
Once More, the Campus Racketeer.

"Dear Father:

I wouldn't bother you with this letter if I did not feel sure there may be an abuse on the campus that calls for public attention in the Bulletin. Get me right, Father, I know that no student minds the fellow who has to dig hard and use honestly the pep and wits that God gave him instead of a rich Dad, in order to collect a few shekels. But have you heard any of the talk going on about the way finances are handled in certain important campus clubs and organizations? Sometimes I have my doubts about the facts. But some fellows are arguing that the officers or those who handle the funds of student organizations are entitled to the "leavings" after expenses of the society have been paid. Others claim that if the officers take money even before expenses have been paid, they might justify themselves on the grounds that they have devoted a lot of extra time and effort towards the welfare of the organization they represent. Supposing funds have been taken in either of these cases, is there an obligation to pay back the money?"

The two cases you submit were explicitly treated in a Bulletin of two years ago, evidently before you got very much interested in the campus racketeers. It reads:

"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.

"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."

PRAYERS: Deceased, an uncle of George Ball. Ill, a sister of one of the priests.