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BOYD'UN ÖĞRENCİ
HAREKETLERİ İLE İLGİLİ
RAPORU

SEVGİLİ ARKADAŞ

Kolejimizde uzun yıllardır öğretim üyeliği yapmakta olan ve Koleji iyi bilen Prof. Sumner-Boyd'un Nisan başında Fen ve Lisan Okulu Araştırma ve İnceleme Komitesine (Study and Review Committee) vermiş olduğu rapordan bazı bölümler sunuyoruz:

" IT SEEMS TO ME URGENT THAT SOME COMMITTEE OR OTHER FACE SQUARELY THE QUESTION OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT. SO FAR AS I KNOW NO OTHER COMMITTEE HAS DONE SO. I therefore submit the enclosed memorandum for discussion by our committee..."

THE STUDENT REVOLT AND ROBERT COLLEGE

In view of the fact that the so-called "student revolt" shows every sign of continuing, spreading, and deepening in violence on both sides witness the shocking occupation of Harvard and MIT by the military forces: where an institution of learning has to call in the army to settle its academic affairs, something must indeed be very deeply wrong-in view, I say, of later be affected by this ferment. Hitherto our students have shown admirable restraint and moderation; but their interests and aspirations are the same as those of all students in this and other countries and they can't fail to be stirred in time to similar forms of protest.

This is not the place to attempt an analysis of the deep lying political, social, and economic sources of the present student unrest nor of the still somewhat nebulous objectives and aspirations of the movement. It is clear at all events that in recent years the various elements of institutions of higher learning have tended to become polarized to such an extent that not only do they no longer function together and toward a mutually accepted goal, but rather misunderstand, distrust, and undermine one another; THUS ADMINISTRATIONS OFTEN IGNORE FACULTIES, FACULTIES ARE SUSPICIOUS OF ADMINISTRATIONS BOTH ARE FREQUENTLY INDIFFERENT TO STUDENTS, AND STUDENTS HAVE A PROFOUND MISTRUST OF EACH. Until a year or two ago few people would have realized that the debacle had become so utter. IT IS OBVIOUS NOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE STUDENTS ARE NO LONGER WILLING TO ACCEPT FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK OR TO PUT UP WITH PALLIATIVES. THEY DEMAND A RADICAL CHANGE.

In so far as THE STUDENT REVOLT IS DIRECTED AGAINST THE UNIVERSITY as an institution- and of course this IS ONLY ONE AND PERHAPS A MINOR ELEMENT IN THEIR PROTEST- WHICH INCLUDES THE HOPE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF OUR SOCIETY-the focus of attack is, I believe, specifically the totally undemocratic nature of the enterprise: the administration runs the institution, the faculty has a consultative function largely confined to academic matters, and the students-the vast majority-obey. This situation, which is clearly anomalous-UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED OLD ENOUGH TO BE CONSCRIPTED AND KILLED IN WAR BUT NOT TO BE CONSULTED ABOUT THEIR OWN LIVING AND LEARNING-, does not even represent a universal tradition: MANY OF THE OLDEST AND MOST FAMOUS UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE WERE FOUNDED AND ORGANIZED BY THEIR STUDENTS and administered by them for several hundred years, while everywhere throughout the middle ages and the renaissance the students had a large measure of influence on the policy and administration of the universities (sometimes this was recognized in the statutes, at others it was enforced by riots and boycotts quite in the modern manner). Gradually, with the stultification of the universities in the later 17th and 18th centuries, the centuries, the students lost this influence and have never again regained it.

Thus it would only be returning to an earlier and healthier tradition to grant the students a substantial share both in the formation of policy, including curricula, academic standards, and administrative and teaching personnel, and in the actual administration of college affairs. Originally and ideally an institution of higher learning is a free society of students and of teachers who are themselves students, working toward one goal, the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. More recently, especially in the American type of institution, a third element has been added or intruded: the administration. It would be irrelevant here to discuss the merits or utility of this third element: It exists, and for the present purposes must be accepted.

But the joint partnership which should exist between these three elements of a university has clearly broken down and the time has come for a radical reorganization on a new principle. THE PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IS SIMPLY THE JOINT, COLLECTIVE, AND EQUAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION, THE FACULTY, AND THE STUDENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ALL THE AFFAIRS OF THE INSTITUTION. If this principle be accepted, the details of its practical application in any institution would be a matter to be worked out jointly by the three parties involved, and would doubtless differ considerably from one institution to another according to its particular circumstances.

In what follows I give a sketch, in broad outline only and merely exempli gratia, of how the principle might be applied in our own case:

The Executive Council - its function would be both executive and policy making; it would consist of (say) 18 members, 6 administrators ex officio, 6 faculty members elected by the faculty and representing the three Schools and the various academic ranks, and 6 students elected by the students and representing the three Schools and the three upper classes, seniors, juniors, and sophomores; not less than one faculty and one student member should be a woman. The Council would regularly meet weekly and would be the body, under the president finally responsible for both the making of policy and the management of all College affairs. ALL MEMBERS WOULD HAVE FULL CONSULTATIVE AND VOTING RIGHTS.

The Statutory Committees - all such committees, including the Finance Committee, the Discipline Committee, the Educational Policies Committee, the Committee on Appointments, Promotion and Tenure, would also be constituted IN EQUAL PROPORTIONS of administrators, faculty, and voting rights.

The Board of Trustees - if it is considered impossible simply to abolish this outworn and discredited¹ institution, then it should certainly have as regular members at least three faculty and three student representatives and at least one of each on its executive committee; in all cases these representatives should have both CONSULTATIVE AND VOTING RIGHTS .

If it be objected that a system such as that outlined above would involve serious danger, difficulty and possible injustice, it can only be replied that any democratic system is always dangerous, often inefficient, and sometimes unjust. Democracy, as E.M. Forster puts it, deserves only two cheers; but there is no other system which deserves even one.

Hilary Sumner-Boyd

April, 1969

¹I use this adjective not so much with reference to our Board of Trustees, whatever one may think of its performance over the years, but in general. It should be noted for example in how large a proportion of instances a censure by the AAUP has been placed not on the administration of an institution but specifically on the board of trustees or regents, and in no case that I know of have the trustees been exempted from the censure.

As far as collegiate trustees are concerned, I should have thought that the final word had been said by Veblen fifty years ago; thus, for example: "So far as regards its pecuniary affairs and their due administration, the typical modern university is in a position, without loss or detriment, to dispense with the services of any board of trustees, regents, curators, or what not. Except for the insuperable difficulty of getting a hearing for such an extraordinary proposal, it should be no difficult matter to show that these governing boards of businessmen commonly are quite useless to the university for any businesslike purpose. Indeed, except for a stubborn prejudice to the contrary, the fact should readily be seen that the boards are of no material use in any connection; their sole effectual function being to interfere with the academic management in matters that are not of the nature of business and that lie outside their competence and outside the range of their habitual interest."

Thorstein Veblen, The Higher Learning in America (1918), pp. 65-6