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ROTC critic, targets; fail to reach 'real agreement'

A student critic of MSU's ROTC program who had been requested to drop a basic ROTC course met with the ombudsman Wednesday and said no real agreement was reached with the Dept. of Military Science.

James R. Thomas, East Lansing special student, said ombudsman James D. Rust stressed that he was primarily a mediator and not a judge or active participator.

Through Rust, Thomas scheduled an appointment with Provost Howard R. Neville for next Wednesday and also talked

Wednesday to Eldon R. Nonnamaker, associate dean of students.

Thomas said Nonnamaker instructed him to bring in his complaint for the Student-Faculty judiciary "whenever he wanted to."

Nonnamaker said he could not take any further action until he received a list of names from ASMSU of students petitioning for the four student seats on the judiciary, Thomas said.

Thomas, who has written two letters to the State News criticizing the ROTC program, had

been requested by a letter from the department chairman to drop the Military Science 100 course he has been visiting this term.

Thomas had requested the meeting with the ombudsman because he felt his rights as stated in Articles I and II of the Academic Freedom Report had been violated by the Dept. of Military Science.

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OUR READERS' MINDS

ROTC violated academic policy

To the Editor:

At the start of Fall term, I enrolled as a visitor in the ROTC program with the purpose of learning first hand the type of instruction being presented by the Department of the Army. I was told by officials of the University that any student legitimately enrolled in MSU was eligible to enroll in ANY MSU course as a visitor. I also called the military science department at the end of fall term and I was informed that I was eligible to enroll in ROTC!

Last Tuesday, the State News published a letter I had written criticizing the inadequacy of the program. That same morning, a young major called me into his office and informed me that I would not be allowed to continue in the course unless I agreed to ask no questions nor participate in any course activity. I was also to sit in the back of the room because, as the major explained it, the rest of the class might see that I was not being called on. I was further informed that I would not be allowed to view a certain classified movie because I had no clearance to show that I was not a security risk. This led me to wonder what sort of film was being shown that I was not allowed to watch for "security reasons," especially since I was recently discharged from the U.S. Army after serving overseas as an infantry sergeant with a security clearance!

Last Friday, the same day Dr. Gar-

Thomas Case
skoff's letter criticizing ROTC appeared in the State News, I received a letter from Colonel Robert G. Platt, the head of Military Science at MSU, informing me that a "review of the factors concerning your enrollment reveals that you do not meet the prerequisites of this department for such enrollment." I was given one week to drop the course or steps would be taken to have me disenrolled! However, there was NO mention of these alleged factors!

It appears that the military science department and the department of defense have established academic criteria and administrative rules that transcend those established by Michigan State University. The MSU ROTC department seems to think itself immune to the standards observed by the rest of the University, and has apparently set up a dictum of its own. The steps taken by the department are a definite violation of the academic freedom report, which outlines responsibilities of the student and department.

The role of the university is to provide an atmosphere for the enlargement, dissemination and application of knowledge, with the most basic necessity being freedom of expression and communication. The student's most essential right is to learn, and this right transcends even provisions of Army field manuals. If any department chiefs at MSU believe they have the right to initiate a brand of authoritarian militaristic-type policy that takes precedence over any established

civilian policy, then these department heads, even if it includes all military science personnel and their leaders, must either submit to existing University policies or be removed from campus!

The flagrant violations of the MSU academic freedom report and the illegal attempt to disenroll a student from class are deliberate and inexcusable violations of academic policy and should be dealt with by the University officials accordingly.

Because of these direct violations of Articles one and two of the academic freedom report, I have filed a protest with the Ombudsman and will immediately file a complaint with the faculty-student judiciary. If the ROTC program is incapable of raising its level of instruction and abiding by University policies, then the role of ROTC on campus should be re-examined.

Jim Thomas
E. Lansing, special student



MITCH MILLER

Tired of waiting for Lefty

One of the losses (or gains) of growing older is that you fail to get excited about things that used to drive you into a frenzy.

I refer to the mounting campaign to drive ROTC off the campus.

In previous years I would have been all a-twitter, running around protesting the outrage, writing angry articles, forming ad hoc committees and behaving like any political activist.

I would have pointed out that Garskof was a card-carrying Something, that he was a member of This or That Committee and a well-known greeno.

I would have gone through the letters, pointing out the inconsistencies and distortions, the misquotation and the taking out of context and all the tricks of the trade that the boys are using.

The facts that they brought out to show the dastardly nature of ROTC would not have gone unchallenged, either. Scholarly works would be mustered to refute the party line about Russia and China and about military training and ROTC and indeed all of the charges.

Chapter and verse from the Academic Freedom Report would have been quoted, showing how the instructor in any class had the right to set classroom procedures and that departments do have the right to select who attends their classes.

I would have questioned Thomas' and Garskof's qualifications to make any judgment on academic or political



matters, considering the one's standing and the other's reputation. "What right," I would have thundered, "does one assistant professor have to question how another assistant professor teaches and disrupt his classes? What happened to professional ethics?"

The way these two gentlemen, one in his pursuit of "high intellectual and aca-

demical standards" and the other who wants to know what makes ROTC officers tick, got together to challenge the Military Science department to a debate on "lying propaganda" about the Vietnam war would have been the subject for much speculation.

When the campaign moved on to its inevitable demonstrations, and whatever, the counter pickets and demonstrators would have been ready. The whole scene.

But, as I said, I have gotten older and considerably more mellow.

So I am not going to get excited about the affair ROTC. Because I realize that everybody knows where Garskof and Thomas stand politically.

And everybody knows that neither of them could care less about academic standards or how officers are trained. (Other than the fact that they are trained and are right now fighting some of the more active members of the movement.)

And everybody knows that departments do have the right to regulate classroom procedures and admittance and be free of interference by other departments and the Ombudsman and judiciary know it, too.

So ROTC will continue to exist at MSU and so will the eternal lefties. (Excuse me, "New Politicians".)

But keep the campaign going for a while, boys. Maybe I can recapture some of my lost youth.

MAX LERNER

EDITORIALS

ROTC: The mounting questions



MSU ROTC: existing or co-existing in the academic community?

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pretrial?

Already the target of a growing number of campus critics, MSU's ROTC department made a move last week that, no matter what its intentions, can only serve to stir up more questioning of the purpose and place of military instruction at this University.

Apparently irked by the nonpassive attitude of James R. Thomas, MSU special student visiting Military Science 100, an ROTC instructor told Thomas to "get out of the class" during a recent class period, when he failed to stand while asking a question.

Thomas admittedly was attending the ROTC class to question and formulate his own objective judgment of the course, but denies he is a "troublemaker or an activist."

Thomas, a former army sergeant, later was given permission to continue in the class, but only if he sat silently in the rear of the room. Then, when a letter by Thomas critical of the ROTC program appeared in the State News several days later, he was requested by Col. Robert G. Platt, chairman of the ROTC department, to either drop the course or be de-enrolled.

Col. Platt has refused to comment on the reasons for Thomas' disenrollment, stating only that he did not "meet the prerequisites of this department for such enrollment."

It is not difficult to figure out the reasons why the ROTC department would want to silence Thomas and his criticism. But by so blatantly, and without apparent justification, dismissing him, Col. Platt has not only drawn more attention to Thomas, but to the entire ROTC program.

The actions of the ROTC department appear to have directly violated the guarantees of the Academic Freedom Report. Section 2.1.2 defines the instructor's role, "to encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression among his students in their quest for knowledge." And in section

2.1.4.3, "The student shall be free to take reasoned exception to data and views offered in the classroom."

Nowhere is an instructor given the right to suppress dissent. Indeed, the very academic ideals of the University must make us suspicious of those who fear free discussion and disagreement.

While granting the military's aim to produce men capable of obeying orders and following discipline, certainly this can be gained without the mutual exclusion of their right to think and question in an academic atmosphere. Indeed, it seems that the Army would want officers trained to think.

Thomas has, of course, appealed the specific actions of the ROTC department to the ombudsman and to the Student-Faculty judiciary. But the real issue in the case seems to be the status of the military as it exists, or co-exists, on campus.

If the ROTC department is covered by the guarantees of academic freedom just recently given to MSU

students, then Thomas has been obviously, and grossly, denied his rights.

If, however, the Dept. of Military Science, as Thomas has put it, "transcends the University in academic matters," then the questions become even more serious.

Exactly how, and just why, we might ask, can this be on our campus? And, perhaps more importantly, what significance will be left for the Academic Freedom Report, if it is allowed to be whittled away with exceptions to its high-sounding, but all-too-general protections?

--The Editors

SNiper's Nest