

University of Notre Dame
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The Campus Racketeer.

Before the close of school last year, three or four students came in at different times, all with the same story and the same plea. The story was a story of campus graft, with the weight of restitution hanging over the head of the grafter; the plea was an appeal for Bulletin treatment of the matter - excoriation, calm reasoning, or whatever method would best serve to keep others from following the slippery path of these repentant grafters.

In each case the question was asked: "Why hasn't the Bulletin acted on this before?" The answer was - and is: The Bulletin has treated this matter at times, but usually the editor's hands have been tied by some active case, submitted in confidence by some one whose conscience was bothering him. Then the following counter-suggestion was submitted: "Why not handle the matter in September, before any active cases come to you for disposal?" The suggestion is a good one - and here goes:

No one has a right to use or dispose of material goods (money or anything else) unless he has a legitimate title to them. The principal sources of title are occupation, accession, prescription, and contract. Occupation consists in taking possession of something that has no previous owner; accession is the right to the fruits of what one already owns; the limits of prescription are determined by law - they do not concern us here.

The principal forms of contract are promises, donations, loans, and sales. It is under a distorted view of one or another of these that the campus racketeer usually forms his conscience, hence our concern is mainly with contracts.

The constitutions of a society, whether it be a class organization, a geographical club, an association of numismatists, or the United States Steel Corporation, determine the ownership of the funds which come into possession of the organization. In the absence of stipulations to the contrary, it is understood that the funds belong to the society as a whole, and not to the officers. If any part of them is to belong to the officers of the society, this part is to be designated in the constitutions as salary.

It follows that the proceeds of a dance belong to the club, not to the officers or committeemen, unless the society votes their ownership to the officers or the committee; that the proceeds derived from the sale of pins, the rent of caps and gowns, or any other revenue-producing activity of the society or club, belong to the club as a whole, which alone has the right to dispose of them.

If there is need for special remuneration for certain persons who give much of their time to the work of the club, that remuneration should be determined by the club, - and that remuneration is not to come in the way of a secret rebate from the company which provides the goods. If a tax for class purposes is to be put on any article which is sold to the members (for insurance against loss, or the like), the net proceeds of such tax belong to the class, and not to the individual handling the funds.

A distorted view of "occupation" in acquiring title seems to be the basis of raids on store rooms. Articles "abandoned" by the owners belong to the first occupant; articles lost or left temporarily are not "abandoned." House-breaking is a form of robbery, and is worse than simple theft.

Restitution obliges unless its obligation is acquitted - either by actual restoration of ill-gotten goods or by the free forgiveness bestowed by the aggrieved party. It must be made to the owner, if he can be found; otherwise, it is to be made to the poor.

FRANKS: Joe. Boehman's grandmother was anointed a few days ago. A relative of Ben Pontic suffered a stroke last week. Four special intentions.