I had heard of this matter was over the summer, when the idea had been presented in part by a group of students who were not officially organized as the Forum Committee for the coming year."

"Before funds can be issued to bring a speaker of any nature to campus, the matter must be brought before the Student Senate for its endorsement, so this body must also be consulted."

Reconsiders Purpose

The President added, "There are certain speakers that I personally do not feel should be brought to campus through the use of University funds, but I will always be very liberal in approving a wide variety of speakers."

The first indication of any type of action being taken by the Forum Committee came at the Student Association meeting two weeks ago when a member of the group reported that the Forum was in process of "reconsidering the purpose of our existence."

King elaborated upon this statement: "We feel that to exist we must be able to bring in speakers with or without the sanction of the administration; notably, we want to bring a spokesman from the communist party to campus. But the administration can block this by refusing to grant us funds."

Varied Speakers

An impressive and varied group of speakers has already been secured by the Forum for the first semester of the school year. Norman Thomas, former presidential candidate on the Socialist ticket and outspoken proponent of that faction spoke on campus Tuesday night.

Among the other confirmed speakers are liberal-minded State Representative Henry B. Gonzales (November 8), and Melvin Belli, the fiery defense counsel in the Jack Ruby trial (December 8).

On November 26, B. L. Brent
(Continued on Page 3)
Forum Reconsiders Purpose

(Continued from Page 1)

Bozell, author of “McCarthy and His Critics,” will be on campus to discuss “Point of Order,” a recent motion picture study of the McCarthy hearings; Bozell will also engage in a debate with a Rice history professor on McCarthy’s career.

Van Den Haag Returns

Late in the month of December, Dr. John R. Silber will deliver a speech for the abolishment of capital punishment. Tentatively set for February are ex-Oklahoma football coach and current senatorial candidate Bud Wilkinson, and Ernst van den Haag, a New York University sociologist and writer for the “National Review,” who has previously spoken on campus in favor of legalizing prostitution.

Dr. Frank Freidel, Harvard University expert on the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, will speak in the spring under the auspices of the Forum, the Ford Foundation, and the Rice History Department.

On Blanket Tax?

The Forum’s hopes for the coming year include achieving a financial independence by being placed on the University blanket tax. King commented that “this subsidizing from the blanket tax will enable us to have a much larger budget and,

thus, a wider scope of presentations.”

“Our constitution allows us seven fields of interest that we may pursue, and although we are currently most concerned with the national political picture, we would also like to have groups of actors from the Alley and ANTA Theaters of Houston visit the campus, as well as some modern musical groups.”

Cannot Delegate

The Forum is also attempting to affiliate itself with the speaker programs now in practice in the various residential colleges at Rice; it is hoped that this association will widen the scope and quantity of their programs.

President Pitzer commented that the Forum Committee would still have to work through the administration for speaker approval even if this blanket tax subsidization were effected. “The administration cannot delegate to any one group the complete authority to bring anyone to campus that it desires.”

Pitzer has offered to meet with the group to formulate their “real objectives, in a platform that will be suitable and constructive for all members of the University.”