

Dr. Lewis W. Barnes

To Editor of the Morehead State University Trailblazer:

Dear Sir:

I submit this for your consideration for publication. I cannot recall ever sending a letter to an editor in my over twenty years of teaching. I have seen a copy of the three-page The Liberator: my reading of its articles motivates these statements. I do not believe that anyone who knows me will ever consider me an enemy of free speech, as other than a rugged individualist, and as other than one who cannot be intimidated by anyone other than himself. Holding tenure, having the highest academic rank a university offers, and owing allegiance to no party or clique, there is no good will I can court, or privilege I can obtain, or commendation I can receive for making these statements. All that can--and may well happen--is that I will receive, in the same sub rosa manner, some of the vilification given to the higher administration of this University. Before moving to my central observations, I might say, for the benefit of others who may not know, that one seldom wins battles with the administration, and such has always been--and is likely to be--axiomatic. Having just lost one over the matter of teaching more hours than is permissible, I am still licking my wounds, in inevitable submission, but not with ecstasy.

My objections to The Liberator could be made in several areas, but what I find appalling is its anonymity, its lack of claim to substantive truth, and its total negative and destructive approach. First, to its anonymity! The word "liberty" with its variant meanings has always been at the core of my total being. I associate "liberty" with enlightenment, as moving from the dark to the light. But the very nature of the nameless and faceless is that of darkness. Man's nature is one of nominalization; but the anonymous writer stands for and asserts the doctrines of dehumanization. A man is one who asks, in his own right and person, a question and receives, in his own right and person, an answer. The naming of each man individually is the very substance of admitting, claiming, asserting, and perpetuating the dignity of each individual.

Man does not speak, in dialogue, or in human terms, with the nameless. The students currently moved by the apparent anonymity of the student number and the computer card need to ponder over the matter of the writers for The Liberator. No student, no faculty member, no member of the greater community of citizens can hold dialogue or respond in any degree, as to the nature of the articles and the natures of the writers. There may be a few who may consider that the articles say what some of them would like to say, but let me assure such people that if they seriously adopt such a view, they are already on their way to surrendering part of that which makes them men and women as such. For they need to realize that each man must make his own testimony.

Now, this is not the first publication which has been anonymous. But let me direct attention to the fact that the noble and moving documents which have steadily assured man of the opportunity to express and assert that bit of divinity which must be his have been signed by men who have stood and in many cases suffered.

To refuse to speak in one's own right and name is to deny the divinity of one's creator. To those who assert that there is no creator, as such, then let me suggest that they must be embarrassed in their own sovereignty since there is no one to address. I realize that those who insist on anonymity are not likely to be persuaded, by any means or measures, or appeals, to change their ways. To respond to them in terms as emotional, biased, and dyslogicistic as their own is but to play into their hands, to grant the very response they desire. The purpose of writing on this and the other two points is to ask each reader of any station or degree to consider well the insult to himself, as well as that to those singled out for attack by the nameless. There are various degrees of being a craven or a coward. One is that of physical fear, another of intellectual cowardice, and the third of spiritual dread.

I know there are those who may claim that expediency is necessary in public affairs. But I suggest that personal and private moral corrosion is the penalty one pays for carrying such doctrines very far. I would remind them of Shelley's statement: "No man may do an evil thing that good may result." And I call attention to the term "man." While mankind has held many different opinions on many subjects, the insistence on the right to speak and to act with his person itself as pledge is the responsibility, but also the glory and achievement of man. There is no one on this campus who is not suspect as long as any individuals speak for or against this university, its administration, faculty, and students and do so without making themselves known. How ironic to find that in the time of our insistence on "doing one's thing," all in the name of seeking to find one's self, we are in the presence of those who fear to do so under their own names.

Finally, as to the matter of anonymity, I might call to the attention of faculty, administration, or students, or non-University people who have chosen the despicable way to expression, a few lines by Shakespeare:

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted;
Thrice is he armed that bears his quarrel just,
And he but naked though locked up in steel
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

And I would ask those hidden writers to look deeply into their consciences, for the injustice that they perpetrate must be akin to that in Hawthorne's thesis of the "unforgivable crime." I move next to the matter of the articles, but must do so briefly.

First, Dr. Doran does not erect buildings for the purpose of bearing his own name and that of Mrs. Doran. He has built them and is building them to give students more and better housing facilities, as well as more and better eating facilities. They provide for more students. There are many buildings here with many names attesting to the worth of many faculty and administrators over the past. More significant than money has been the award of recognizing by name those who have dedicated themselves to the well-being of their fellowmen, all of them with names.

Dr. Doran does not name buildings after himself. The buildings are named by those to whom Dr. Doran owes his responsibilities. That our young women prefer being well-dressed, clean, courteous, and loyal to Morehead is well-known. That they prefer a basic honesty dedicates them to preparing themselves to teach, to go into business, or to have cultural enlightenment for its own sake. That they prefer decency to prostitution of mind, body, and spirit is indicated in the service they give to their communities and in the marriages and children they cherish in themselves and for the basic principles inherent in a good person and citizen. The love for this University, the dedication of her total self to all aspects of student life, instruction, and improvement, and her total commitment to the insistence that every young woman needs, is entitled to, and can obtain a better life for and in herself have made the naming of any building after her a fitting tribute to not only Mrs. Doran but also to the things she has stood for. And such must be the case of all those public servants who have given of themselves to this and other universities.

Now, as to the the nature and course of the university. Morehead State University is not only the student body and its faculty. Morehead State University is its administrators and the entire citizenry of the State of Kentucky. As President, someone must speak to, for, and through the University. The point is not that responsibility has its privileges so much as responsibility demands and must have strong and effective leadership. The more one does, the more he renders himself vulnerable. It is a sad but historical fact that the greatest animal may be attacked by the meanest herd, and, unfortunately, such is also true in the world of man and men.

There are privileges and rights due to all men, and certainly to faculty members and students. If his cause is right and if his spirit is staunch, no man here need be subordinated to any other man except where such subordination is but right and proper in view of wider responsibilities, greater stature, and more difficult decisions. Dr. Doran does not decide who is fitted to study here. The previous education, the laws, rules, and regulations of accrediting associations, the state system, and the entire structure of the university, ranging from registrar to faculty member instructing determine who comes and who stays. The will of the greater community is a force which seems to be unknown to or ignored by those who consider that only faculty and students constitute the university. (I might observe and recall to the attention of each individual the nature of his class meetings and the frightening and frightful inadequacies of faculty committees. Would each individual, judging honestly, be satisfied with that?)

To those who have been off this campus to observe what this University has done and is doing for its total citizenry, no explanation as to the greater nature of the university is necessary; to those who have not, very little is possible. I need to add that those who assert that the current faculty and students are the university are being far from democratic. The spirit of all those living and the vast number of dead who have given of their bodies, minds, and spirits in and for this University also need their votes, and the votes need to be cast by someone with greater than faculty or student vision.

Great changes are effected by great people, some for better or for worse, but not by ordinary individuals. Yet, let me assert that Dr. Doran determines no policy that is not reviewed by higher authority and that is not subject to appeal by any individual. That the justice of his actions must be substantially sound is indicated by his long service, his many achievements, and the confidence vested in him by higher authority. Dr. Doran can dictate no dismissal of a faculty member or student contrary to the civil law, the criminal law, or the laws of associations to which we subject ourselves. If the faculty member or student dismissed is convinced of the merits of his case and if he will commit himself to the pursuit of them, he will receive justice. When the President makes a decision, and he must make many, he is held responsible.

The vicious note that I detect, apart from the utterly unworthy anonymity of the writers, is the call to the students and faculty to speak out against what is termed "this presidential monarchy." The ones who believe that they have been individual victims are the ones who can and should stand forth, if they have a case, and discuss the problem with Dr. Doran. As for the "ill-famed" train," I understand that a statement has been made that those who do not like the University may travel in any direction, with the train taking care of the easterly and westerly exits. I have understood this statement to mean that this University has, at its core, a basic philosophy which is still existent and operative. There comes a point and time when each individual asks himself where he stands with respect to the position.

I have understood that should such a break in the meeting of philosophies become sufficiently great that neither party, in all sincerity and good will, can resolve the problem, the faculty member may leave with no ill-will or negative recommendation. There have been times when I have exercised my critical nature in questioning certain policies and operations. I have preferred my commitment to the University as greater than my criticism, and no man is a heretic until he votes the other way. That Dr. Doran is a monarch is not true. That he attempts to be one is not, in my opinion, true. I believe that many individuals prevent their seeing their own inadequacies and lack of commitment and courage by simply making such an assertion. When Dr. Doran and Dean Lappin leave this institution, they will have handed on to their successors a noble piece of work and achievement. And let me say again, this is not a word from one whose career here has been one long course of complacent agreement with authority of any kind. I have fought, and will, in all likelihood, in my own name, and with no appeal for a supporting herd, do so again. But, as I look back over the decisions against me, I see that my position was based on a narrower and more fragmented view of the total situation.

When we come to page 3 of The Liberator, the picture of Dr. Doran flagging a train to shoot his faculty members west and east does not bring up a picture of Russian ideology in action; the very use of his name is in contrast to the facelessness of Russian rulers, one facet of this facelessness is evident in the anonymous writers of The Liberator

I doubt that I have seen any university show more concern for its students than is true of our faculty and its administration. Let me say that I have seen many students here remain and allowed to remain much to their own surprise. I also have to say that many of them have turned out to be rather good citizens. In my seven years here, I have seen faculty leave, but I have not seen many leave who really desired to stay.

Now, there is no question that this University is in a state and in a part of the state where its citizens have certain standards, hold to certain basic positions, and expect their will and wishes to be considered. No president would be doing his duty were he to sacrifice his University to the community, nor would he be doing his duty to ignore the voice of those who make this University possible. Were Dr. Doran's voice not strong and clear as to the vital need to have out-of-state students and had he not stood in total commitment to his position, the University would have lost. Had the President not insisted that the classroom is for teaching the subjects and courses for which the instructor is hired, he would have failed in his duty to the total community of scholars, students, faculty, and citizens.

When we look at the comments on the University Senate, I am somewhat baffled here since the statements do not square with my own personal knowledge of the situation. I do not know how the student members will obtain their seats, other than to know that they will have their own elections, and the honesty of the elections will be a measure of the honesty of student elections as such. I do know that the faculty representatives in our school were elected by an entirely democratic process. There were no appointments. There are sensible reasons for requiring that members will have been at Morehead for some time. As a matter of fact, when all faculty members sitting on such a body have tenure, the whole University has no reason to complain. A faculty member with tenure has achieved a certain security which cannot be jeopardized other than for the most serious and difficult to prove reasons. Therefore, such members would feel no pressure that might be present with members without tenure and without a degree of security. There might be some reason for the latter to look to students or administration for some sign. However, the more people with tenure on the faculty roster for the Senate, the less reason for concern.

I cannot see why the administration should not be represented. I might point out that the administrations often have less security than the faculty. Further, no matter what rank or power the members of the administration may have in themselves, they have no more votes per man than have the twelve students. If the students do not make themselves heard, or if the administrators do not make themselves heard, and if the faculty does not make itself heard, then the fault is in the individual member. I am aware of the nature of most Senates, and I believe this one to be the most democratic of them all. Its real nature and worth can be determined only through its functioning. There is no truth in the article "A Mask for the Same Face." At the best, much is but an opinion about an event that has not yet occurred.

Dr, Jack Ellis, Director Libraries

When the reader comes to "The Rat Traps," we find another of the articles dealing with freeing women from campus dormitory regulations. I do not know how well the analogy of comparing the Morehead dormitory coed with rats locked up in a laboratory will hold, but I think there is an entirely hopeless fallacy, and the whole matter of the analogy is quite pathetic. I am aware that nearly all institutions consider that some protection is needed for the female students. In some instances the protection is there to protect the student against herself, more often, to protect her against many irresponsible individuals, numbering among them many young lechers whose interest in the young women is far from ideal.

I doubt that the writers know too much about feminine psychology and about the intricate personality makeup of woman. Even were we to grant that these students should be as free as the men, some of them might not so agree, and, certainly, the parents of these students would be far from agreement. I do not know how far those who would establish the reign of students and faculty care to go in this attitude toward parents. There is some body of evidence to suggest that unrestricted environments in coeducational institutions, as to time to be in the dormitories and as to visitations have a negative effect on intellectual attainment. If the writers are indeed serious and honest in their beliefs, they might well engage in some research as to the need for help and guidance for our students of both sexes. I suggest that were they to understand the scope of the problems met by the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women they might well consider with more reflection and write with more restraint.

I trust that our students are sufficiently well acquainted with the intensity of certain words and phrases used in The Liberator to evoke or provoke certain emotive responses. Whether the writers are sincere reformers, whether this paper reduces tensions in those who want to write and speak without the risk of personal dialogue, whether they are frustrated in some areas and seek a certain sublimation in the areas of personal attack, whether they intuit the fact that they lack stature and can get satisfaction only by attacking those of more courage and real achievement, whether they are professional trouble-makers, or whether they are immature human beings playing a game, and not knowing any better can never be known because these individuals have no names and no personality. Finally, I would say that while living is itself a troublesome business, the life of a man who is not one must be a terrible thing indeed.

The least we can do is to ask for the facts. Who has been shot out of Morehead unjustly? When? What students have been denied the opportunity to study here? Names? Dates? Where are the rooms with the bars and the women with the shackles? What cannot be detailed specifically, and apprehended sensorially has little value in the realities of each person's existence.

At least, unless the authors of The Liberator emerge, declare themselves, and stand on their own terms and names, the blight of calumny is on the entire university and its members.