

Universities Must Live in a Real World

By WILL MULLER

A viable university, if it is to be true to its purpose, must be integrated with the world as it is today. It must bubble and foment and stir with the times.

President John A. Hannah has held Michigan State University faithfully to that belief. He often has done so at the cost of public criticism by groups careless of injury to an enduring institution as long as they gain public attention for a momentary cause through shrill imprecations.

Such an occasion is an attack on MSU by a publication called "Ramparts," a house organ of a featureless group dedicated to expounding confusion among self-styled intellectuals over the war in Vietnam.

The article "charges" that MSU permitted the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to infiltrate a federally financed university project to set up a modern police organization in South Vietnam. The curse in this, supposedly, is that the academic world is profaned whenever intruded upon by reality.

Many years ago in a time when the fathers of his present critics were hungry, Hannah was a professor in a



DR. JOHN A. HANNAH

school so Republican in its administration its board meetings were like party discussion groups.

Blue Eagle

He admitted to being part of the world in those times. He accepted appointment as Blue Eagle egg administrator for the U.S. from the Democratic administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the context of those days that was awful.

MSU seemed to survive that profanation of its temples by reality. It has thrived from similar and broadened experiences since. It lives and breathes and tests and adventures—and sometimes suffers and is defeated—as part of America's being.

This department is little concerned that MSU academicians were obliged to work

beside Americans doing intelligence work in a country threatened with Communist engulfment. It is concerned to learn MSU professors thought this degraded them.

The U.S., like it or not, was at war then as it is now with Communists and Communist agents in Vietnam. Neither this country nor any other has found a way to stop the world and let the virgin intellectuals off while the rest of the nation goes about the "dirty" business of fighting a war.

Great outcry is raised that an educational institution should involve itself in the prosecution of foreign policy, in aiding an ally to set up an orderly police system, in helping Americans to risk their lives to collect information crucial to national safety. The noise of the critics fails to mask their contradiction.

Fomenters at Work

They argue that the university is being "used" when it joins and cooperates with the national government in carrying out its purpose. But they say nothing when university campuses are used as rallying points by those deliberately fomenting in downy minds opposition to the national purpose.

President Hannah's tolerance of all manner of controversy as beneficial to understanding is unchallenged. He served quietly and well when called on to help his country adjust its armed force personnel. He has served three Presidents in the cause of civil rights. He practices what he believes, that a university lives in the same world as its people.

Of such a philosophy are leaders of a better world made. Each man, pedagogue, or pot maker, inescapably must lift up or cast down his fellows. A reflection of this, which adds to disquieting thoughts about intellectual patricians on college campuses, was a recent letter from an MSU senior.

College students, he said in arguing for their exclusion from the draft, "are more important to the country than garagemen, brokers and telephone workers." Then he announced that "today's college students are going to be tomorrow's leaders."

Some of them may be, but not unless he awakes. He, like college professors who feel debased by working with CIA men in a time of common trial, will find he has removed himself from the rest

Muller is right

Arthur J. Federle

Rauysails Vietnam

April 26, 1966

Dear Mr. Hayden:

This is to express my personal appreciation, and that of Michigan State University, for the understanding and sympathetic attitude of the Detroit News in discussing the University's project in South Vietnam. I refer particularly to your editorial of April 17, and the signed articles by Mr. Barnes and Mr. Muller, but I recognize that these reflected the considered view of the newspaper, and for this I should thank you as the editor.

It was refreshing to find at least one newspaper unwilling to accept sensational charges against the University at face value, preferring instead to reserve judgment until other evidence and its own experience could be brought to bear.

Sincerely,

President

Martin S. Hayden, Editor
The Detroit News
Detroit, Michigan

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April 27, 1966

Dear Bill:

I have already written to Mr. Hayden to express appreciation for the attitude taken by the Detroit News in the Ramparts controversy, but I want to thank you personally for your cogent analysis of reality in your article on April 21. That you said some kind things about me personally is appreciated, too, but far more than personal reputation is at stake in this matter.

It is good to think that the philosophy to which you gave such eloquent expression reflects the fact that you were educated at East Lansing where you saw the philosophy of public service in daily practice.

Remembering you as a student, I have followed your career with a great deal of interest through the years, and am delighted that you are so highly regarded by those in your profession and by your many readers.

Again, my sincere thanks for your delineation of the issues in this matter. I only wish all newspaper columnists were as perceptive!

Sincerely,

President

Mr. Will Muller
Editorial Department
The Detroit News
Detroit, Michigan

rj

Longhand note: Bill Thanks a million!

JAH

Ramparts

April 27, 1966

Dear Judge Lederle:

Your note on the fine article by Will Muller in the Detroit News is much appreciated.

With kind personal regards,

Sincerely,

President

Judge A. F. Lederle
1258 Edison Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48202

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