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"PEACE MAKER": PRESIDENT ALEXANDER G. RUTHVEN OF MICHIGAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND REGENTS

by
Peter Edgar Van de Water

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ABSTRACT

"PEACE MAKER": PRESIDENT ALEXANDER G. RUTHVEN OF MICHIGAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND REGENTS

by
Peter E. Van de Water

Chairman: David Madsen

The dissertation is an historical study of the presidency (1929-1951) of Alexander G. Ruthven of the University of Michigan. Ruthven, the seventh President of Michigan, assumed office at a chaotic time in the institution's history. His predecessor was the controversial Clarence Cook Little, a charismatic young innovator whose lack of tact and patience eventually forced the Regents to dismiss him. Ruthven, a distinguished scientist, and a respected leader of the Michigan faculty, was given the formidable task of restoring peace to a campus which Little left wrought with dissension. Ruthven's task was made more difficult by Depression, which hit the state of Michigan particularly hard, and by World War II, the effects of which were still felt at the University even at the close of the Ruthven era.

Despite almost continual adversity, Ruthven was able to lead Michigan to renewed stability and unprecedented growth. The accomplishment was due in large measure to his own considerable skill in personal relationships with his major constituencies—faculty, students, and regents. Ruthven regarded his faculty as competent professionals capable of setting their own standards, and he seldom reversed faculty decisions,

even when sensitive matters of academic freedom were involved. With student activists, however, the President was not so charitable. In 1935 and 1940 he arbitrarily dismissed a number of student dissenters, and he made contimual attempts to subjugate the student newspaper, probably his most consistent irritant. Ruthven's relationships with his regents were unusually harmonious until World War II, when a series of controversies caused a "minority group" to seek his replacement. The study of all of these relationships indicates that, in crisis after crisis, Ruthven calmly, quietly, and tactfully preserved the peace for his University.

Ruthven's prescience in establishing "The Michigan System," an organizational plan for shared administrative responsibility and democratic faculty governance, also made its contribution not only to peace, but to progress, for "The Michigan System" was the precursor of contemporary university organization and administration. Ruthven was the pioneer in establishing vice-presidents with specific areas of responsibility and corresponding authority. They were instrumental in the smooth functioning of an institution whose student enrollment grew from 12,000 to almost 30,000 during the Ruthven regime. Ruthven also promoted the trend to faculty involvement in academic decision-making at a time when autocratic centralized administration was the accepted standard.

Ruthven's initiative in establishing "The Michigan System" was typical of his unobtrusive, yet effective leadership, especially during the first half of his twenty-two year presidency. During the 1930's Ruthven was at his best. He instituted a new residential living program for Michigan; he persuaded the legislature to vote sufficient funds for the ongoing support of the Depression-wracked University; he made valiant attempts to "humanize" the University and combat its depersonalizing largeness.

During World War II and the post-war period, however, Ruthven's triumphs were minimal. His belief that the University must not sacrifice its academic program to the war effort further accentuated his differences with the more militant "minority group" of regents. After the war, Ruthven's fondest curricular promotion, a program of education for workers, was prematurely dissolved, mainly through the efforts of the General Motors Corporation. At the Regents' instigation, during Ruthven's final years in office many of the executive duties which he had performed were delegated to other administrators and he became, in effect, a titular president. Still, for the greater part of his presidency, Ruthven was the man the times demanded. As this dissertation reveals, he deserves to take his place in the front rank of Michigan presidents.

PREFACE

The University of Michigan is known as "the mother of state universities" and, as such, has always enjoyed a position of eminence in American higher education. Much of any institution's history is the story of its presidents; Michigan is remarkable in that, over its life-span of approximately 150 years, only nine men have held its presidency. Some, such as Henry P. Tappan, James B. Angell, and Harry B. Hutchins have been the objects of considerable biographical study. Surprisingly, Alexander G. Ruthven, the president who had the second longest tenure of office—during probably the most trying period in the institution's history—has remained virtually unacknowledged by historians of the University. This dissertation, then, is primarily an attempt to relate Ruthven's role in Michigan's history.

The idea of an historical study of the presidency of Alexander Ruthven did not arise, like the phoenix, full-blown from the ashes of my typical graduate student despair over a dissertation topic. At the beginning, I knew only that the topic must be historical, and I preferred that it encompass the fascinating subject of academic freedom. "Why don't you immerse yourself in the history of the University of Michigan"? asked my advisor, and this chance question led me to two important discoveries. First, the Michigan Historical Collections in the Rackham Building on the Michigan campus is a rich reservoir of University history, for its depositories contain most of the primary source material still

available. Second, I read Ruthven's Naturalist in Two Worlds, an enchanting little collection of the random reminiscences of Michigan's seventh president. The value of my discoveries was enhanced when I discovered that the Michigan Historical Collections had recently been given eighty-seven boxes of Ruthven's presidential papers, and that these papers were virtually unexplored. Further, I found that Dr. Ruthven, now eighty-eight years old, but still lucid and lively, was living in Ann Arbor.

With growing enthusiasm I began to forage among the voluminous papers of Ruthven and his contemporaries. It was soon apparent that a full historical treatment of a twenty-two year university presidency was beyond the purview of a doctoral dissertation. The limitation was easy: At the outset it seemed that much of Ruthven's success as a university president was the result of his effective relationships with faculty, students, and regents; not incidentally, these relationships constituted my own major interest in higher education. It was recognized from the beginning that Ruthven's relationships with alumni, donors, townspeople, and legislators would have to await the pen of a future historian of the University of Michigan. A complete biography was never even contemplated; hopefully, this too will interest some future scholar.

Once the topic was agreed upon, it seemed important to supplement the written record by interviewing Dr. Ruthven and a selected few of his contemporaries. The Michigan Historical Collections and the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies generously provided a grant for an "Alexander G. Ruthven Oral History," and eighteen key faculty, regents, and administrators, most of whom had experienced the Ruthven years in their entirety, were asked for interviews. Eleven responded affirmatively.

In most cases the interviews with them were taped, transcribed, and then edited. Interviews varied in length from forty-five minutes to three hours. Those interviewed were Professor Robert Cooley Angell, former chairman of the sociology department; Professor Harold Dorr, former chairman of political science; Miss Hazel "Doc" Losh, professor of astronomy; Professor Wesley Maurer, former chairman of the journalism department; E. Blythe Stason, former provost and dean of the Law School; Edward H. Kraus, former dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Marvin Niehuss, former vice-president in charge of university relations; Walter B. Rea, former dean of men; Erich Walter, former associate dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and dean of students; and Regent Emeritus Alfred B. Connable. With three exceptions (Kraus, Niehuss, and Rea preferred not to have their reminiscences recorded for posterity) these interviews are now on file at the Michigan Historical Collections. This distinguished assemblage of Michiganders was most cooperative and extremely generous in sharing their recollections of the Ruthven years. Of this group, I owe particular thanks to the kindly spirit of Erich Walter, who first read the manuscript.

Acknowledgements are due many other people. Foremost is my family. My parents are lifelong educators in every sense of the word. My wife, Becky, shared the typing and the proofreading. Much more than that, she was able to perform the difficult task of making a new home for Tom, Katherine, Beth, and me and, as always, she did it easily, cheerfully, and lovingly.

The good people of the Michigan Historical Collections made the research thoroughly enjoyable. Their professional competence and unfailing good humor are a credit to their director.

This project would have been undertaken without the sabbatical leave provided by St. Lawrence University, but the task would have seemed onerous rather than pleasant.

Mr. and Mrs. Alan MacCarthy introduced Becky and me to Dr. Ruthven at a dinner in their home. This gracious gesture paved the way for our subsequent interviews.

It is also timely to thank the members of my committee for their willingness to serve and their constructive suggestions. I particularly appreciate the help of my chairman, and reserve for him the highest praise I know: He is a worthy successor to John S. Brubacher.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debt to a grand old man, Alexander G. Ruthven. When I first asked Dr. Ruthven if he would consent to being interviewed, the answer, typically, was, "Of course. I'll tell you all about my mistakes!" Eight separate interviews followed. Each lasted one hour, and each was delightful. Dr. Ruthven was as candid and precise as his octogenarian memory would allow, and he seemed to enjoy the role of raconteur as much as I enjoyed hearing his stories. The detachment of the scientist was always evident, for Dr. Ruthven neither questioned me about my discoveries nor tried to prejudice my interpretation of events. Either he had long since learned to rein in his curiosity, or perhaps he simply believed that he had done his best and the record would prove it. "I knew I could be wrong, but I didn't see how," was one way Ruthven summed up his career to his friends.

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CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF A UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT, 1929

On January 21, 1929, Clarence Cook Little, President of the University of Michigan, surprised the college world by announcing his resignation. Little was young, handsome, brilliant, and an unusually creative educator; the public wondered what had caused the unexpected announcement. The Nation editorialized that Little's innovations were anathema to "one of the most rigid of our great State educational institutions. . . . The lesson of it is that here is another place where a man of charm, distinction, intellectual courage, and advanced thought is not wanted . . . he paid the price in this reactionary age."[1] Time magazine, in a cover story featuring Little, spoke of the "inevitable personal dislike" between the President and Michigan Governor Fred Green.[2] Wilfred B. Shaw, editor of The Michigan Alumnus, alluded to the elderly regents: "It is the eternal conflict between the progressive and vigorous expression of youth and the conservatism and more cautious thought of mature years."[3] The Michigan Daily sprang to Little's defense in an editorial entitled, "Michigan Turns its Back on a Genius." The student writer lamented, "Michigan loses, with his

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[1] The Nation, Vol. CXXVIII, No. 3318 (1929), p. 149.

[2] Time, Vol. XIII, No. 5 (1929), p. 38

[3] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXV, No. 16 (1929), p. 340.

passing, a man who had greater potentialities as one of the foremost educators of the world than any other man at present in the educational field in the United States." The Daily wistfully called for the reinstatement of the young president.[4]

Obviously, the Little resignation revealed discord within the University. Little noted this in his statement of resignation: "My methods of handling situations dealing with the interests of private donors, political interests, 'local' interests and alumnae interests are not consistent with policies which the board of regents deem wise."[5]

Little's Demise

C. C. Little had come to Michigan from the presidency of the University of Maine, a post he had accepted when he was only thirty-three years old. He had established a reputation at Maine as a progressive educator and a brilliant biologist.

Four years of turmoil preceded the President's resignation at Michigan. Little had strong convictions, often contrary to the public consensus, and he expressed himself forcefully and frequently.[6] Almost from the start, he made enemies.

Within a month after his inauguration he had spoken to the Illinois

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[4]Michigan Daily, January 22, 1929, p. 4.

[5]Ann Arbor Daily News, January 22, 1929, p. 1.

[6]Soon after arriving in Ann Arbor, Little, during one two week interval in September and October, spoke before a different group each night. See Daniel Van Eyck, President Clarence Cook Little and the University of Michigan, doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965, p. 66. Much of the discussion of Little's problems which follows is based upon the Van Eyck dissertation, pp. 93-219, passim.

Birth Control League, the Chicago Women's Club, and a Michigan state convention of public health officers and nurses on the subject of birth control. He advocated sterilization of certain types of criminals and mentally defective persons as well as more conventional types of birth control. The Detroit League of Catholic Women, 8,000 strong, censured Little and filed a formal protest with the Regents.

Before he had been in office three months he had demanded that the fraternities stringently police their houses for any violations of prohibition regulations. If they refused to comply within two days, he told them, University proctors would search for bootleg booze. Two hundred representatives of forty campus fraternities passed a resolution condemning the President for his hasty action.

President Little was anxious to improve living conditions of students, and he was exasperated to discover that a number of landladies engaged in "rent profiteering." Under his direction a faculty study committee recommended a series of dormitories and residential colleges which would eventually house all but fraternity and sorority members. The Michigan Alumnus reported, "Petitions signed by several thousand householders of Ann Arbor, protesting the action of the University in erecting student dormitories, have been presented to Governor Fred W. Green."[7]

The young president's major educational innovation was to be the University College, a separate administrative unit which would enroll all of the freshmen and sophomores in the University. The University College would stress individual differences, yet all students would receive wide

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[7]Vol. XXXV, No. 6 (1928), p. 133.

exposure to cultural courses and introductory courses in the sciences and arts. At the end of two years, comprehensive examinations would determine which students would continue in the University. It was agreed by the University Senate that individual colleges could exercise the option of not affiliating with the University College. The College of Engineering and the Literary College chose not to affiliate. The ensuing debate was acrimonious, and many felt that the entire plan should be abandoned, but the Regents were convinced by the President and agreed that the University College would be operative on September 1, 1929.

Claude Van Tyne, distinguished chairman of the Department of History, was beleaguered by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Brousseau because he had delivered a series of lectures on the American Revolution which were not uniformly complimentary to some of the founding fathers. The Brousseaus were wealthy benefactors of the University, and Mrs. Brousseau was president-general of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Dr. Little, in defending Professor Van Tyne, became embroiled in a public debate with the Brousseaus during which he declared that the DAR was "un-American" because it refused to hear views contrary to its own.

All of these contentions stirred public interest, for Little continued to express his views in frequent speeches, and he called weekly press conferences to discuss University affairs.[8] Sometimes the regents agreed with his stands; at other times they disagreed; at all times they continued to wish that Little would exhibit more tact and patience.

As if these difficulties were not enough, Little's marriage was on the rocks. The Littles had been married for eighteen years, yet people

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[8]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20, 1970.

noticed that Mrs. Little was seldom seen at University functions with her husband.[9] There were whisperings among campus insiders.[10]

The "last straw" in the rapidly deteriorating situation concerned the Law School and its major benefactor, W. W. Cook. Cook, an individualist inclined toward the eccentric, had donated the major buildings of the Law Quadrangle. A number of gift riders had seemed unreasonable to Henry M. Bates, Dean of the Law School, and since Bates was not the conciliatory sort, he and Cook had become estranged. Cook's unpredictability upset the regents, too, but they knew that over $14 million of Cook's remaining fortune was earmarked for the University of Michigan. The regents knew that Cook was dying, and they thought that soon his estate would be available if they could but mollify Bates and humor Cook a little longer. President Little thought differently. After a series of frustrating attempts to placate Cook, Little became convinced, as Bates had, that Cook's whims compromised University principles. He proposed that the regents scrap their hopes of obtaining Mr. Cook's estate and instead ask the state legislature for the needed funds. The regents were aghast to think that their valuable fish, so nearly in the boat, might now shake off the hook.

At this point a majority of five regents concluded that President Little and the University of Michigan must part company. Regent Murfin told the President of the Board's decision, and Little—who had by now concluded that he was not meant to be a university president—soon

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[9] Detroit Free Press, June 25, 1929, p. 1.

[10] On June 26, 1929, Little sued for divorce on the basis of "legal desertion." On September 1, 1930, he married Beatrice Johnson, who, while at Michigan, had served as President Little's lab assistant and one of three Advisors to Women. The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVI, No. 36, (1930), p. 751.

announced his resignation.[11] Little was never again associated with higher education; he remained in Ann Arbor as titular president until June 20, when he began an official leave of absence. He then returned to Maine, where he directed cancer research for the Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory.

Speculation Over Little's Successor

Speculation fastened immediately on Little's successor. The Ann Arbor Daily News reported, "Michigan's faculty is discussing, almost without exception, possibilities . . . from within its own number and from men recently on the campus."[12]

Many names were proposed. Paul V. McNutt, commander of the

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[11] The story found in the University of Michigan annals is that C. C. Little resigned voluntarily, but Van Eyck's dissertation paints a different picture. Four regents wanted Little dismissed; four did not; Regent Sawyer was undecided. Sawyer was due for reelection, and Governor Green, a resolute Little antagonist, controlled the convention which would nominate Sawyer. It was suggested to Sawyer that he would face an uphill convention struggle unless he agreed that Little must go. Sawyer got the message. pp. 225-226. A review of the record indicates that Van Eyck was only partially justified in his conclusion. On January 12, 1929, J. O. Murfin wrote to "The Members of the Board of Regents" (Sawyer Papers, Vol. 18, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, hereafter referred to as MHC.) and told them that "At the request of five [italics mine] of my associates" he had had an interview with President Little and expected him to present his resignation on January 21. After [italics mine] this Murfin-Little meeting, Dr. Sawyer did receive subtle pressure from the Governor's office (Letter of Junius E. Beal to Walter H. Sawyer, January 12, 1929, ibid.; Letter of Perry F. Powers to Junius Beal, January 15, 1929, ibid.; and Letter of Benjamin Hanchett to Walter H. Sawyer, January 17, 1929, ibid.). However, he must have been one of the five referred to in Murfin's letter of January 12; the hints from the Governor's office were gentle; and Sawyer refused to meet with the Governor until after Little resigned, for he said, "I would at once be charged with conniving to sacrifice the President to my own personal ends. I think you will appreciate that I would not put myself in that position for anything." (Sawyer to Hanchett, January 16, 1929, ibid.).

[12] January 23, 1929, p. 1.

American Legion and Dean of Indiana University Law School, was publicly recommended by Governor Green.[13] The Michigan Daily thought that only one man was big enough to replace Little: Alexander Meiklejohn of Wisconsin.[14] It was suggested in the newspapers that ex-President Calvin Coolidge was being considered.[15] Some felt that Edmund Ezra Day, a former Michigan Dean of Administration who was then with the Rockefeller Foundation, was a logical choice. The "outsider" most frequently mentioned was Walter A. Jessup, President of the University of Iowa. The "insiders" supposedly receiving consideration were Jesse S. Reeves, chairman of the political science department, Dean Henry M. Bates of the Law School, Edward H. Kraus, Dean of the College of Pharmacy and director of the Summer Session, and Alexander G. Ruthven, Dean of Administration.

From the beginning Ruthven appeared to be the front runner. He was, after the President, the man with more campus responsibility than any other; he was concurrently professor of zoology, head of the Department of Zoology, director of the University Museums, and Dean of Administration. At Dr. Little's insistence, he had agreed to hold the latter position, corresponding to an executive vice-presidency, for one year.[16] He was already a distinguished scientist at the age of forty-seven, widely renowned among his professional colleagues for applying the principles of geography and ecology to the taxonomizing of reptiles. He was the author

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[13] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXV, No. 18 (1929), p. 383.

[14] January 22, 1929, p. 4.

[15] Ann Arbor Daily News, January 25, 1929, p. 4.

[16] Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20, 1970. Regent Stone later claimed that the appointment of Ruthven as Dean of Administration was a "tryout" for the presidency. Letter of Ralph Stone to Alexander G. Ruthven, June 6, 1951, Stone Papers, box 1, MHC.

of numerous articles and monographs, and had led major zoological expeditions in the United States and South and Central America. His course in conservation of natural resources was probably the first such offering in the country. He had been offered the directorship of the state Department of Conservation by Michigan Governor Fred Green. The Museums Building, then likely as fine a university museum as any in America, was Ruthven's design, and his prodding convinced the state government to appropriate the needed funds.[17] He was efficient as an administrator, and he was liked and respected as an individual. Furthermore, Ruthven was a Michigan man through and through, for his Ph.D was from Michigan, his wife and children were Michigan graduates, his academic experience was at Michigan, and he was well-known to the Michigan alumni and regents. Clearly, in the chaotic aftermath of President Little's resignation, Ruthven seemed to be the most likely choice.

The Regents

The final decision would, of course, be the province of the regents.[18] There is general agreement that the most important single responsibility of any governing board is the selection of the chief executive.[19] In 1929 the men who would make Michigan's decision were veterans, men of acknowledged stature, dedicated to the University, and compatible

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[17]Alexander G. Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 24-25.

[18]Article XI, Sec. 5, Constitutional Provisions, 1908: "The regents of the university shall as often as necessary, elect a president of the university." See Lucius L. Hubbard, University of Michigan: Its Origin, Growth, and Principles of Government (Ann Arbor, 1923), p. 37.

[19]John J. Corson, Governance of Colleges and Universities (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p. 53.

as a group.[20] To a man they were Republicans.

Dr. Walter Hulme Sawyer was the senior member, and probably the most influential.[21] "He was respected wherever he went," wrote Shirley W. Smith, "and wherever he stayed he was loved."[22] Candid, yet moderate and magnanimous, he considered all on the Board his friends.

William L. Clements had been a regent since 1910. His avocation was early Americana, and the Clements Library on the Michigan campus was his gift. He was a thoughtful, deliberate man, and a diplomat who could "finesse" the legislature when the occasion demanded. He was very wealthy and very generous.

Junius E. Beal had held the traditional post of "local regent" since 1908. His Ann Arbor residence put him in the center of every campus concern. He had a bulldog tenacity, and "sought to be right the first time because it was so hard for him to change."[23]

Lucius Lee Hubbard was the oldest member of the Board. His health was poor; he spent his winters in Florida and the Caribbean and did not usually attend the Regents' meetings. He was a kind, gentle, philosophical man who was regarded with affection by his colleagues.

Benjamin S. Hanchett was a self-made man, and the only regent

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[20]The writer suggested to Dr. Ruthven that his first Board of Regents was probably his best. He replied, "Nobody ever had a better Board than that one." Interview, January 20, 1970.

[21]Dr. Ruthven thought Clements to have the most influence. (Interview, January 20, 1970). Shirley W. Smith, author of Harry Burns Hutchins and the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1951), thought that "no member of the Board exceeded [Sawyer] in influence." p. 123.

[22]Ibid., The descriptions of the regents which follow are from Smith, pp. 120-147, passim.

[23]Ibid., p. 122.

without college training. He was sensitive about this, and also deeply sensitive about any criticism of the University from the legislature and the press. He was concerned with student welfare, and had been a major proponent of the Health Service.

Victor M. Gore was known to his fellows as a clear thinker and an appealing orator. His opinions and his purposes were highly regarded, but poor health caused his influence to wane in his final years on the Board.

James O. Murfin was the youngest regent in both age and service. Smith's description of him is appropriate: "Here was a colorful character. Tall, slender . . . impetuous, a hard fighter for what he wanted but surprisingly without rancor if he lost, if he had had eyes in the back and sides of his head the University of Michigan would have been the apple of every one of them."[24]

Ralph Stone was a Detroit attorney. The President of the Detroit Trust Company, he became the regental fiscal expert. He was a close friend of Regent Murfin, and they usually found their views in harmony.

These were the central actors in the drama about to be staged. The faculty, whose committee of Professors Reeves, Huber, and Sadler had participated actively in Dr. Little's selection, was not to be involved this time. Both Regents Clements and Stone believed that faculty participation in the selection process was desirable.[25] However, Regent Beal held that the previous faculty committee was partially responsible for the mistake of selecting Little. Besides, he argued, the faculty was prejudiced

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[24] Ibid. p. 147.

[25] Stone to Sawyer, February 23, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 18, MHC.

against educationists and might overlook someone otherwise eminently qualified.[26] Beal was adamant, and the regents proceeded without faculty assistance. In 1929 nobody even thought to suggest student participation in the selection process.

Regents Beal, Sawyer, and Clements as chairman were named the committee to screen candidates and make a final recommendation to the entire Board.

Ruthven's Appointment Appears Certain

By July the regents had formed definite opinions. Murfin, the youngest regent, promptly decided that Ruthven was his man. "The more I see of Ruthven the better I like him," he wrote Regent Sawyer.[27] In a letter to Regent Gore later in the summer, Murfin enumerated his reasons:

(1) He comes from our own group and will not be compelled to be educated as to Michigan policies, plans, and traditions.
(2) He has shown, as Dean of Administration, a firmness and tact and an executive ability that I think could only be called outstanding.
(3) He is ultra-conservative and the day of storm and stress will be over for the present.
(4) The overwhelming majority of the deans and the faculties are for him.
(5) Professor Hobbs is against him.[28]

Ralph Stone, Murfin's regental colleague from Detroit, had also become a firm proponent of Dr. Ruthven. Stone was committed to the general practice of promoting from within the organization.[29] He wanted Ruthven's

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[26]Beal to Sawyer, February 22, 1929, ibid.

[27]Murfin to Sawyer, March 6, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[28]Murfin to Victor M. Gore, July 31, 1929, ibid. Hobbs was a world-renowned geologist whose strong opinions irritated the regents at times.

[29]Stone to Alfred B. Connable, Jr., February 14, 1951, Stone Papers, box 1, MHC.

appointment for the same reasons as Murfin, but in addition he was much impressed with the "very unusual financial and business sense" which the Dean of Administration had demonstrated.[30]

William L. Clements was initially opposed to Ruthven's appointment, but C. C. Little and Claude Van Tyne convinced the regent of Ruthven's merits.[31] By July, Clements was ready to vote for Ruthven. However, he admitted to Ralph Stone that he had nagging doubts about Ruthven's ability as a speaker and would have favored Jessup of Iowa had he been a Michigan man.[32]

Regent Gore believed that Ruthven's "essential soundness" was "a guaranty of stability in University affairs." Gore predicted that Ruthven would "grow into an able and worthy president," and announced his willingness to act immediately.[33]

Lucius L. Hubbard, while not active in these deliberations, was known to favor Dr. Ruthven.

Benjamin Hanchett was in a quandary. He had indicated to Regent Murfin that he was ready to vote for Dean Ruthven, but he had also told Dr. Sawyer that he regarded Ruthven with suspicion because Dr. Little, whom Hanchett despised, was promoting him. Furthermore, he thought Ruthven's friends were guilty of "logrolling" with the regents.[34]

Dr. Sawyer was also undecided, but inclined to support Dean Ruthven.

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[30]Stone to Murfin, June 20, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[31]Sawyer to Murfin, March 7, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 5, MHC.

[32]Clements to Stone, July 19, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[33]Gore to Clements, June 20, 1929, ibid.

[34]Hanchett to Sawyer, June 11, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

As early as March he had expressed his favor with Ruthven.[35] Three months later he wrote to Ralph Stone, "Ruthven has grown with me. I think he is a good deal of a man, and we might do much worse while trying to do better. He has a faculty of putting his finger on the weak spots and pointing a remedy."[36]

Regent Beal's initial choice was Dean Edward Kraus.[37] Beal liked Ruthven personally, but he was opposed to his selection. For one reason, he was afraid that Ruthven would carry out ex-President Little's policies. "I doubt if we desire these past fights to be perpetuated by those already committed to them," he warned Ralph Stone.[38]

Beal also doubted that Ruthven could ever be "a great spiritual, scholastic leader," and felt that Ruthven "might be a 'good' President, but not one who can keep Michigan up at the head of hard competition."[39] When it became apparent that Beal's enthusiasm for Dean Kraus' presidency was not shared by the faculty or any of the other regents, Beal centered his attention on President Jessup of Iowa.[40]

On the campus, some heavy artillery wheeled into line behind Ruthven. The biggest, despite the hopes of many that he had been forever spiked, was ex-President Little. He had expressly requested that Ruthven,

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[35]Sawyer to Murfin, March 7, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 5, MHC.

[36]Sawyer to Stone, June 5, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[37]Beal to Sawyer, January 4, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 18, MHC.

[38]Beal to Stone, May 9, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[39]Beal to Sawyer, June 24, 1929, ibid.

[40]Regents Clements, Beal, and Sawyer went to Iowa City to interview Jessup on May 2, 1929. He expressed his availability, saying, "I am convinced that you have the outstanding opportunity in the country." Letter of W. A. Jessup to Clements, May 3, 1929, ibid.

as Dean of Administration, carry the 1929 budget to the legislature.[41] It was understood on the campus that Little backed Ruthven. Others fired off letters of support to the regents. John R. Effinger, Dean of the Literary College, wrote Regent Murfin that Ruthven's appointment would lead to "a quiet administration in which the faculties and the President might work together from the start."[42] The venerable Van Tyne urged Ruthven as a man of "hard work and good honest brains."[43] "I know of no one here I should prefer to Dr. Ruthven," wrote Shirley W. Smith, Secretary of the University.[44]

Off the campus, it became known that Governor Green, ex-regent Harry Bulkley, and ex-Governor Chase S. Osborn favored Ruthven's appointment.

Regent Murfin scented victory for his candidate and he pressed the attack. "I am informed that every Dean but two would enthusiastically welcome him as President and he would not be objectionable to the other two," he wrote Clements. "I have never before seen such a near-unanimity of opinion on the campus as there seems to be in favor of Dr. Ruthven."[45] Murfin felt that action was warranted, and he fretted over the sluggish deliberations of his colleagues. By July he confidently assured Dr. Sawyer that every regent except one was prepared to vote for Dean Ruthven.[46] Only

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[41] Ann Arbor Daily News, January 12, 1929, p. 1

[42] Effinger to Murfin, May 16, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[43] C. H. Van Tyne to Sawyer, February 9, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 18, MHC.

[44] Smith to Sawyer, April 15, 1929, ibid.

[45] Murfin to Clements, May 28, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[46] Murfin to Sawyer, July 3, 1929, ibid.

Regent Beal held out.

Despite the recalcitrant Beal, Ruthven's selection seemed a certainty. The appointment was expected on August 2, for a special session of the Regents had been announced.[47] The waiting appeared to be over.

The Tables Turn

Suddenly, only two weeks before the special session, The Ann Arbor Daily News reported that Ruthven's selection was not as certain as it had appeared. The paper guessed that the regents lined up five to three in favor of the "home talent." The article mentioned support, both on campus and among the regents, for President Jessup of Iowa, and concluded that "by tradition" election of the Michigan president was unanimous.[48]

If the paper was to be believed, the regent's views had shifted. In fact, they had. One cause was Regent Beal. His intransigence was having an effect on Regents Hanchett, Clements, and Sawyer, all lukewarm supporters of Ruthven. Beal sent frequent letters to the triad, and reported that a small, but influential group of faculty leaders "do not think [Ruthven] is Presidential timber."[49] There was enormous respect for Beal among the regents. Clements wrote to Stone, "I think so highly of Junius, and he has been such a good friend for so many years, and has been of such great use to the University, that I for one hesitate to override him. . . ."[50]

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[47] Ann Arbor Daily News, June 28, 1929, p. 1.

[48] July 18, 1929, p. 1

[49] Beal to Sawyer, June 24, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[50] Clements to Stone, July 19, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

Regent Sawyer felt that way about Junius Beal, too. Sawyer, it will be recalled, was probably the most influential member of the Board. Had he stood foursquare for Ruthven, Clements and Hanchett would almost certainly have followed his lead and Ruthven would have been elected on August 2, as expected. But at this crucial juncture Dr. Sawyer was swayed by his medical colleague, Dr. James Bruce. Dr. Bruce, professor of post-graduate medicine at the University Medical School, was treating Dr. Sawyer's ailing wife.

In addition, he was a trusted friend; he became Dr. Sawyer's campus confidant. Dr. Bruce did not want Ruthven to become President. During June and July, Bruce sent at least ten letters and telegrams to Regent Sawyer warning him of a campus conspiracy whose principals were Ruthven, Little, and Dr. Hugh Cabot, Dean of the Medical School. Bruce intimated that these three had initiated a skillful campaign on campus, among the regents, and even in the newspapers aimed at placing Ruthven in the presidency. Although Bruce, like Regent Beal, thought well of Ruthven personally, he both disliked and distrusted Little and Cabot. If Ruthven was to become president, Dr. Bruce told Dr. Sawyer, Sawyer should enact a price: the understanding that Ruthven would dismiss Dr. Cabot as Dean of the Medical School.[51]

Dr. Sawyer was unsettled by the reports from Bruce. In mid-July he responded to a letter from A. S. Whitney, retiring Dean of the School of Education. "I have a very high opinion of Dean Ruthven," Sawyer wrote, "but his choice is now rather doubtful in view of the opposition

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[51]Letter of Bruce to Sawyer, June 25, 1929, Vol. 19, Sawyer Papers, MHC. The Bruce-Sawyer correspondence is found in the Sawyer Papers, MHC. There is no evidence that Ruthven's subsequent dismissal of Dean Cabot was the result of any "deal".

which has developed."[52] "If I had to make a choice at this time it would be Jessup," Sawyer told Allen Schoenfield of the Detroit News a few days later.[53]

At this very time, Regent Clements exploded a bombshell. In a copyrighted article, the Bay City Daily News reproduced an interview with Clements in which he stated that the regents would vote on August 2 and Ruthven would be the choice by a seven to one margin. Regent Beal, he said, was the only regent opposed. The Summer Michigan Daily was quick to point out that such a pronouncement by a regent was not cricket.[54] Nevertheless, the story was carried throughout Michigan by the press and it was generally assumed that Clements was stating facts. The pro-Ruthven Ann Arbor Daily News responded immediately with a large front-page photograph and a banner headline entitled, "Practical Man, Equipped With Energy But Also Patience, Is Dr. Ruthven."[55] The following day, editor R. Ray Baker, a Ruthven friend, wrote a lengthy, laudatory page one piece headlined, "Ruthven's Prospects Attract Attention To His Probable Policy."[56]

The unfortunate Clements had been duped. A reporter had, by conjecture, written an article purporting to show the various attitudes of the regents as fact, and asked Clements to comment on its veracity. The reporter's guesswork was close enough to the truth to entice some statements from Clements and he found himself in print.[57]

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[52]Sawyer to Whitney, July 15, 1929, ibid.

[53]Sawyer to Schoenfield, July 20, 1929, ibid.

[54]Summer Michigan Daily, July 19, 1929, p. 2.

[55]Ann Arbor Daily News, July 19, 1929, p. 1

[56]Ibid., July 20, 1929, p. 1

[57]Clements to Murfin, July 19, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

The presidential speculators buzzed over the Clements interview. Regent Beal wrote Regent Sawyer that on the campus some took it "as a political move intending to bludgeon us into the Ruthven camp, but I know Will [Clements] better than that. They just cunningly hooked him."[58] The regents forgave their errant brother, and thereafter referred to the incident discreetly as "Clements' mistake." Clements, chagrined at being fooled and crestfallen because he had exposed his friend Beal to public ire, decided that he should placate Beal by withdrawing his support from Ruthven.[59]

Regent Gore suddenly remembered that there were certain things he would like to know about Ruthven. "Is Dean Ruthven a Pacifist? Is Dean Ruthven a Socialist? Is he committed to the Little screed [sic] of Birth Control?" he demanded of Regent Murfin.[60]

The tables had turned. Beal, Clements, and Sawyer, the three members of the selection committee, did not favor Ruthven. Gore and also Hanchett were uncertain. The long-awaited August 2 special session was approaching. Dr. Sawyer decided to take a vacation.

From San Diego he sent a telegram to Murfin:

> We must not be torn asunder by dissension among ourselves. Advise that we drop all discussion of names now under consideration and start anew or appoint a new committee. Cannot be home for August second meeting.[61]

The meeting was cancelled.

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[58]Beal to Sawyer, July 25, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[59]Clements to Lucius L. Hubbard, August 13, 1929, Hubbard Papers, box 7, MHC.

[60]Gore to Murfin, July 30, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[61]Telegram of Sawyer to Murfin, July 22, 1929, ibid.

Ruthven's Dilemma

It is difficult to determine what went through Dean Ruthven's mind at this time. Forty-one years later he still recalled the uncertainties of the summer of 1929 as "some kind of Hell."[62] He remembers that he was not an active candidate in any way, and took no part in the intrigues which swirled around him. His first love was science, and both he and his colleagues were distressed to think that his scientific pursuits might cease.[63]

On the other hand, Ruthven was an insider and very loyal to his alma mater; he recognized that the University was in a "terrible mess," and he thought he knew what to do about it.[64]

As early as January, 1929, he had written a long letter to Ralph Stone to "acquaint you with the general situation here." "The morale of the faculty is very low," the Dean told the regent. "Like vultures grouped around a dying dog other universities are picking off . . . our best men." Ruthven went on to say that a new form of centralized reorganization was needed, for he and a General Motors vice-president had discussed Michigan's organization vis-à-vis General Motors and the comparison was "enough to make the angels weep."[65] Stone wrote back that

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[62]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20, 1970.

[63]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20, 1970. Dr. Ruthven told the writer that all of his colleagues in zoology signed a plea urging him to decline any invitation to the presidency. He assured his professional friends that he would never give up his museum and that the "God-awful, thankless" administrative job of Dean of Administration was only temporary. Letter of Ruthven to Edgar M. Ledyard, January 28, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 85, MHC.

[64]Interviews, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20 and January 23, 1970.

[64]Interviews to Ruthven, January 4, 1929, ibid.

he was "very much impressed by what you say," and expressed the hope that Ruthven would also communicate his views to the other regents.[66]

Ruthven did this from time to time. To Dr. Sawyer he explained that "several of Dr. Little's policies . . . are of doubtful importance." He specifically suggested one Dean of Women to replace Little's three Advisors to Women and proposed that the controversial University College plan be replaced by a plan acceptable to all the faculties.[67] To Regent Murfin he outlined his plan for a group of vice-presidents to remedy "an outworn form of organization."[68]

Dr. Ruthven's opinions were discussed among the regents, as he must have known they would be. It could be said that his letters revealed the "platform" on which he hoped to gain election. On the other hand, his book, Naturalist in Two Worlds, records that he did not aspire to the position, had not been approached by the regents, and was surprised by their eventual decision.[69]

In fact, Ruthven had discussed his own resignation as Dean of Administration with Regent Stone soon after Dr. Little resigned. Stone had told him not to resign, for "things may happen between now and June which we cannot now foresee."[70] Ruthven also told Stone at this time that he was considering an offer of another position.[71]

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[66]Stone to Ruthven, January 4, 1929, ibid.

[67]Ruthven to Sawyer, June 3, 1929, ibid.

[68]Ruthven to Murfin, May 21, 1929, ibid.

[69]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 28-29.

[70]Stone to Ruthven, February 23, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[71]During the months before he became president, Dr. Ruthven had museum offers from Harvard and the Smithsonian. Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20, 1970.

In mid-May Ruthven wrote again to Regent Stone, this time telling him that he firmly intended to resign as Dean of Administration after the June commencement. He told Stone plaintively that he was "actually putting in from sixteen to eighteen hours a day, and [had not] this year at any time had more than seven hours sleep. . . ." He had not, with all his duties, "been able to give the staff the help which it needs."[72] The regents were upset, and Clements, Murfin, Gore, and Stone urged him to reconsider.[73]

If Ruthven's threat of resignation was designed to force the regents into action, it failed. He did not know where he stood with the regents and, after the aborted meeting of August 2, they did not know either.

Murfin Aroused

James O. Murfin was not known for being prudent, and he was indignant over the sudden turn of events. He angrily wrote to Dr. Sawyer:

> I think you should arrange with Regent Clements for a meeting of our Board at once. I have reached the point where I care not how nearly unanimous we may be. . . . We have become the laughing stock of the State of Michigan by our hesitation and vacillation. If Ruthven was good enough for seven of us before Mr. Clements burst into print he is certainly good enough yet.[74]

Murfin hammered away. He circularized the regents, telling them that he had been corresponding with James R. Angell, President of Yale, who had told him that the regents should not, after their experience with Little, consider a young man from another institution. When the deadlock continued, Murfin threatened to resign from the Board. He wrote Regent

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[72]Ruthven to Stone, May 16, 1929, Stone Papers, box 1, MHC.

[73]Ruthven Papers, May, 1929, box 1, MHC.

[74]Murfin to Sawyer, August 13, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

Hanchett:

> I am thoroughly disgusted with the efforts of some members of the Board to please Regent Beal rather than choose the best man available for the Presidency. I am seriously thinking of leaving the Board if . . . Dean Ruthven is not chosen. If I do leave I will tell the public in no uncertain terms why I reached such a decision.[75]

Murfin's threatened resignation was probably a bluff, but Murfin's ally Ralph Stone was earnestly considering his own resignation from the Board. He told Dr. Sawyer that he was in a state of nervous exhaustion, and would use his increasing responsibilities at the Detroit Trust Company as a "cover" for his resignation.[76]

With these threats hanging over their heads the selection committee of Beal, Clements, and Sawyer searched frantically for a compromise candidate who would be acceptable to all regents. Dr. Robert A. Milliken of the California Institute of Technology was approached, but was unavailable.[77] The committee hurried to New York to consult with Frederick P. Keppel, President of the Carnegie Corporation. Keppel's advice was to select Dean Ruthven, but he suggested some other names, among them Harry Woodburn Chase, President of the University of North Carolina.[78] When the committee decided to approach Chase, Murfin wrote to Stone, "It seems peculiar that our associates should go to Mr. Keppel for advice and then not follow it."[79] Undaunted, the selection committee opened negotiations

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[75]Murfin to Hanchett, September 14, 1929, ibid.

[76]Stone to Sawyer, August 14, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[77]Sawyer to Ralph Jenney, August 20, 1929, ibid. Jenney was a Sawyer friend who acted as an intermediary for the Board.

[78]Clements to Stone, September 4, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[79]Murfin to Stone, September 6, 1929, ibid.

with President Chase.[80]

Early in September, the committee met with Chase in New York. The committee's impression was most favorable, and Regent Beal expressed the group opinion, "We think he is just the man for us."[81] There was one catch: Chase's wife was in Europe and he would not guarantee his availability until discussing the matter with her. It wasn't until September 30 that Chase told the committee that he was available, but he added that it was "doubtful whether I could come to Michigan before the end of this academic year."[82]

The regents had expected this and decided that, with the academic year approaching, someone would have to be in charge of the University. Regents Clements and Stone conferred in Detroit and proposed that the regents "delegate to the Dean of Administration the powers and duties of President of the University until further action by the Regents."[83] All of the regents except Hubbard and Murfin agreed to this, and Dean Ruthven became, in effect, Acting President, although that title was avoided by the Regents.[84] The Ann Arbor Daily News again ran the big Ruthven picture with a banner headline, "Ruthven is Appointed Acting President."[85] However, at least one regent viewed the Board's decision as an agreement that

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[80]Clements to "Members of the Board of Regents", September 13, 1929, ibid.

[81]Beal to Hubbard, September 14, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[82]Letter of H. W. Chase to Clements, September 30, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[83]Telegram of Shirley W. Smith to Murfin, September 20, 1929, ibid.

[84]Telegram of Smith to Murfin, September 21, 1929, ibid.

[85]September 21, 1929, p. 1.

Ruthven would not be named president, at least until after he had once again proved himself in his new role. "Poor Ruthven!" Hanchett wrote to Murfin, "It was tough on him and he has been so faithful and loyal under most trying circumstances, that he deserved anything but that."[86]

By late September if Regents Murfin and Stone—who was following Murfin's lead—had been persuaded to drop their support of Ruthven, there is no question that the Board would have united behind Chase of North Carolina. Even Regent Hubbard, who had not wavered in his backing of Ruthven, agreed that his "mind [was] open to the recommendation of the committee."[87] Murfin and Stone refused to yield. Dr. Sawyer admitted, "We must concede as much to Stone and Murfin as we have to Beal, and I think every one would be in accord with Ruthven's appointment, except perhaps Beal."[88]

One final event occurred late in September which strengthened the Murfin-Stone position. Benjamin Hanchett resigned on September 23. Although Hanchett had backed Ruthven, his support was neither constant nor committed, and it seems probable that he would have voted with the majority. His resignation was ostensibly for reasons of health.[89]

To the disgust of the remaining regents, Governor Fred Green decided to break precedent and appoint a woman to succeed Hanchett. Flint

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[86]Hanchett to Murfin, September 23, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[87]Hubbard to Beal, September 18, 1929, Hubbard Papers, box 7, MHC.

[88]Sawyer to Gore, September 26, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[89]Mystery surrounds the Hanchett resignation. It seems unlikely that he resigned for "ill health" during the climax of the search for the new president. In fact, a letter from Dr. James D. Bruce to Regent Hanchett, August 27, 1929, Hanchett Papers, MHC, shows that Dr. Bruce had given Hanchett a complete physical examination and at that time he was not unhealthy.

alumna Mrs. Esther Marsh Cram, described by Green as "in every sense a cultured and capable lady," was chosen.[90] It seems likely that Green, a Ruthven advocate, made certain that his new appointment would steadfastly favor Ruthven's selection. In fact, Ruthven's Naturalist in Two Worlds describes an amicable meeting in Governor Green's office between Mrs. Cram and himself just prior to the lady's appointment as regent.[91] With the addition of Mrs. Cram to the Board, the balance of support once again shifted to Ruthven.

"It Was Worth Waiting For"

The next Regents' meeting was scheduled for October 5. The Ann Arbor Daily News urged the Regents to act. The public, the editor stated, "believes the time has arrived . . . to give the University a permanent president.[92]

On October 5, the Regents named Alexander Grant Ruthven as the seventh President of the University of Michigan.

Murfin, victorious, was elated. He wrote C. C. Little:

> I made the motion after two hours of alleged oratory including a charming speech by Madame Regent Cram. Whereupon the three members of the committee went into a huddle in the hall. When they came back Regent Sawyer asked me to withdraw my motion. I inquired why and he said in order that Regent Beal might make it. Whereupon Regent Beal made the motion and the action was unanimous.[93]

"Good work and congratulations," "Pete" Little had written, "It was worth waiting for."[94]

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[90]Letter of Fred W. Green to R. Perry Shorts, September 30, 1929, Shorts Papers, box 1, MHC.

[91]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 45-46.

[92]October 3, 1929, p. 4.

[93]Murfin to Little, October 15, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[94]Little to Murfin, October 5, 1929, ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE RUTHVEN PLATFORM

The appointment was greeted favorably. The regents agreed that any past differences would be forgotten. "Everyone will now fall in line," Dr. Sawyer predicted. "Junius [Beal] took his medicine with a wry face but he will recover from his disappointment . . . Jim [Murfin] held himself pretty well which lessened the trouble I feared."[1] Regent Beal wrote soothingly to Regent Murfin: "I want to tell you how glad I am that we came through the recent differences of opinion in harmony. . . . Everything is all right."[2] Beal demonstrated the regents' solidarity by agreeing to act as toastmaster at a banquet in Ann Arbor at which 900 friends honored Dr. Ruthven. It was the largest function of its kind ever held in the city.[3]

The Ann Arbor Daily News called him "the logical choice" and claimed that "the citizens of Michigan . . . would have been satisfied with nobody but Ruthven in the president's chair."[4]

The Michigan Daily recognized the enormity of Ruthven's task: "Today there descends on his shoulders the full weight of a university

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[1]Sawyer to Stone, October 7, 1929, Sawyer Papers, Vol. 19, MHC.

[2]Beal to Murfin, October 17, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[3]The Washtenaw Tribune, November 19, 1929, p. 1

[4]October 5, 1929, p. 4.

that is not a well-oiled, smoothly working piece of machinery." The Daily editorialized, "We have great faith in the ability of his calm personality and quiet efficiency to put Michigan back where she belongs in the front rank of American universities."[5]

The faculty of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts adopted a unanimous resolution stating its pleasure that "for the first time in the history of the University of Michigan, one of its members has been elected to the Presidency . . . Dr. Alexander Grant Ruthven . . . commands our admiration and respect."[6] Interviews with faculty members who were on the campus then confirm that this feeling was general.

The campus, not aware that within the past two weeks the regents had narrowly failed to unite behind another prospect, accepted the appointment calmly. Ruthven was "the least disturbed of all."[7]

"Keep It Out of the Newspapers"

President Ruthven had one thought uppermost in mind. He must steady the University, "keep it out of the newspapers," and restore harmony among its many discordant elements.[8]

He called a press conference. The University under President Little had proved to be such a source of headlines that newspapers from Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Chicago had assigned reporters to Ann Arbor. Little had reveled in repartee with these reporters at weekly press conferences. Ruthven, however, told the disappointed newsmen that there would be no more press conferences, and that he would call them

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[5] Michigan Daily, October 5, 1929, p. 4.

[6] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (1929), p. 57.

[7] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2 (1929), p. 2

[8] Interviews, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20 and 23, 1970.

individually when something newsworthy occurred.[9] He suggested that the University would profit from a "highly trained news editor" who would interpret the University to "the papers of the state and other mediums of publication."[10] T. Hawley Tapping's editorials in The Michigan Alumnus, which previously had freely and frankly commented on campus controversies, were suddenly replaced by the bland "Conning the Campus" column. "I told Tapping that he was getting as bad as The Michigan Daily," Dr. Ruthven recalled in explaining why he had ordered the change to more affable prose.[11]

"The office of the president has been unduly exalted," Ruthven remarked, and to insure that the presidency remained out of the public eye he decreed that there would be no formal inaugural ceremonies.[12] He told the University Senate that he would have no inauguration, but instead wished his first meeting with them to mark the real beginning of his work.[13]

The Platform Statement

Ruthven balanced this "low profile" by releasing what came to be called his "platform statement." He had given considerable thought to the various problems of the University and had prepared a complete summary

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[9]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 20, 1970.

[10]"Platform Statement", reported in full in The Ann Arbor Daily News, October 5, 1929, and in The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2 (1929).

[11]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970.

[12]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, November meeting, 1929, p. 96.

[13]Speech of Alexander G. Ruthven to the University Senate, November 11, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 77, MHC.

of his views for distribution as soon as his selection was announced.[14] The "platform statement" set forth the guidelines for his administration; as such, it deserves careful attention.

The state university, Ruthven said, must recognize that its function includes both technical training and liberal education. The first must never develop exclusive of the second, for "no student should be considered properly educated unless he has come to appreciate good pictures and other forms of art, to love good music more than jazz, to prefer drama in higher forms than represented in the movies. . . ."

The first purpose of the university must be the instruction of students, and the "service function" cannot be allowed to detract from the regular academic purposes of the university. Ruthven warned that, while the university would cooperate with the people of Michigan in providing services, "the cost . . . should be paid by the person, firm, or state department receiving it."

He said that large size was not an asset, and could lead to "excessive expansion of curricula and multiplication of departments." "Expansion in the way of new units," Ruthven stated, "should be encouraged only when the need is great and funds are available. . . ." As a correlative to size as a quality control, Ruthven wanted the University to accept "only those students evidently qualified to pursue advanced studies." If the University attempted to raise the general level of culture by admitting the maximum number of high school students, "the result would be a lowering of standards to the dull level of mediocrity. . . ."

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[14] The writer asked Dr. Ruthven to explain the genesis of the "platform statement." He said that there had been no precedent for it. "Just say I was inspired," he added with a twinkle in his eye. Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970.

The student must recognize that a degree of "in loco parentis" is necessary, for the student is transitory. Furthermore, he will face laws not of his own choosing upon graduation. "Above all the student wants and has a right to know just what he can do," Ruthven affirmed, "He will not object to discipline administered expeditiously and justly." However, the President recognized that rules and regulations must not be "immutable laws," but "experimental and subject to change" by faculty and students.

"In a very real sense the university is its faculty," he declared. "Administrators who fully appreciate the fact that a university can be no better than its faculty will see to it that available funds are first used to secure for its staff the best scholars and teachers available, that once secured the faculty is kept happy and contented, and that no sacrifice of staff is permitted because of an expressed need for other facilities."

Ruthven noted that the alumni should become an integrated and meaningful segment of the university. Courses, either on the campus or at University extension centers, should be made available to the alumnus so that he can keep abreast of developments in his profession. While on the general topic of alumni, Ruthven warned that benefactors must not control the University through restricted gifts, and that both donors and the University would profit from discussions to include the faculties of the units concerned.

Ruthven attacked the University's organization as "the curiously antiquated and cumbersome machinery with which the routine work is performed. . . . " He suggested that increased efficiency would result if the various administrators, deans, and department heads were given "authority in proportion to the responsibility which is theirs." The

executive officers should collectively determine broad university policies, he said. The president should not, Ruthven reasoned, initiate projects such as the University College and force them on the faculties. Rather he should be supportive of whatever sound educational ideas the faculties sought to develop.

He stated that the traditional "town and gown" dichotomy was "unfortunate" and assured the troubled Ann Arbor landladies that, while the University was committed to dormitories, it would not build them so rapidly that the landladies would be deprived of needed income.

The "platform statement" demonstrated that the new chief executive was the proper medicine for the ailing institution. He was telling the various segments of the University that he was one of them and understood their difficulties for, after all, he had been on the campus for almost thirty years. He was telling them that he was not reactionary (many had feared that the Regents' choice would be) for he forcefully urged some progressive ideas of his own. Neither would he follow the Little line, for he had no committment to the University College and wished to revamp the present organizational structure completely. The "platform statement" was clearly the work of a faculty man, one who believed that the administrator's role was to serve the faculty in its vital functions of teaching and research, and one who was willing to acknowledge the faculty responsibility for much of the educational innovation and decision-making. Above all, the statement was considered, balanced, carefully reasoned, and stimulating without being inflammatory.

Ruthven's statement was heartily accepted just as his appointment had been. The President of Johns Hopkins wrote: "As a document I think it is unique and really cannot help admiring the spirit and

wisdom shown."[15]

The Michigan Alumnus called the statement a "master stroke."[16] Greek professor Campbell Bonner told his colleague, Latin professor John G. Winter: "Ruthven made an admirable statement of his plans and policies . . . so that even some of the disappointed ones were greatly pleased."[17] The statement showed "a disposition and ability to give the University of Michigan a tactful, firm, just, forward looking, wide awake administration," according to The Detroit Free Press.[18]

Toward a New Stability

On the same day Ruthven assumed office, the Regents announced that former governor Chase S. Osborn had presented the University with over 3,000 acres of land on Sugar Island and Duck Island as well as his library of several thousand volumes. Soon afterward, W. W. Cook died and the University fell heir to his estate of almost $15 million, a sum which was subsequently severely reduced by litigation and the stock market crash, but which, nevertheless, was the largest single gift in University history. Over $300,000 in additional gifts to the University were announced in the first year of Ruthven's presidency.[19]

Dr. Sawyer wrote:

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[15]Joseph S. Ames to Ruthven, December 26, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[16]Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (1929), p. 60.

[17]Letter of Bonner to Winter, October 15, 1929, Winter Papers, box 1, MHC.

[18]October 7, 1929, p. 6.

[19]The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey, ed. by Wilfred B. Shaw, I (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1942), p. 111.

> Again, I want to say to you how happy we are over the way things are going at the University. From every quarter I hear the kindest, most encouraging reports. It seems to me that this is rather an unusual condition of things, to deal with such a mixed up affair and bring order out of it which all approve.[20]

Ruthven was not the typical dour Scot, for he occasionally delighted the regents with flashes of wit. When Regent Beal invited the "Regential Golf Experts" to a match, he suggested that non-player Ruthven referee.[21] Ruthven responded by prescribing a series of rules which outlawed Regent Beal's cigars ("The smoke, to say nothing of the aroma, tends to persist") and "scurrilous comments . . . on the game, stance, or approach of any player. . . . "[22] Beal so enjoyed the President's levity that he wrote back in kind, and sent Ruthven's letter to all the other players.[23]

It is easy to understand, after the tension of the Little years, how readily the regents welcomed this easy camaraderie.[24]

Buoyed by this general support, Ruthven decided on two bold strokes. In February, 1930, he fired Dr. Hugh Cabot as Dean of the Medical School and the following month he appointed Alice C. Lloyd Dean of Women.

Cabot was a Boston Brahmin who had been appointed Dean in 1919; he was a friend of fellow Harvardian C. C. Little. Many faculty in the

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[20]Sawyer to Ruthven, November 29, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 2, MHC.

[21]Letter of Junius Beal to "Regential Golf Experts," September 11, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 3, MHC.

[22]Ruthven to Beal, September 12, 1930, ibid.

[23]Beal to Ruthven, September 15, 1930, ibid.

[24]Another time Regent Clements wondered how it was that his favorite Jersey cow had presented him with twin black and white calves. He called upon Ruthven "as a specialist in zoology" to explain such an event. (Clements to Ruthven, April 3, 1931, ibid.) "As a biologist and not as a college president," Ruthven responded, "may I say that there must have been a hole in the fence." Ruthven to Clements, April 6, 1931, ibid.

Medical School, as well as University administrators, grew to believe that Cabot's administrative techniques were slipshod at best. For example, Dr. Ruthven recalled that Dr. Cabot had a disconcerting habit of neglecting to include the salary request for a faculty member or two when submitting his budget. When the mistake was discovered, adjustments would have to be made from other items in the Medical School budget.[25]

This was only one of many administrative difficulties which led to alienation between the dean and his faculty. In addition, there was a policy dispute over whether Medical School faculty should spend their total time teaching or be allowed to add to their salaries by lucrative private practice. Cabot held the former view, and further thought that the University Hospital should be open to private patients with fees paid to the University. The faculty disagreed and, naturally, the Michigan State Medical Association sided with the faculty. This conflict escalated until eleven key members of the Medical School faculty virtually demanded Dr. Cabot's resignation.[26] The Board of Regents had wanted this solution all along, but had been reluctant to act because of the furor sure to ensue. Furthermore, there were no established precedents for firing a dean; by custom "deans were deans until they died."[27] The Regents agreed, however, that if Dr. Ruthven had the courage to dismiss Cabot they would support the President in any showdown. Ruthven immediately relieved Dr. Cabot of his duties as dean and department chairman, but he was allowed to remain as a member of the medical faculty.

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[25]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970

[26]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVI, No. 18 (1930), p. 352.

[27]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970.

An executive committee, chaired at the outset by Ruthven and later by Dr. Frederick Novy, was formed until a new dean could be appointed. To Ruthven's vast relief, the dismissal of Dr. Cabot was met with general approval, "even by the interns."[28] The Ann Arbor Daily News called the dismissal "inevitable" because of the "chronic condition of inharmony" in the Medical School. "We are convinced, with the administration, that Dean Cabot's removal was in the best interests of the University," the local paper editorialized.[29]

Another surprising, but sagacious decision was to name Alice Lloyd Dean of Women. Miss Lloyd was the daughter of former graduate school dean Alfred Lloyd, and, although some considered her too young for this assignment, she quickly proved to be a highly capable and respected member of the administration. Her appointment brought to an end the Little system of three Advisors to Women which Dr. Ruthven had considered "terrible."[30]

Swords Into Plowshares

Early in his regime Ruthven displayed a surprising talent for turning potential detractors into allies. Jesse S. Reeves was a power among the faculty, and he would not have been at all averse to accepting the Michigan presidency for himself.[31] A few months after Ruthven became President, Reeves appealed to him for aid in securing Reeves' appointment

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[28] Ibid.

[29] February 9, 1930, p. 4. Upon leaving Michigan Cabot joined the Mayo Clinic as a surgeon and concurrently held an appointment as professor of surgery at the University of Minnesota. He died in 1945. Who Was Who in America, 1943-1950.

[30] Letter of Ruthven to Walter H. Sawyer, June 3, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[31] Letter of Walter S. Penfield to Jesse S. Reeves, June 7, 1929, Reeves Papers, box 25, MHC.

to the World Conference on International Law at The Hague. Dr. Ruthven, as he often did in matters of this sort, asked his friend Arthur Vandenberg to intercede, and the Senator was able to secure the prestigious appointment for Reeves. Reeves sent the President a pipe in gratitude.[32] In 1931 Reeves filled a new chair as W. W. Cook Professor of American Institutions, and at the same time he became Chairman of the Department of Political Science.

Also in 1931, James D. Bruce (who earlier had so vigorously opposed Ruthven's appointment as president) was offered the newly-created post of Vice-President in Charge of University Relations. He found the offer "tremendously stimulating," Bruce told Ruthven, and he hastened to accept "without any reservation of either heart or mind."[33]

Edward H. Kraus was a name frequently mentioned in the presidential sweepstakes of 1929. He was unusually able and extremely strong willed, and there is some evidence that Kraus may have wanted the Michigan presidency for himself.[34] During the uneasy summer of 1929, Kraus had been one of two deans who were opposed to Ruthven's presidency, yet when Dean John R. Effinger of the Literary College died in 1933, Ruthven considered Kraus for this sensitive post. The Literary College at that time was notorious for its elitist posture, a posture nourished by the presence

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[32]The Reeves-Ruthven-Vandenberg correspondence is found in the Ruthven Papers, box 2, February-May, 1930, MHC.

[33]Letter of James D. Bruce to Ruthven, August 7, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 5, MHC.

[34]Dr. Ruthven told the writer that during the summer of 1929 Kraus had let it be known that "Ruthven had a mistress in Ypsilanti." Ruthven had promptly scotched the rumor, saying, "I can't afford a mistress, and if I could I certainly wouldn't keep her in Ypsilanti." (Interview, January 20, 1970).

of a small cluster of academic celebrities, men whose national reputations made any differences with them risky. Ruthven is supposed to have remarked, "Ed Kraus is just the man to tame those wildcats," and Kraus was appointed.[35]

The men chosen for these assignments proved to be respected, able, and loyal. It could be argued that these appointments resulted more from beginner's luck than political adroitness—for Ruthven was not by nature a political manipulator—but the fact remains that he was able to gain the services and the support of three of the most critical members of the faculty.

Next, from off the campus, Ruthven received a challenge from former governor and regent and recent benefactor Chase S. Osborn. Osborn was covertly maneuvering for re-appointment as a regent, for Lucius L. Hubbard had announced his intention to resign.[36] This alarmed the regents, for Osborn, though capable of great charm, was also mercurial and frequently abrasive. Regent Murfin, in particular, had been bloodied by past political battles with Osborn and thought the prospect of his being on the Board "horrible."[37] The regents' papers reveal that the other members of the Board shared his concern and agreed that the only way to avert the threatened disruption of their cordial relationships was to persuade Hubbard to remain on the Board.[38] They unanimously agreed to do

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[35]Interview, Walter B. Rea, February 12, 1970.

[36]The Hubbard Papers, box 7, MHC, show that Hubbard was corresponding with Governor Green about resigning even before Ruthven became President.

[37]Murfin to Clements, October 30, 1929, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[38]Ibid.

this; Ruthven conveyed the Board's request to Hubbard, and Hubbard replied that he would "reluctantly consent to hold [his] formal resignation in abeyance for some further time."[39] The unpredictable Osborn changed his mind and told Governor Green that he would not accept the appointment.[40] Nevertheless, he knew about the regents' reaction and it had galled him. Osborn decided that he would try Ruthven out, "test . . . the blood pressure and the metabolism" of the new president, as he put it later.[41] He wrote to Ruthven (who did not know that Osborn had withdrawn from regental consideration) to tell the President that his [Osborn's] appointment as a regent was being considered.[42] Ruthven, who must have been as upset as the regents, replied unconcernedly: "You know, I am sure, that I could work with you as a Regent and as a matter of fact it seems to me to be my business to work with the Regents whoever they are."[43] Osborn told Ruthven that his tone was "cold and petulant," and Osborn further suggested that since he was "persona non grata to the regents and to you perhaps it is my duty to turn in my honorary doctorate. . . . "[44] Still Ruthven refused to rise to Osborn's bait. "It was kind and thoughtful of you to keep me informed," he wrote to the former governor, "We have been friends too long . . . to be estranged now by the tone of a letter."[45] Osborn gave up. "NOW after reading your

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[39]Hubbard to Ruthven, November 5, 1929, Hubbard Papers, box 8, MHC.

[40]Fred W. Green to Hubbard, November 29, 1929, ibid.

[41]Osborn to Ruthven, January 20, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 2, MHC.

[42]Osborn to Ruthven, undated, 1929, ibid.

[43]Ruthven to Osborn, November 11, 1929, ibid.

[44]Osborn to Ruthven, January 20, 1930, ibid.

[45]Ruthven to Osborn, January 27, 1930, ibid.

most gracious letter I KNOW I WAS WRONG in my interpretation of yours, Dear President ALEXANDER GRANT RUTHVEN. . . . If you 'hendle' everybody as you have me in this matter you may be confident that your regime as President shall be brilliant."[46] From then until his death in 1949 the crusty old "Iron Hunter" regarded Ruthven as a close friend and one of the three greatest Presidents of Michigan.[47]

The absence of corrosive publicity, the considered rhetoric of the "platform statement," the beneficence of donors, the favor of the regents, the bold action with Deans Cabot and Lloyd, and the gratification of potential opponents set the Ruthven regime on solid footing. Even the former Dean of the Education School, A. S. Whitney, who had bitterly opposed Ruthven's selection as President, confessed to Regent Murfin: "You were right and I was wrong. I now think he has the makings of a great President and the University seems to be functioning as though every joint was doubly greased."[48] The Depression was bringing new challenges, but after a long absence, stability had returned. Peace settled like a warm, fluffy blanket over the Ann Arbor campus.

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[46]Osborn to Ruthven, January 30, 1930, ibid.

[47]"There have been three great Presidents of Michigan: Angell, Burton, and yourself. That is a triad no other university can equal." Osborn to Ruthven, May 13, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 28, MHC.

[48]Letter of Whitney to Murfin, March 20, 1934, Murfin Papers, box 8, MHC.

CHAPTER III

THE MICHIGAN SYSTEM

In his letters to the regents and again in his "platform statement" Dr. Ruthven had voiced his dissatisfaction with the form of organization of the University. As a student of ecology he had long been interested in the order in which living things related to each other. As he surveyed his University, its structure appeared to him archaic, aimless, and amorphous.

Past Organization

In fact, the University's organizational pattern had changed little from President Angell's era. The president was expected to initiate educational policies, adjudicate disciplinary cases, address alumni, student and civic groups, plan and present the budget, entertain notables, woo the legislature, hire the faculty, and set the moral standards for the campus. It didn't seem too much to expect for, after all, President Angell had performed these tasks until he was over eighty years old. To be sure, Michigan's presidents no longer addressed weekly chapel sessions, answered correspondence in longhand, and personally enrolled Literary College students as Angell did, but what assistance they had was mostly in the performing of routine tasks in specialized areas. Dr. Ruthven, upon assuming the presidency, found that his executive support consisted mainly of Secretary and Business Manager

Shirley W. Smith.

Ruthven thought the administrative plan "militaristic," and he described it as "one in which there is a continuous line of authority . . . all problems being routed along much the same course, and most of the executives having too little authority and responsibility." It was a form of governance, Ruthven predicted, which would "soon be as dead as the Dodo."[1]

However, it was the form in vogue in virtually all American colleges and universities at the time Ruthven took office. In fact, in 1930 the United States Office of Education (USOE) was urging a "systematic plan . . . for the routing of business." The USOE contended:

> The most efficacious line of procedure is from the individual staff member to the head of the department to the dean or director, and from the dean or director to the president. . . . All administrative authority is thus centered in the president's office.

This was the plan in all but four of sixty-nine land-grant colleges and universities surveyed, the USOE noted approvingly. Were the four exceptions more democratic? Not at all, for in these institutions the department heads simply bypassed the deans to get to the president. The USOE report noted that a few of the institutions surveyed had executive committees and, in some cases, faculty legislative procedures designed to advise the president, but it urged the president to "exercise the right of veto over . . . their decisions."[2]

At Michigan the regents themselves had come to be largely

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[1]Alexander G. Ruthven, "The Organization of the University," The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVI, No. 27 (1930), p. 523.

[2]Survey of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Vol. 1, Bulletin 1930, No. 9 (U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1930), pp. 66-67.

responsible for the administration of educational matters. It was common in the 1920's for a regent to select the school or college which corresponded with his particular expertise and become, in effect, a committee of one to advise--and often to actually administer--that unit. Thus Dean Bates and Regent Murfin, a lawyer, would jointly make policy for the Law School. Regent Dr. Sawyer had as his bailiwick the Medical School, and advised the dean in the preparation of that school's budget. Regent Clements' province was the library. The number of Regents' committees approximated the number of schools and colleges.[3]

Under this arrangement, the deans wielded enormous power. Mortimer Cooley in Engineering, John R. Effinger in the Literary College, Henry M. Bates in Law were legendary leaders whose empires were sacrosanct--provided, of course, that the pipelines to their guardian regents were intact. The deans hired their own faculty, prepared their budgets, and usually ran their empires in the fashion of benevolent despots.

When concerns pertaining to the entire faculty of the University were raised, the University Senate, which included all faculty above the rank of instructor, assembled in time-honored town meeting style.

In President Angell's era this organizational pattern had worked, for when he took office in 1871 Michigan--with Harvard the largest University in the land--had only 1100 students.[4] By 1929, however, the student enrollment was over 12,000; courses had proliferated; departments, schools, and colleges had been added; and Michigan had established the growth pattern which would lead to its emergence as a full-fledged multiversity.

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[3]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 27, 1970.

[4]Howard H. Peckham, The Making of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), pp. 69-70.

Democratic Reorganization

Dr. Ruthven had seen what was occurring, and both the set oligarchies of the deans and the disordered growth which he observed were alien to his nature. His boyhood on the Iowa frontier, where he rode cow ponies and saw the covered wagons moving westward, and his scientific expeditions in the jungles of South and Central America, had taught him that intelligent men were resourceful and capable of guiding their own destinies. He was a democrat.[5] As a young scientist, he had been taught to respect the careful presentation of facts in the search for new truths; one did not forge ahead unless it seemed justified by prior evidence. His concern for the environment fostered a respect for order and the interdependency of all organisms.[6] As a long-standing member of the faculty, he understood the pride, aspirations, and prejudices of that group.

Through his efforts to raise funds for the University museums, Dr. Ruthven had become a friend of Ormand Hunt, a vice-president of General Motors, and Regent Ralph Stone, President of the Detroit Trust Company.[7] He was also acquainted with Michigan alumnus Chester Lang, a vice-president of the General Electric Company. The Ruthven Papers reveal that in 1929 and 1930 both Dr. Ruthven and his assistant, Frank

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[5]The story is related that Dr. Ruthven was seen walking along the "diag" chatting amiably with a campus janitor. One of the most senior of professors, a classics man, later admonished Ruthven that this kind of fraternizing was beneath the dignity of a university president. Ruthven replied that his friends were from all classes of society and he would be seen with whomever he pleased. (Interview, W. B. Rea, February 12, 1970.)

[6]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 13, 1970.

[7]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970.

E. Robbins, were very much interested in the organizational charts of corporations. Ruthven recognized that the University's organization was no longer appropriate for its magnified functions and he turned to his corporate friends for suggestions. Their ideas, coupled with his own predilection for democratic, yet orderly governance, gave birth to the plan of university organization which eventually became widely accepted throughout the United States and was sometimes referred to as "The Michigan System."[8]

Ruthven started with the regents. He reasoned that their role was not to make basic educational decisions, for they were primarily "captains of industry" and had had no experience in the ways of academia. Rather, regents, as "guardians of a public trust" were obliged to insure that the University was able to secure funds from the legislature and private donors adequate to carry out the ongoing educational program. Regents, Ruthven thought, should educate themselves to the broad needs of the University in order to judge the merits of proposals brought to them by the president from the faculties.[9]

During Marion Burton's presidency the Regents of Michigan had been formed into eight working committees and Burton had tried with limited success to have each regent take an interest in all facets of University operation. Ruthven further reshuffled the Regents' committees, so that by 1933-34, in addition to the Executive Committee, the only remaining committees were Finance, Plant and Equipment, Educational

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[8]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. LI, No. 10 (1944), p. 171.

[9]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Administration at Michigan," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. II, No. 1 (1930), p. 9.

Policies, Student and Alumni Relations, and Public Relations.[10] This meant that key regents would sit on more than one committee, and President Ruthven impressed upon the group that their interests must no longer remain parochial.[11]

As the regents became generalists, Dr. Ruthven felt that Regents' meetings could be shortened, and even expressed the view that the customary monthly meetings were too frequent.[12] Dr. Ruthven recalls that the regents surrendered their administrative chores gladly, but the record shows that Regent Clements, for one, complained to the President that the regental committees no longer took "a detailed part in administration." He declared that he "did not care to be on a non-functional committee."[13]

The president's own role, Ruthven decided, should be:

> Chairman of the faculties, . . . representative of the staff before the Board of Regents, . . . the interpreter to the faculty of the actions of the Board of Regents, and . . . co-ordinator of the interests, problems, and policies of the several units. As an overseer of the University [the president] will be expected to suggest broad lines of policy to the Regents and faculty, as a moderator and budget director, he will . . . digest and harmonize the claims and interests of departments and schools; and as chief personnel officer he will concern himself with the problem of developing the staff.[14]

The Vice-Presidents

In March of 1930 Shirley W. Smith and Clarence Stone Yoakum were

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[10] The President's Report for 1933-1934, Vol. XXXVI, No. 29, p. 3.

[11] Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 27, 1970.

[12] Alexander G. Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 38.

[13] Letter of Clements to Ruthven, June 8, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 5, MHC.

[14] Alexander G. Ruthven, "Administration at Michigan," p. 9.

named Vice-President and Secretary, and Vice-President in Charge of Educational Investigations, respectively. Smith's new title did not mean a change in duties, for he continued in general charge of finance and physical plant, but Yoakum's appointment was an innovation of major proportions. The Michigan Alumnus described the new office as "experimental" and supposed that its purpose was to aid the faculties in proposing new teaching methods and curriculums.[15] Soon after these appointments, Lewis M. Gram became Director of Plant Extension, which corresponded to a vice-presidential post. Gram's duties were concerned with the building program and space allocations, for Ruthven told the Regents that too often University buildings had been built with only "financial and mechanical" considerations in mind. He proposed to build them "from the inside out," and therefore one of Gram's primary duties was to assess the academic needs of the faculties when new buildings were proposed.[16] Next, Dr. Ruthven appointed Dr. James D. Bruce to a position of Vice-President in Charge of University Relations. In this post Bruce was to coordinate the University's extension work, adult education, alumni activities, and all other matters relating to the people of the state. In 1933 Henry C. Anderson became Director of Student-Alumni Relations; his responsibilities were auxiliary enterprises such as the Women's League, the Michigan Union, and the dormitories. This position, too, was regarded as at the vice-presidential level. Thus, as the academic year 1933 began, the President had a cabinet of five officers of vice-presidential rank.

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[15] Vol. XXXVI, No. 22 (1930), p. 432.

[16] The President's Report for 1929-1930, pp. 8-9.

Each vice-president was to be responsible for his own area and each was given the authority to make binding decisions in his area. The president, of course, did not relinquish his constitutional responsibility for the entire operation of the institution, but in actual practice vice-presidents were given carte blanche. The vice-presidents acted as consultants to the president on matters effecting total University policy. Ruthven's hope was that the vice-presidents would relieve him of many of his peripheral duties and free him for more direct contact with deans, department chairmen, and faculty committees. The President, however, did continue with the back-breaking responsibility of preparing the budget and presenting it to the legislature. It was carefully pointed out to the faculty that the vice-presidential coterie was not to be a barrier between them and the president.[17]

The Deans

This was especially important to the deans, for they were fearful that President Ruthven's re-organizational scheme would subtract from their powers. Their concern was justified, for one of Ruthven's objectives was to curtail the customary "empire building" of the deans. In his first appearance before the University Senate, the new President referred to the deans as "old barons," and this jibe drew an appreciative chuckle from the assembled faculty.[18] Ruthven insisted that all correspondence with the regents be done through his office; no longer would deans and regents jointly prepare budgets and discuss faculty appointments. To improve communication a "dean's conference" consisting of the

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[17]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Administration at Michigan," pp. 8-9.

[18]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970.

president, the vice-presidents, the deans of the schools and colleges, the librarian, and the student service deans met weekly. At these conferences, frequently held in the president's home, matters of general University policy were discussed. These were informal gatherings and the "dean's conference" had no legislative powers.

Early in his regime Ruthven offered his personal message to each dean in turn. He wrote to the Dean of the Education School: "You know, I am sure, that I am very much interested in your School. I will assist you in every possible way to make its work successful. To this end permit me to criticize and comment freely (to you), and do you please keep me informed of the progress and ideals of your department."[19] He urged the Dean of the Graduate School to get additional help, for he was "a fiend for work" and was trying to do too much.[20] The President complimented Dean Effinger on the revised curriculum in the Literary College.[21] However, he had a slap on the wrist for Dean Bates, the old monarch of the Law School. When Bates proposed certain changes in building structure to the architect of the Law School, Ruthven reprimanded him: "In my opinion, the faculty should confine its criticism to the arrangement and the amount of space in class rooms and offices . . . the

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[19]Ruthven to J. B. Edmondson, December 23, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[20]Ruthven to G. Carl Huber, June 27, 1930, ibid.

[21]Ruthven to J. R. Effinger, May 23, 1930, ibid. The new curriculum: "No student shall be accepted as a candidate for a degree until he has received at least 60 hours credit, and unless the average of all his work is of C grade or better. . . . Each student, upon becoming a candidate for a degree, shall select a department or division of concentration." (Proceedings of the Board of Regents, May Meeting, 1931, p. 630.) This meant that the Literary College, on its own initiative, had decided to incorporate the major principles of C. C. Little's unsuccessful University College.

decision as to the size of the building and possible methods of construction should be decided by the administration."[22] From the engineering dean he requested a statement of policy regarding the nature and amount of consulting done by engineering faculty. Dean Sadler piously assured the president: "It is considered desirable for all members of the Staff to adhere rigidly to the ethics of the profession, and particularly to avoid the active solicitation of outside work."[23] "There is apparently some discrepancy between your statement of policy and the practice of certain men on your staff," Ruthven retorted, "May I ask you now to give me a report upon the status of the work of Professors Hoad, Decker, and Menefee. . . . "[24]

It is doubtful that President Ruthven's badgering had any ameliorating effect on old warhorses like Bates and Sadler, but he had served notice that it was a new system and, like it or not, the deans would have to get used to it.[25]

The Faculty Reorganized

In 1930 the University faculty conducted its business through

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[22]Ruthven to Henry M. Bates, October 18, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[23]H. C. Sadler to Ruthven, October 28, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 4, MHC.

[24]Ruthven to Sadler, November 6, 1930, ibid.

[25]Bates, apparently, never did get used to it. He complained to Regent Murfin in a "Personal and Confidential" letter that "nothing like this has happened before," for he was "being treated very much like a subordinate foreman." (Bates to Murfin, January 20, 1931, Murfin Papers, Vol. 6, MHC). Bates' Law School was conceded to be one of the best in the country, and Ruthven and the Regents decided that they would be well advised not to force the re-organization of the Law School but instead wait for Bates to retire. Ruthven to Murfin, November 30, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 18, MHC.

the University Senate, a group which was comprised of 531 faculty members. President Ruthven realized that the University Senate was too large for legislative deliberations and encouraged the formation of the smaller, representative University Council, which consisted of twenty-two deans and other administrators and thirty-four elected members of the faculty. The University Council was empowered to legislate, but it was agreed that the entire University Senate might review any of the Council's actions. At the outset the major work of the University Council was done by its Committee on Program and Policy. This committee, chaired by President Ruthven and consisting of the chairman and vice-chairman of the Council and the chairmen of the four standing committees, initiated discussions of any academic policies effecting the general faculties.[26] When some faculty complained that the presence of all of the top-level administrators inhibited discussion, the representation was revised so that about one-third of the Council was administration and the other two-thirds were faculty.[27]

Within the schools and colleges executive committees were established to aid the dean in budget preparation, promotion and tenure, and faculty recruitment. These committees assumed a good deal of the decision-making which had previously fallen to the dean. The first executive committee was appointed in the Medical School upon the dismissal of Dr. Hugh Cabot. The second executive committee was formed in the

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[26]Letter of Frank E. Robbins to Archie M. Palmer, Association of American Colleges, January 7, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 7, MHC. Robbins, as Assistant to the President, answered inquiries about the University's organization.

[27]Letter of Frank E. Robbins to Tom D. Rowe, March 7, 1944, Ruthven Papers, box 47, MHC. Rowe was chairman of a committee to organize a faculty senate at the Medical College of Virginia.

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts following Dean Effinger's death in 1933. Thereafter, executive committees were formed periodically at the request of the faculties of the individual schools and colleges. In most cases members of the executive committees were appointed by the president from a list submitted to him by the faculty of the school or college. However, members of the executive committees were regarded as major executive officials by the Regents, and that body refused to allow the faculties final authority for the selection of executive committee members.[28]

Individual departments, too, were encouraged to establish executive committees, and these also served to aid the chairman in budget preparation, faculty appointments, and salaries. Since departments varied in size from two to over fifty members, it was recognized that executive committees would not be feasible in the smaller departments. Within some departments the foundation for more democratic governance had already been established, for in the early 1920's it became the practice to do away with the autocratic title of "department head" and replace it with "chairman."[29]

One further organizational procedure was promoted by the Ruthven administration, although the term used to describe it had originated a few years earlier. To foster better communication among units of the University with like interests, "divisions" were established. Because divisions were not intended as administrative units, there was some

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[28] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, Special August Meeting, 1933, p. 193.

[29] Letter of Frank E. Robbins, to Charles H. Tuttle, March 4, 1938, Ruthven Papers, box 25, MHC.

confusion as to their function. A division was officially defined as:

> a grouping of units and departments for the purpose of coordinating various allied activities, and of developing the general field therein. . . . Its specific duties of advice and recommendation concern the interrelations of its several curricula, the encouragement of individual research, and the promotion of cooperative investigations.[30]

The purpose, then, was simply to promote common goals and avoid overlap. The Ruthven Papers show that the President, through Vice-President Yoakum, worked doggedly to bring about a Division of Fine Arts, a grouping consisting of the College of Architecture, the Department of Fine Arts, the Department of Landscape Design, and the play-production courses in the Department of Speech.[31] When this grouping was finally secured, it pointed the way for similar groupings in other disciplines.

One final coordinating body was named. This was the faculty personnel committee, chaired by the president. Its function was to review all academic appointments to insure that equal standards would exist throughout the University.

Consequences

These changes brought manifold results; one of the most striking was the shifting of responsibility and authority from the deans to the faculties. After all, Ruthven reasoned, the faculties are the "educational experts" and the University should utilize their expertise. Not only would the institution profit, but self-government would lead to greater individual dignity and job satisfaction. Ten years after his installation as President, Ruthven spoke at the National Alumni Dinner. "The University,"

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[30]Memorandum of Alexander G. Ruthven, February 9, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 7, MHC.

[31]Ruthven Papers, box 6, July-November, 1931, MHC.

he said, "requires for efficient administration both wholehearted co-operation and decentralized responsibility; a democratic way of life is the inclusive purpose of American education, and our schools cannot assist in the achievement of this purpose if they encourage autocratic administration, permit a spirit of uncertainty, fear, rivalry, or suspicion to prevail among staff members. . . . "[32] Earlier, he had spoken of a "faculty copartnership in administration," and expressed his hopes that the new plan would "promote harmony between administrative efficiency and the human value of self-determination and self-respect."[33] "No distinction should be made between faculty opinion and administrative opinion," he once told the University Senate. "In the University of Michigan there is no administrative view, only a University point of view."[34] It seems significant that faculty members from the Ruthven years are unanimous in agreeing that Michigan has been a University which is administered democratically. Obviously, as executive committee memberships rotated, practically all senior faculty had the opportunity to participate extensively in governance. Ruthven, reminiscing, was sure that the extent of faculty participation in decision-making had a salutary effect, although he recalled that change, when it was the responsibility of the faculty, was apt to come slowly.[35]

Another outcome of the Ruthven re-organization was increased

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[32]Alexander G. Ruthven, "A Decade of University History," 31st General Bulletin, Bureau of Alumni Relations, Vol. XLI, No. 68 (1940), p. 3.

[33]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Administration at Michigan," p. 10

[34]Speech of Alexander G. Ruthven to the University Senate, November 30, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 77, MHC.

[35]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 27, 1970.

daily contact between the president and the faculty. The Ruthven Papers indicate that he regularly attended, ex-officio, the meetings of most of the major committees on campus, including such divergent groups as the Board in Control of Athletics and the Board of Governors of the Student Religious Association. He frequently stressed that the vice-presidents were not to stand between him and the faculty; they were "out at the side to keep them out of the functional line. . . . We are definitely subordinating administration," he told the faculty in a speech that must have warmed their scholarly hearts.[36]

The introduction of the vice-presidents, the plan which Ruthven borrowed from his corporate friends, also made an impact. A check of the American Council on Education publication, American Universities and Colleges, reveals that in 1928 the term "vice-president" was used in only a half dozen American colleges and universities. Major universities, in listing "administration," would name their president and, usually, academic deans and, sometimes, their registrar, dean of men, and dean of women. The University of Chicago was the only institution at that time to list more than one vice-president, for Chicago had designated a Vice-President and Dean of Faculties and a Vice-President and Business Manager.[37]

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[36]Speech of Alexander G. Ruthven to the University Senate, November 30, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 77, MHC.

[37]American Universities and Colleges (American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1928). Chicago's Vice-President and Business Manager functioned similarly to Vice-President Shirley W. Smith at Michigan, but the Vice-President and Dean of the Faculties was an educational maverick. The president assigned to him various projects, but he had no set functions, and no real authority. Floyd W. Reeves, et al., The Organization and Administration of the University, The University of Chicago Survey, II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1933), p. 57.

Ruthven's method of using vice-presidents was antedated in print by President Raymond M. Hughes of Iowa State College. He suggested to the Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions that those universities with 10,000 students should be prepared, when selecting a new president, to allow him to name one or two vice-presidents of his own choosing. "It is impossible for one man to do all that the president of a great university should do," Hughes concluded.[38]

There is no doubt that Ruthven, in command of a university of over 12,000 students, exhibited great foresight in establishing the vice-presidential structure which provided the administrative manpower to help the University survive the Depression and, soon after, World War II.

Trailblazer

The Michigan System combined elements of many types of administrative organization and is therefore not easy to categorize. The plan for vice-presidents charged with executive authority for designated areas has come to be known as a "cabinet" form of organization. The emphasis on faculty executive committees with shared administrative responsibilities in schools, colleges, and departments appears as a precursor of the group participation techniques of the modern management experts.[39] The president's relationship with the regents and the deans maintained elements of traditional line-staff organization.

When considered in toto it seems probable that The Michigan System introduced by President Ruthven was a trailblazer in American higher

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[38]Quoted in Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors, Vol. XV, No. 6 (1929), p. 468.

[39]See Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961).

education. More than any other plan of organization it anticipated the needs of a large modern university. Even though the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago had authorized the title of "vice-president" as early as 1923, Chicago's plan did not give the executives set areas of responsibility and real authority as Michigan's did. By 1932, only one other major university—the University of Pennsylvania—had established a group of vice-presidents who functioned in a somewhat similar manner to those at Michigan.[40]

There were, of course, varying degrees of faculty participation in governance in evidence when The Michigan System was introduced. Antioch College, for example, had gone so far as to establish an Administrative Council of three faculty elected by the faculty, three faculty appointed by the president, and the president and dean ex-officio. Antioch's Council met weekly to "determine general policies and to advise the president and dean."[41]

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[40] American Universities and Colleges (American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1932). Historically, Pennsylvania had called its chief executive Provost rather than President and, since 1926, had designated three "vice-provosts": one responsible for faculty personnel and relations; one in charge of student government and welfare; and one in charge of public relations. Edward Potts Cheyney, History of the University of Pennsylvania 1740-1940 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), pp. 415-416. In 1931 the Pennsylvania statutes were revised to provide, in addition to a president, a provost and four vice-presidents. Two of these vice-presidents were in charge of the professional schools of law and medicine; a third was placed in charge of the undergraduate schools; and the fourth was responsible for the business departments of the University. (Statutes of the Corporation, University of Pennsylvania, June 1, 1931, pp. 13-17). It would appear that the functions of the first three corresponded to those of the Deans of Law, Medicine, and Literature, Science, and the Arts at Michigan. There is no evidence in the Statutes that there was faculty involvement in governance as there was at Michigan.

[41] Arthur E. Morgan, "The Antioch Program," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 1, No. 9 (1930), p. 501.

A 1919 study of written statements by ninety-three college and university presidents showed that at twenty-eight institutions the faculty "practically" determined educational policy. However, at twenty-two other institutions the faculty had no voice whatsoever in the matter. Surprisingly, a follow-up study in 1929 revealed that in these ninety-three institutions there had been a slight decrease in faculty governance during the decade.[42]

In 1930 one of the most authoritative sources on the subject of governance was E. E. Lindsay and E. O. Holland's College and University Administration.[43] Lindsay was Head of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Pittsburgh, and Holland was President of the State College of Washington.[44] Prior to publication their manuscript had been reviewed by Presidents Lowell of Harvard, Aydelotte of Swarthmore, Sproul of California, and Frank of Wisconsin, as well as by a number of noted professors.[45]

It is interesting to note that there is no mention of any "vice-president" in Lindsay and Holland's listing of officers of general administration.[46]

It is equally interesting that, in speaking of faculty governance, the authors baldly state, "The tendency today in academic circles is

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[42]Edward C. Elliot, M. M. Chambers, and W. A. Ashbrook, The Government of Higher Education (New York: American Book Company, 1935), pp. 162-163.

[43](New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930).

[44]Since 1959 Washington State University at Pullman, Washington.

[45]Ibid., Introduction.

[46]Ibid., p. 25.

distinctly that of centralization."[47] They don't recommend extreme centralization of authority in the hands of administration, the authors hasten to add, for "the teaching faculty in each college or division should have some representation in the affairs of that institution."[48] Lindsay and Holland's solution? They suggest "discussion groups" which would elect one faculty representative from each college or division to meet with the college or division deans in a central body. Of course, that central body would include the bursar, registrar, statistician, and other administrators to "effectively break the balance between the deans and the faculty representatives in favor of the central administration." Any such central body would not participate in actual decision-making, but would nevertheless be significant, for "if faculty feelings and emotions have an outlet, they do not accumulate and gather the force necessary for a destructive explosion."[49]

If Lindsay and Holland's ideas were regarded as the latest word in administrative theory, it seems obvious that Ruthven's Michigan System was innovative, for it certainly surpassed Lindsay and Holland in sophistication and foresight, particularly in the introduction of vice-presidents and in the democratic, meaningful participation of faculty in governance.

When the Journal of Higher Education was founded in January, 1930, the editors turned to Ruthven for their first article on college and university organization.[50] However, the probability that Ruthven introduced a new system of organization to American higher education has

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[47] Ibid., p. 462. [48] Ibid., p. 466. [49] Ibid., pp. 468-469

[50] Alexander G. Ruthven, "Administration at Michigan," January, 1931.

never been acknowledged. Frank Robbins, who was present at the creation of The Michigan System, felt that it was Ruthven's finest contribution to the University's history, but Robbins apparently never realized that Ruthven's contribution at Michigan was a form of administrative organization new to higher education.[51]

Ruthven did seem to realize it, although he made only one effort to point this out publicly. In a rare press conference in 1944, called to announce administrative personnel changes, he spoke of The Michigan System when he said: "Michigan pioneered in developing this type of organization for universities, one which is being adopted every year by more and more of our educational institutions."[52] Later, reminiscing with retired Regent Ralph Stone, he wrote: "I am sure that one of the improvements in administration which we put in early in my regime was the decentralization of responsibility for major fields of activities. This was new in the educational world."[53] When reminded of The Michigan System in a recent interview, he reaffirmed that Michigan had introduced this form of organization to higher education. "Come to think about it," the aged ex-President recalled, "it did arouse a good deal of interest around the country."[54]

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[51] Michigan: An Enclopedic Survey, I, p. 98. Robbins wrote the section on Ruthven's presidency.

[52] Alexander G. Ruthven, Statement to the Press, December 4, 1944, Ruthven Papers, box 50, MHC.

[53] Ruthven to Stone, July 11, 1951, Stone Papers, box 1, MHC.

[54] Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 23, 1970.

CHAPTER IV

HUMANIZING THE UNIVERSITY

In October, 1929, the same month Ruthven became President, the stock market crashed. F. Clever Bald recounts:

> Because of its highly specialized industrial structure Michigan suffered sooner and more severely than most of the other states. Automobile production fell off from five million units in 1929 to two million in 1933. In 1930, 20 per cent of the state's non-agricultural workers were unemployed; in 1931, 29 per cent; in 1932, 43 per cent; and in 1933, nearly 50 per cent. More than half a million people were dependent on public funds for their daily bread.[1]

The state government had as its major source of revenue a tax on land, buildings, and personal property. As the Depression hit, people were unable to pay these taxes; delinquincies in the state averaged about one-third.[2] From 1929 to 1932 nearly two hundred Michigan banks failed. By early 1933 it was necessary for the Governor to declare a bank holiday.

The Legislature in the Depression

With the Depression gripping the state hard, it was inevitable that the state's University would suffer. At first, luck was with the University, for then the legislature met bienially and the University's two-year budget had been approved just prior to the stock market crash.

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[1] F. Clever Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 404.

[2] Ibid., p. 405.

The budget, by law, was predicated on a mill tax on real property. This mill tax principle was extremely important to the University, for it meant that future budgets could be planned and growth predicted as the wealth of the state increased. However, when as many as one-third of the state property owners were unable to pay taxes, it looked as if support for the University must be seriously curtailed. From September, 1930, until May, 1931, the President wrangled with Governor Wilber M. Brucker over the principle of the mill tax. Brucker's proposal to eliminate the mill tax, Ruthven told him, "will be the death knell of the institution as we have known it."[3] In May he told Brucker that the University was faced with the largest enrollment in its history, faculty salaries were low, and "Michigan has dropped from first place to far down the line."[4] Ruthven's reproachful reasoning reaped rewards, for the legislature cut the University's request by only $140,000, a moral victory for the University. Regent Clements wrote to Ruthven: "Some one, and I believe it was you, is entitled to much credit in getting even as favorable action."[5] The victory was only temporary, for state revenues were plummeting and, in 1932, a special session of the legislature reduced the University's income from the mill tax by 15 per cent, or about $738,000. As the regular 1933 legislative session approached, President Ruthven and the Regents were faced with the likelihood of a discarded mill tax and the unwelcome possibility of appealing to the legislature for appropriations from the state general funds every two

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[3]Ruthven to Brucker, April 17, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 3, MHC.

[4]Ruthven to Brucker, May 11, 1931, ibid.

[5]Clements to Ruthven, June 9, 1931, ibid.

years. "I believe that we should cling to the principle of the mill tax at all cost," Ruthven wrote Clements.[6] In 1933 the mill tax was first repealed by the legislature, then retained as Governor William Comstock vetoed repeal.[7] Nevertheless, the University's appropriation was reduced to $3,200,000, approximately a 30 per cent decrease in income. When mill tax revenues on real property continued to shrink, the 1935 legislature abolished this form of income and substituted a sales tax. Ruthven had foreseen that this was inevitable, but he fought to retain some means by which the University could plan its financial future without relying for funds on the whims of each new legislative session. The President appealed to Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald:

> We could seek to amend the sales tax law to provide a continuing appropriation of a portion of the sales tax proceeds equal to a predetermined percentage of property valuations of the state. This arrangement would give the University the same revenues, both as to amount and stability . . . but they would have the advantage of not being actually derived from a tax on property. They would simply be measured by property valuation.[8]

Law professor E. Blythe Stason drafted such a bill; the bill became law; the law resulted in slightly increased income for the University and, even more important, a yardstick against which future development could be planned. Peckham, the University historian, regarded this as a "great

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[6]Ruthven to Clements, January 12, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 8, MHC.

[7]Michigan's governors were elected every two years. During the 1930's a pattern was established: When Franklin D. Roosevelt won in national elections, he swept Democratic governors into office in Michigan; in off-year elections the predominantly Republican state returned a Republican governor to the state house. Willis F. Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), p. 654.

[8]Ruthven to Fitzgerald, December 10, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC.

Ruthven victory," and called him "a magnificent rear guard fighter" for his struggles with Depression legislatures.[9] Sagendorph recorded: "President Ruthven pulled a financial rabbit out of his hat."[10] However, the University's income in 1939-1940 remained lower than that received prior to the Depression.[11]

Depression on the Campus

For the first three years of the Depression, student enrollments remained constant, but in 1933-1934 the number of students dropped to 10,573, almost 2,000 below the pre-Depression figure. Sagendorph tells the story dramatically:

> More than a thousand students had packed up and gone during the early stages of the depression. . . . A thousand more who should have left hung doggedly to their college careers, and more than one faced actual hunger.[12]

Most students found that, since there were no jobs available in industry or agriculture, it was better to struggle through college. After the low enrollment year of 1933-1934, student attendance increased markedly, and by 1939-1940 over 16,000 students were enrolled.

Income from the legislature decreased, contributions from past benefactors dried up and, after 1931, the legislature cancelled all outstanding building plans. The University was forced to economize. Ruthven told Glenn Frank, President of the University of Wisconsin:

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[9]Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 173.

[10]Kent Sagendorph, Michigan: The Story of the University (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1948), p. 312.

[11]Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey, I, 105. The income and enrollment figures which follow are from Table 1, p. 105 in the reference cited.

[12]Sagendorph, Michigan: The Story of the University, p. 315.

> We are undertaking to reduce expenditures by eliminating superfluous instructors and assistants and by limiting current expense and equipment. . . . I have been opposed to faculty salary decreases but much to my surprise the staff has informally asked that reductions be made.[13]

Reductions were made. In 1932-1933 all salaries were reduced on a graduated scale of 6 per cent, 8 per cent, and 10 per cent. Those with the highest salaries [over $10,000] received the 10 per cent cuts.[14] The following year further graduated across-the-board pay decreases were made. The first $1,500 was exempt, but 8 per cent was cut from the next $2,000, 12 per cent from the next $2,000, 15 per cent from the next, and 20 per cent from anything above $7,500.[15]

The faculty responded philosophically, and Professor W. C. Hoad spoke for many others: "I think we are all coming to appreciate the extreme seriousness of the situation by which the University is faced; but, pay or no pay, come Hell or High water, we'll all stand by and see the job through."[16]

In fact, faculty status at the University was to be envied, for the academic routine was not appreciably disrupted and, with two exceptions, payrolls were met on time.[17] The Ruthven Papers indicate that

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[13]Ruthven to Frank, April 25, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 6, MHC.

[14]Ruthven to Walter A. Jessup, February 28, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 9, MHC. Ruthven's salary was reduced from $18,000 to $16,200. Fred I. Chase Commission of Inquiry, undated 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 8, MHC.

[15]The President's Report for 1933-1934, Vol. XXXVI, No. 29, p. 2.

[16]Letter of W. C. Hoad to Ruthven, March 30, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 9, MHC.

[17]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 3, 1970. Dr. Ruthven told the writer that Mr. Christensen, the Controller, would drive to Lansing with a state police escort, gather up the "nickels and dimes" from the state treasury, and return to Ann Arbor where he would spend all

literally hundreds of letters requesting faculty appointments were received during the Depression years and, although many applicants presented excellent credentials, the requests would be met with a stock, "I regret to say that there is very little possibility of a suitable opening on the staff." Some faculty were released, and no replacements were appointed for those who died or retired. In 1933 alone, 60 teaching and 29 non-teaching positions were eliminated and 122 additional staff members had their time reduced. Of the 66 teaching positions eliminated, 45 were at the instructor level.[18]

President Ruthven did what he could to keep morale high. When members of the University Senate expressed concern that Ann Arbor banks would fail, Ruthven promptly announced to them that he would continue to deposit his check in one of the local banks.[19]

When, in 1930, 162 faculty members were caught in a transitional squeeze between the retirement plans of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Teacher's Insurance and Annuity Association, the University budget was somehow expanded to include pensions for retiring professors.[20]

Dr. Ruthven suggested a scheme to enroll Michigan's displaced

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night counting the money so that the next day's payroll could be met. This story is also mentioned in Ruthven's Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 63-64.

[18] The President's Report for 1933-1934, Vol. XXXIV, No. 29, pp. 1-2.

[19] Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 3, 1970.

[20] The Carnegie Foundation had originally intended that its annuity plan would be sufficient for retiring professors. The Carnegie plan was not sufficient, and so the plan under TIAA (originally associated with the Carnegie Foundation but independent since 1930) provided that both the faculty member and the institution pay premiums toward a retirement allowance.

instructors in the graduate school without payment of the usual fees.[21] The idea, presumably, was that these men, who were unable to secure jobs, would at least have the opportunity for professional development without added financial burden.

In November of 1934 Ruthven initiated a policy permitting faculty who had served in administrative capacities for fifteen or more years to relinquish their administrative duties and assume "distinguished professorships." This was an educational innovation and Ruthven explained his reasoning to The Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions. Administration was a burden, he said, and since scholarship was the first love of any academic-turned-administrator, a change back to faculty status was, therefore, a promotion. "Distinguished professorships" would recognize the academic skills of mature scholars and pave the way for younger men to fill the more physically demanding administrative positions.[22]

When many students were unable to pay tuition at the beginning of the academic year, it was agreed that they could enroll for classes anyway. Credit for the year's work, however, was not awarded until tuition had been paid.[23] The Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA)

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[21]Letter of Professor O. J. Campbell to Ruthven, September 28, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 12, MHC.

[22]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Some Thoughts on Retiring Ages," Proceedings of the Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions, November 15-17, 1934. While Ruthven's candor was usually unquestioned, the first two appointments to "distinguished professorships" removed from deanships Marcus L. Ward of the School of Dentistry and Herbert C. Sadler of the College of Engineering. The Ruthven Papers reveal that he was unhappy over the lack of progress in both of these units, and the deanships were filled by Russell Bunting and Henry C. Anderson, men known to be sympathetic to Ruthven's wishes.

[23]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXIX, No. 20 (1933), p. 327.

and the National Youth Administration (NYA), two federal agencies, contributed financial aid for which students agreed to work on various campus projects. By 1939-1940 approximately half of the students held part-time jobs, and President Ruthven sent strong letters to his congressmen urging continuation of the NYA program.[24]

Scholarship and loan programs were strengthened. It was specified that an Earhart Foundation grant of $10,000 was to be used in part for scholarships for senior students, and the Brousseau Foundation gave $115,000 primarily as a student loan fund.[25] The Rackham Foundation contributed $100,000 for the same purpose.[26]

Welcome though these private benefactions were, President Ruthven realized early in the Depression that scholarship funds, then virtually non-existent, were needed if the University was to insure equality of opportunity for the state's children. The Regents established, in 1931, a number of Michigan Alumni Undergraduate Scholarships. These were tuition scholarships, and each alumni club in the state was to have the privilege of recommending one or more candidates (not to exceed three) every year.[27]

The Regents also created a number of loan funds to supplement gift income, and by 1935-1936 nearly 2,600 students were receiving loans

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[24]See "NYA" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 30, MHC.

[25]The President's Report for 1930-1931, Vol. XXXIII, No. 14, p. 11.

[26]The President's Report for 1933-1934, Vol. XXXVI, No. 29, p. 11.

[27]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, May Meeting, 1931, p. 629.

totaling more than $145,000.[28]

The need for even more scholarship funds for deserving students was frequently mentioned in Depression-era President's Reports, but not until 1943 was a major new University scholarship program established.[29]

Just as "necessity is the mother of invention," adversity on the campus seemed to breed a surprising esprit de corps. Sagendorph recalls that Depresson-era students found "ingenious solutions to the everyday problems of existence."[30] If morale remained high, football was undoubtedly one reason, for the Michigan Wolverines, under Coach Harry Kipke, won Big Ten and national titles in 1932, 1933, and 1934. Prohibition ended in 1933, but any resultant revelry was tempered by a Ruthven caution to the students: "The University will not continue as a student a man or woman who brings disgrace upon it."[31]

Despite legislative curtailment of building funds, the contributions of a few wealthy donors resulted in increased campus building. When W. W. Cook died in 1930, his estate provided funds for the continued construction of the Law School, completed in 1933. In 1935, as a result of President Ruthven's negotiations with the executors of the Rackham Fund, $6,500,000 was given to the graduate school for a building and for program endowment. Also in 1935 plans were undertaken for Burton Tower and the Baird Carillon.

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[28]The President's Report for 1935-1936, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 36, p. 47.

[29]See "Scholarships for Tomorrow's Leaders," The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLIX, No. 8 (1943), pp. 139-140.

[30]Sagendorph, Michigan: The Story of the University, p. 318.

[31]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXIX, No. 30 (1933), p. 516.

Ruthven remembered Depression times as some of the better years of his regime, for despite forced economies, teaching and learning continued unabated and morale was higher than hard times justified.[32] His papers reveal that he was confiding to friends: "I am not at all discouraged. . . . I must even admit that the curtailment of our resources has permitted me to make certain changes in the organization which I believe will be of lasting benefit."[33]

As job outbacks encouraged students to prolong their educational experiences, graduate schools turned out a surplus of scholars with advanced degrees. It seemed the opportune time to raise standards for the faculty and in 1935 the "Standing Committee on Educational Policies" made such proposals. The committee suggested to President Ruthven that "junior instructors" be called thereafter "teaching fellows," and recommended that the title of associate professor no longer be conferred as a reward for faithful service, but instead designate a man with all the attributes of a full professor. Men would remain as associate professors, the committee suggested, until an opening occurred in the professor's ranks.[34] Ruthven concurred, and the regents instituted the new standards.[35]

By December of 1933, the campus had exhibited such recuperative powers that President and Mrs. Ruthven sailed for Karanis, Egypt on a two

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[32]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 3, 1970.

[33]Ruthven to Dr. Howard A. Kelly, October 7, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 12, MHC.

[34]Ruthven to Professor H. A. Sanders, February 8, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 16, MHC.

[35]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, April Meeting, 1935, pp. 563-565.

month journey to inspect the University's archeological digs.

As conditions improved, Ruthven proudly told President Angell of Yale:

> Michigan has not decreased salaries this year. On the contrary we have made increases totaling approximately three hundred and eight thousand dollars. Salary cuts were not restored by percentages, but increases were given where most merited.[36]

Character Education

Despite the encouraging signs it became apparent as the Depression lengthened that rising enrollments, inadequate housing, and a reduced faculty were working hardships on both students and staff. President Ruthven as an undergraduate had attended a very small college where he had enjoyed the close relationships with his professors and his fellows.[37] At Michigan, he feared, these relationships were becoming impossible. He began to write and talk of "character education" and "humanizing" the University. This theme was developed before the National Association of State Universities meeting in 1933. Ruthven told the assembled educators that the nation's teachers and administrators had been stressing "aptitudes to the neglect of spiritual growth and unified development. It has not been fully recognized," Ruthven said, "that the final and net result of the educational process should be . . . a person trained to maintain his physical well-being and to grow continuously both mentally and spiritually." The Michigan President went on to say that the college graduate was "handicapped by lack of experience . . . in the broad field of human relations." Doctors, he

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[36]Telegram of A. G. Ruthven to James R. Angell, October 10, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 17, MHC.

[37]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 3.

explained, had hospital practice and lawyers performed before a mock court, but the typical college alumnus who would be required to pass judgment on his community's social problems would be "little more inclined than anyone else to act upon knowledge and reasoned judgements rather than upon his emotions in the field of human relations."[38] In his President's Report for 1933-1934 he urged careful study of the possibilities of "orientation to life" and he quoted Emerson's thesis that "character is higher than intellect. . . . "[39]

On the campus Ruthven launched a broad "humanizing" program. He wrote to his friend and riding companion H. B. Earhart that he was "trying to make every individual member of the staff feel the responsibility of furthering the interests of the institution. . . . "[40]

He advised the veteran Registrar, Ira M. Smith, to be more considerate with students who came to that office, for parents, students, and alumni had complained to him of mistreatment.[41]

The qualifications for admission to the University were rewritten. "While definite evidence of intellectual capacity is indispensable," the new guidelines stated, "the University believes that . . . positive qualities of character and personality should operate as determining factors in admission." Ruthven further recommended that

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[38]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Religious Instruction at the University of Michigan," The Educational Record, Vol. XV, No. 1 (1934), p. 42

[39]Vol. XXXVI, no. 29, p. 18.

[40]Ruthven to Earhart, September 23, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 8, MHC.

[41]Ruthven to Smith, November 21, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 16, MHC.

the Registrar's office utilize personal interviews, aptitude tests, and psychological examinations in choosing a Michigan class.[42]

It was also agreed that "ability as a teacher includes not only proficiency in classroom instruction but also interest and success in student guidance. . . . "[43]

Within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, Professors Russell Hussey, Erich Walter, and Lewis Vander Velde began to offer their services as academic counselors to students.[44]

When the new dean of dentistry told Ruthven that he wished the Dental School to stress a professional attitude, Ruthven reminded him: "I would like to see emphasized always in the professional schools the desirability of a broad cultural training underlying the professional work. . . . You are also interested in turning out doctors who have the training to be intelligent citizens."[45]

He informed University benefactor Tracy W. McGregor: "Our student health service is by far the best in the country. . . . Among other things, we introduced a psychiatrist so quietly that the youngsters accepted him without question." He added that the faculty had recently done away with its disciplinary committee and had substituted instead

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[42] The President's Report for 1934-1935, Vol. XXXVII, No. 23, p. 3.

[43] Ibid., p. 565. As might be expected, this provision drew some caustic comment from the faculty "to the effect that promotion should not be a reward for minding other people's business." Report of University Council meeting, May 13, 1935, in L. S. & A. Faculty Minutes, 1934-35—1936-37, p. 203.

[44] See "Counselors Befriend Troubled Students," The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLIV, No. 12 (1938). This service was begun informally about 1931.

[45] Ruthven to Russell Bunting, October 5, 1936, Ruthven Papers, box 20, MHC.

a committee on student conduct which would "try to train students to be good rather than punish them for being bad."[46]

Religious Education

In Ann Arbor, by 1930, it had become customary for the local churches to sponsor religious programs for students and to retain an assistant pastor to counsel University students of each denomination. Many churches had their own religious activity buildings on the campus periphery. The University-supported religious activities were under the aegis of the Student's Christian Association, which dated from pre-Civil War days, but which had aroused little campus enthusiasm since about 1920.[47]

Dr. Ruthven determined to re-vitalize the University's religious program. He was a man with a very strong, though perhaps unconventional belief in the power of religion. He regarded religion as "not a matter of external observance of creeds and dogmas, but the unifying force in the life of the individual and the co-ordinating factor in group living. . . ."[48] C. Grey Austin, who has chronicled the University's

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[46]Ruthven to McGregor, July 11, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC. This may have proved to be a special challenge to the law students, for President Ruthven received a number of complaints about their moral behavior. One "distracted parent" asked him if he was "aware that at [a] dance held in [the] Lawyer's Club . . . some of the students . . . took young women to their rooms, filled them with liquor, and debauched them?" ("Distracted parent" to Ruthven, November 13, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 11, MHC.) Ruthven suggested to Dean Bates that an independent investigation by the Law School Board of Governors was required. Ruthven to Bates, November 15, 1933, ibid.

[47]The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey, ed. by Wilfred B. Shaw, IV (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), pp. 1892-1893.

[48]Alexander G. Ruthven, "The Common Sense of Religion," C.B.S. radio broadcast, April 2, 1939, miscellaneous Ruthven materials, uncataloged, MHC.

religious history, says of Ruthven: "It was not his intention to take religious activities out of the hands of students, but rather to establish the principle that the state university, which could never afford to be sectarian, could not, on the other hand, afford to neglect religion."[49] Ruthven recognized that Depression economies and the legislature's aversion to the church-state controversy would preclude any funds from the state treasury and so he began to grope for private support.

He had previously talked with Cecil B. de Mille about the need for greater emphasis on religious instruction, and he tried an indirect approach to the mogul of the movies. He told de Mille that some of his plans at Michigan were already in progress, but that "owing to the well-known shortage in financial assistance" it would not be possible to employ a religious counselor, as he had hoped.[50] When de Mille apparently did not respond to this broad hint, Ruthven turned to his friend H. B. Earhart. This liaison paid dividends, for in July, 1932, the Earhart Foundation voted $2,500 for a Director of Religion at Michigan.[51]

The Regents added funds to the Earhart grant, and redefined the position as Counselor in Religious Education. The responsibilities were set as follows: "Improve facilities for spiritual development; advise students about religion and other personal matters; act as a contact

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[49] C. Grey Austin, "A Century of Religion at the University of Michigan" (pamphlet published by the University of Michigan, 1957) on file, MHC, p. 39.

[50] Ruthven to de Mille, May 10, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 5, MHC.

[51] Margaret Earhart Smith to Ruthven, July 20, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 10, MHC.

person between the University and religious agencies and be an advisor to the University in religious affairs."[52]

During the academic year 1932-1933 many names were proposed to Dr. Ruthven and a number of clergymen wrote to recommend their own services, for not only did the Depression render any academic position attractive, it was understood that the Counselor in Religious Education would be a major University appointment. The many applicants were considered for almost a year, and Dr. Edward W. Blakeman, Director of the campus Wesley Foundation, was appointed.[53] Blakeman proved to be an active member of the administration and his close relationship with President Ruthven enabled him to influence the course of all religious affairs on the campus.

The Student Christian Association was changed to the Student Religious Association in 1937 in order to include a very active group of Jewish students under the leadership of Rabbi Bernard Heller.[54] That same year a degree program in Religion and Ethics, which included fifty-three courses, was instituted in the Literary College. This program was

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[52] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, December meeting, 1933, pp. 269-270.

[53] Erich Walter remembered that when Blakeman was appointed many faculty resented the significance attached to the position. Interview, Erich Walter, February 24, 1970.

[54] On questions of religion Ruthven turned to a Catholic Priest, a Protestant Minister, and Rabbi Heller. (Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 114.) Ruthven found Heller particularly helpful and told him: "Whatever philosophy I have may be said to be the result of cross-fertilization between science and Jewish ethics." (Ruthven to Heller, December 8, 1937, Ruthven Papers, box 24, MHC.) Heller wrote: " 'Rabbi' in Talmudic literature means 'my teacher'. . . . On the basis of the instruction and inspiration which I received from your writings and discourse, I feel it is I who ought to call you 'Rabbi' instead of the reverse." Heller to Ruthven, February 8, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 27, MHC.

not aimed at preparing ministers, but intended to prepare students "for intelligent spiritual and moral leadership in the modern world."[55]

Residential Living

President Little had advocated residence halls for women, but the wrath of the Ann Arbor landladies had forced him to abandon those plans. Ruthven, too, favored on-campus residential living, but resolved to move cautiously.[56] Even though the accommodations in Martha Cook, Mosher-Jordan, and Betsy Barbour residence halls were comfortable, their space was not adequate and there was a constant waiting list of Michigan women.[57] The shortage of men's housing was even more acute, for with the exception of the Lawyer's Club and Fletcher Hall, which housed only 124 men, there were no on-campus residences for a male student population of 7,000. Assistant Dean of Students Fred B. Wahr and Dean of Students Joseph Bursley stressed to President Ruthven that more dormitories must be built promptly.[58] In 1936-1937 Allen-Rumsey House, accommodating 120 men, was erected, and in 1938-1939 a series of dormitories housing approximately 1,500 students was constructed with federal funds from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA). Additional residence units were planned, and Dr. Ruthven and his student service deans turned their attention to the organization of these new dormitories. A chance conversation with a group of visiting students from Oxford and Cambridge suggested the foundation for what

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[55] C. Grey Austin, "A Century of Religion," p. 41.

[56] "Platform statement."

[57] Ruthven Papers, MHC, passim.

[58] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLII, No. 19 (1936), p. 357.

became known as the Michigan House Plan.[59] The plan provided that dormitories be separated into "houses," each house to have its own student government, and its own shared dining facilities. High house morale was to be promoted through athletic, scholastic, and social competition.[60] Furthermore, a faculty Resident Advisor and a staff of graduate students were appointed for each house; their responsibilities were the academic tone and discipline. Each house also had a woman House Director to oversee social life. A Board of Governors of Residence Halls was appointed and Professor Karl Litzenberg became Director of Residence Halls.[61] Houses were relatively small, for each unit accommodated only slightly more than 100 men. Lounges and recreation rooms added to the homelike atmosphere. As a result of Dr. Ruthven's negotiations with the vice-president of the J. L. Hudson Company, between 500 and 750 prints were obtained for house walls.[62] The Michigan Alumnus proclaimed the houses "comfortable as a club."[63]

Teas, Fraternities, and Tolerance

President Ruthven believed that a University should accept the responsibility for the informal training of its students. This was the

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[59]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 30, 1970.

[60]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLIV, No. 26 (1938), p. 534.

[61]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLV, No. 25 (1939), p. 497.

[62]Ruthven to James B. Webber, Jr., January 4, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 55, MHC. The idea came from the daughter of Dean of Students Erich Walter. She was an Oberlin student, and told her father that Oberlin had a picture lending library. Walter told Ruthven of this, and he persuaded the J. L. Hudson Company to donate the prints. Interview, Erich Walter, February 24, 1970.

[63]Vol. XLVI, No. 7 (1939), p. 141.

primary reason why he and Mrs. Ruthven began weekly student teas in the President's home.[64] At first few students attended, but as the custom was established, the Ruthven home overflowed. Dr. Ruthven enjoyed these gatherings and mingled easily with the students.[65] He was particularly proud that the student teas made campus adjustments easier for foreign students.[66] Furthermore, the teas had a practical value: informal tête-à-têtes with campus leaders provided insurance, Ruthven felt, against personal attack in student publications![67]

Stories of Michigan's rich traditions never fail to mention the Ruthven student teas, and old-time faculty recall with favor the first family's willingness to open its home, not only to students, but also to faculty groups.[68]

President Ruthven was not a fraternity man, but the Michigan campus had a long-standing fraternity tradition. The President's position was stated very simply: fraternities should "live up to their own ideals."[69] One reason he was so anxious to develop the dormitory system, Ruthven wrote to an alumnus, was that fraternities "all too

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[64]Alexander G. Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 97

[65]Interview, Erich Walter, February 24, 1970.

[66]Alexander G. Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 92-93. Michigan was one of the leading American universities in enrollment of foreign students, and in the mid-30's had more oriental and Latin-American students than any other university in the United States. The President's Report for 1935-1936, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 36, pp. 54-58.

[67]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 6, 1970.

[68]Interview, Hazel Losh, February 11, 1970.

[69]Harris P. Ralston to Ruthven, June 20, 1935, Ruthven Papers box 16, MHC.

often have demonstrated . . . antisocial tendencies."[70]

When fraternities were lax in upholding their social codes, Ruthven did not hesitate to chastize them. In 1935 he called the fraternity officers and their alumni advisors together and told them that they must produce immediate change in their social conduct or he would not hesitate to request that their national organizations withdraw charters. He did not, he told the greeks, possess a reputation for attempting to "run a bluff . . . ."[71] The Michigan Alumnus reported: "Within a week society meetings had resulted in new house rules or a determination of strict adherence to hitherto unenforced regulations."[72]

President Ruthven sometimes referred to fraternities as "undemocratic" or "intolerant," for these were terms he was wrestling with during the years when he bent every effort toward humanizing the University. He spoke out strongly against bigotry and intolerance in a powerful baccalaureate address to the Class of 1932.[73] The record found in the Ruthven Papers indicates that his views were not always shared by the majority, for in the 1930's prejudice against Jews and, especially, Negroes was often open. For example, an alumnus sent the President a newspaper clipping of a track meet—his son was third behind two Negroes—and spoke of his "extreme repugnance" to see black

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[70]Ruthven to George Levey, October 13, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 31, MHC.

[71]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLI, No. 13 (1935), p. 213.

[72]Ibid.

[73]"The Anatomy of Tolerance," The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 34 (1932), pp. 668-688.

competing with white.[74] Ruthven replied that he did not find such competition objectionable because, "after all, there will have to be a certain amount of association between the races when the boys are through college." Then, as was his usual practice when he disagreed with an alumnus or donor, he invited the irate parent to call on him the next time he was in Ann Arbor.[75]

On another occasion, the Board in Control of Athletics decided that star football player Willis Ward, a Negro, should not, for his own safety, be allowed to play against Georgia Tech.[76] Ward was held out of the game "out of deference to the southerners," and Georgia Tech, as a goodwill gesture, told its own star to remain on the sidelines.[77] Ruthven felt that the Board in Control of Athletics should have foreseen the difficulty and was in error in scheduling the game, but—and this was another usual practice—he did not want to contravene the Board's authority.[78] The Ward incident became a cause célebre on campus and in the press, and Ruthven told Shirley Smith, "My life is being made miserable by arguments with the colored brethren. . . . I wish now," Ruthven admitted, "that I had taken the Ward matter into my own hands."[79]

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[74]Letter of Woolsey W. Hunt to Ruthven, March 4, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC.

[75]Ruthven to Hunt, March 13, 1935, ibid.

[76]"Board in Control of Athletics" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 14, MHC.

[77]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLI, No. 3 (1934), p. 54.

[78]Ruthven to H. Richard Frank, October 31, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 14, MHC.

[79]Ruthven to Smith, October 12, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 16, MHC.

In 1931, Ruthven addressed a primarily Negro audience on the subject of "Pride and Prejudice." Thinking persons should gain patience and hope, he told his audience, "from the obvious fact that in a reasonably short time there will be but one race in the United States. . . . The fact is one of biological inevitables." The vision of the biologist was tempered by the caution of the public figure, for he continued: "Racial changes are slow, can seldom be hurried . . . and may be promoted . . . not by exhibits of pride, by opposition, and by wrangling . . . but by modesty, by faithful performance of duties, and by frank recognition of the characteristics of mankind.[80] Ruthven's preaching to his "colored" friends would today be readily dismissed as a servile "Booker T. Washington" approach to racial inequities, but forty years ago his words were what one would expect from an enlightened leader in higher education.

It is impossible to know the effect of Ruthven's attempts to humanize Michigan. Members of the faculty then have only hazy recollections now of these efforts. Most recall the student teas and the Michigan House Plan as very positive influences in offsetting the impersonality of the large campus. On the other hand, a 1934 report of "Student Understanding and Attitude" showed that only 16 of 103 students felt they were an integral part of the University and just as important as faculty or administration. To the question of, "Do you have a feeling of resentment or rebellion toward University supervision, control, and direction of your conduct other than while in class?" 43

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[80]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Pride and Prejudice," sermon at Second Baptist Church, Ann Arbor, October 18, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 78, MHC.

replied yes; 57 no.[81] Certainly, "paternalism"—the forerunner of "in loco parentis"— was a chronic complaint of The Michigan Daily during the years prior to World War II.

Except for the few who became administrators, those faculty interviewed did not recall other than superficial personal contact with the President. One pointed out that this was not to be expected in a University with almost 1,000 faculty.[82] Another remarked that there was an age differential of approximately twenty years, and thus he didn't expect to see much of the President.[83] A number of those interviewed volunteered their displeasure at the limited faculty-student contact on the campus today.

In retrospect, about the only conclusion that can be drawn from the President's attempt to humanize Michigan is that the idea was noble in conception, but was introduced to the campus at a difficult time. The ancient Greeks found that humanitarian impulses flourished during prosperity and peace; Ruthven's plan to humanize Michigan floundered in the face of Depression exigencies, the inevitable disruptions of war-time, and, finally, the sheer unmanageable numbers of post-war students.

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[81]Report published by Student-Faculty Committee of the Michigan Union, July, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 14, MHC. The report cited polled only men students, and there was no attempt at sampling.

[82]Interview, Hazel Losh, February 11, 1970.

[83]Interview, Robert Cooley Angell, February 4, 1970.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT UNREST

President Ruthven's benign paternalism was received with mixed feeling by the students. Those who recall the Ruthven years agree that most of the students found him genial, fair, and available.[1] The record of those years indicates that he was always willing to advise a student who came to him with troubles. Ruthven recalls that he told his secretary to follow this simple rule when arranging office appointments: "Students get in first, faculty members second, and deans when they can."[2] A Ruthven practice probably aimed at winning student approval was to send a personal letter of announcement to scholarship and prize recipients.[3] In disciplinary cases where feelings ran high the President—as was his wont in any sensitive case—invited the involved student to his office so that they could discuss the matter in person. Probably because of the finality of the written word

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[1]Walter B. Rea remembered that at dusk Ruthven liked to don an old rain hat and tramp the campus with his bulldog, Eleanor, at his heels. He would frequently stop at campus residence halls to chat amiably with the students, some of whom never realized the identity of their visitor until he left. Interview, Walter B. Rea, February 12, 1970.

[2]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 78. Erich Walter agreed that Ruthven was accessible to students but did not think he was more accessible to students than to others. Telephone conversation, May 11, 1970.

[3]See Ruthven to Margaret Dusseau, June 10, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

and the possibility of misunderstanding, Ruthven preferred not to commit himself in print when controversial matters could be discussed face to face.[4]

This is not to say that he was either devious or afraid of conflict. Ruthven did not hesitate to tell a mother that her son was "decidedly lazy."[5] Neither did he hesitate to threaten the dismissal of the son of a friend and wealthy benefactor of the University, for, he told the father, he had been unable to develop in the son "a spirit of loyalty and cooperation which is fundamental in social organization."[6] Throughout the Ruthven Papers, one is struck by the consistency with which Ruthven dealt with pressures from influential people trying to gain favors for students. He would refer the request to the appropriate person or committee and, if the response was negative, he would stand steadfastly behind the decision. When two governors of Michigan, a regent, and several state legislators urged him not to allow the suspension of a student who was academically deficient, his answer was a cold, "We do our best to run the University for those students who can make good use of the facilities provided."[7] In the two notable exceptions in which he overruled a committee decision, Ruthven's conclusion was that the student involved deserved clemency.[8]

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[4]See Ruthven to Lloyd S. Woodburne, January 3, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 32, MHC.

[5]Ruthven to Mrs. A. W. Decker, March 29, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[6]Ruthven to James Inglis, May 14, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 6, MHC.

[7]Ruthven to Hon. John K. Strack, October 2, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 13, MHC.

[8]In one case, Ruthven recommended greater leniency for a

Traditional Concerns: Football, Prohibition, and Student Government

It is surprising that Ruthven did not come to grief with students and alumni because of his attitude on one of their overriding interests: King Football. During the season The Michigan Daily and The Michigan Alumnus covered every aspect of the game, and there is no doubt that the stars of the football team were the mightiest heroes on campus. Ruthven attacked this temple in a manner befitting his deposed predecessor, C. C. Little. Speaking to the National Association of State Universities soon after he became President, he called intercollegiate athletics "public spectacles," and proposed that they be reduced to "voluntary student activities within the physical education program."[9] To Ruthven's surprise, his recommendations fell on deaf ears; he was told he "might as well have kicked the crucifix."[10] Regent Murfin, a football fan, was incensed. "This comes to me like a bolt from the sky," he wrote to Ralph Aigler, Chairman of the Board in Control of Athletics. "If this is the forerunner of a suggestion from

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violator of student automobile regulations, for Ruthven had talked with him, liked his attitude, and thought "he has had a lesson." (Ruthven to Dean Joseph Bursley, February 16, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 3, MHC.) On another occasion Ruthven arbitrarily reinstated a student who had been dismissed from the School of Nursing for drinking intoxicating liquors. This decision resulted in a furor during which the president of the student nurses' governing body disagreed with Ruthven's action; the Director of the School of Nursing resigned in protest; and the President of the Michigan State Nurses Association supported her resignation as a protest against Ruthven's decision. Letters of Karen Dahlberg to Ruthven, October 3, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 31, MHC, and Mabel McNeel to Ruthven, November 9, 1939, ibid.

[9]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Predicts Decline in Athletic Interest," The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVII, No. 9 (1930).

[10]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 54.

him to change the general scheme of things in connection with athletics . . . he is going to meet with some very lively opposition."[11]

Ruthven continued to retain a forlorn, and perhaps naive hope that intercollegiate athletics would return to the simple games of youth which he recalled from his undergraduate days. When Coach Harry Kipke, whose teams had fallen on lean years, was forced to resign in 1937, it seemed that the resulting controversy was of major import to every citizen of the state. Ruthven told Regent David H. Crowley: "I have been so offended at the talk of those groups that I . . . have refused to attend games in recent years, hoping in a small way to indicate that I do not feel that intercollegiate athletics are of paramount importance in an educational institution."[12] It was like trying to stop an eclipse of the sun, for the new Michigan teams under Coach "Fritz" Crisler began to win again and were mentioned as likely participants in the Rose Bowl. "I will oppose such a game to the last ditch," Ruthven vowed, and even after Michigan defeated Southern California 49-0 in the 1948 Rose Bowl, he termed the Rose Bowl arrangement a "mistake."[13]

After the reaction to his tirade at the National Association of State Universities, Ruthven refrained from public exposition of his antipathy to big-time athletics, perhaps content in the knowledge that

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[11]Murfin to Aigler, November 21, 1931, Murfin Papers, box 6, MHC.

[12]Ruthven to Crowley, December 13, 1937, Ruthven Papers, box 23, MHC.

[13]Letters of Ruthven to Edward H. Lauer, November 4, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 35, MHC, and Ruthven to John B. Fuller, December 23, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 59, MHC. Lauer was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington; Fuller was a professor at Ohio State.

Michigan's athletic program, under the gentlemanly Directors of Athletics Fielding Yost and Crisler, was more honorable than most. He never again made athletics an issue with either students or staff and his opinions on the subject were not common knowledge.[14]

The Depression brought an end to the carefree student attitudes so prevalent in the 1920's, but one of the social problems in that era persisted. In February, 1931, local police raided five fraternity houses and discovered bootleg liquor in the rooms. Seventy-nine students were arrested, and Dean of Students Bursley, with the backing of a University Senate committee, closed down the five houses. The Michigan Daily vehemently opposed the severity of the discipline in an editorial sarcastically entitled, "This Liquor-Ridden Campus!"[15]

Many letters from alumni, most applauding the firm action in stamping out "lawlessness," were received by the President. A number of writers noted that practically all college men drink and protested that the action seemed harsh, but one combative ancient voiced prevailing sentiment when he declared: "Were I in Ann Arbor, I should very gladly join a mob to take those young fellows out and publicly whip them at a post."[16]

Ruthven's response, as always, was measured. He replied courteously to those who agreed with the University's position; he told those who disagreed that they "did not have all the facts," and offered

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[14]Interviews with Hazel Losh, February 11, 1970 and Walter B. Rea, February 12, 1970.

[15]Michigan Daily, February 17, 1931, p. 4.

[16]I. W. Smith to Ruthven, February 13, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 3, MHC.

to discuss the matter in person. Thereafter, when anyone asked, the President's posture was that "we have no liquor problem at the University."[17]

The Depression years at Michigan saw the temporary demise of student government. "It wouldn't be far from the truth to state that the Student Council has just about touched the bedrock of zero in campus attention," T. Hawley Tapping reported after a particularly apathetic student government election.[18] Ruthven estimated that only about 600 students had any interest in student government.[19] In the Spring of 1933 the Student Council came to an end when one of two major campus political parties withdrew on the eve of the election.[20] According to Peckham, Dean Bursley's opinion was that most students felt that student government was a carry-over from high school and they had no interest in juvenile politicking. "Bursley's diagnosis," Peckham thought, "has been borne out by . . . thirty-five years of steady and increasing indifference on the part of the majority of students."[21]

As the Depression lengthened, the traditional student concerns of football, fraternities, and student government diminished in significance, and a small but vigorous number of Michigan's students began to focus on social and political concerns.

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[17]See Ruthven to Mrs. Grace Fletcher, July 25, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 9, MHC.

[18]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 25 (1932), p. 483.

[19]Ruthven to Professor H. W. Miller, April 12, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 6, MHC.

[20]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XL, No. 8 (1933), p. 123.

[21]Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 185.

The Leftist Student Groups

The Michigan Socialist Club first drew the attention of The Michigan Alumnus in the Fall of 1931. Editor Tapping observed that the Club's newspaper "shows a daring and a crusading spirit of admirable proportions."[22] The program of the Socialist Club called for the overthrow of campus paternalism, elimination of racial discrimination, free tuition for needy students, and abolition of ROTC.[23]

In 1933 the National Student League (NSL) achieved campus recognition.[24] The League Against War and Militarism, the Student League for Industrial Democracy, and other leftist groups competed for memberships as objectives changed and new alliances were born.[25] These organizations were passionate advocates of anti-war activities and the labor movement. Ruthven thought the groups "amusing" and observed to a curious alumnus, "the members have a good time wrangling with each other."[26]

This cavalier attitude of the administrators toward the nascent leftist organizations was shattered by the publicity ensuing from the participation of thirty-five Michigan students in a May Day, 1934,

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[22]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 5, (1930), p. 93.

[23]The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 29 (1932), p. 575, and Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 (1932), p. 63. ROTC was voluntary and enrolled approximately 500 students.

[24]The NSL had a University of Michigan membership of approximately sixty at its peak (Ann Arbor Daily News, April 11, 1935, p. 1).

[25]Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 189.

[26]Ruthven to Charles Englehard, March 5, 1934, Ruthven Papers, box 11, MHC.

communist demonstration in Detroit. The students involved rented a truck, draped it in a University of Michigan banner and, led by a member of the NSL, rode around downtown Detroit shouting their solidarity with workers and singing the "Internationale." When police requested the students to leave their truck, two students who responded too slowly were hit with blackjacks.[27] "Trouble Seekers Usually Find It," wrote the Daily and the Free Press editorial was equally unsympathetic: "They Got What Was Coming."[28]

Again, public reaction was mixed. The National Student League mounted a letter-writing campaign to protest "police brutality," and also to condemn Ruthven for the quote attributed to him: "When university students create a disturbance, they must take the consequences." Ruthven ignored these protests, but he personally revised the report of the University Committee on Discipline.[29] The committee had found the students "guilty of bad taste, poor judgement, and a regrettable immaturity of attitude," and concluded that any such future action "will be cause for dismissal." Ruthven modified the latter phrase to read "severe disciplinary action."[30]

Nevertheless, the implication was clear: neither the President nor the disciplinary machinery would tolerate any extreme of social or political deviation on the part of the students. This was spelled out

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[27]Michigan Daily, May 2, 1934, p. 1.

[28]Michigan Daily, May 3, 1934, p. 4.; Detroit Free Press, May 3, 1934, p. 6.

[29]This disciplinary committee became a subcommittee of the University Committee on Student Conduct.

[30]"May Day Celebration" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 12, MHC.

in official statements. The Regents voted that a student who did not observe the usual rules of conduct of the University and the community or conducted himself "in such a manner as to make it apparent that he . . . is not a desirable member of the University . . . shall be liable to disciplinary action."[31] The following year, Dr. Ruthven buttressed the Regents' statement: "Attendance at the University of Michigan is a privilege and not a right," he said. "The University reserves the right, and the student concedes to the University the right, to require the withdrawal of any student at any time for any reason deemed sufficient to it."[32]

The latter statement was ex post facto, for earlier in 1935 events involving student activists had so irritated Ruthven that he had taken the unprecedented step of summarily dismissing four students from the University.

Trouble had started in March when British communist John Strachey was denied permission to speak in Hill Auditorium. Strachey's lecture, to be sponsored by the National Student League, had previously been approved by Vice-President Shirley Smith, who had been told that the subject would be international peace.[33] However, Smith changed his mind when the lecture was announced as "The Coming Struggle For Power," and the request was referred to the University Committee on Lecture Policy, which denied permission to speak, saying: "The Committee is

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[31] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, September Meeting, 1934, p. 429.

[32] The President's Report for 1934-1935, pp. 2-3.

[33] Smith to Ascher Opler, February 16, 1935, in "Gag Rule at Michigan," National Student League handbill, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

not convinced of the responsibility of this organization [NSL] to sponsor public lectures in University buildings. . . . "[34] A group of faculty, students, and townspeople was created to sponsor the lecture under different auspices.[35] This proposal was also denied by the Lecture Policy committee, despite a petition by fifty faculty urging "free speech."[36] Strachey came to Ann Arbor on March 14 as scheduled, but his talk to 1,000 people was held off-campus in Granger's ballroom.[37]

Ruthven, who supported the decision of the Lecture Policy committee, received eighty-seven student signatures on petitions protesting the refusal to allow Strachey to speak on-campus.[38]

Following this brouhaha came a peaceful anti-war strike which attracted between 1,000 and 1,200 students.[39] The strikers deserted classes and hanged William Randolph Hearst in effigy as part of their program. Some of those present took the "Oxford Oath" pledging that they would not participate in war.[40]

President Ruthven pooh-poohed the significance of the student's

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[34] Michigan Daily, March 9, 1935, p. 1.

[35] Michigan Daily, March 10, 1935, p. 1. This group included John L. Brumm, chairman of the journalism department; Robert Cooley Angell, later chairman of the sociology department; and Neil Stabler, a future Democratic gubernatorial candidate.

[36] Michigan Daily, March 13, 1935, p. 1.

[37] Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 191.

[38] "National Student League" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[39] Ann Arbor Daily News, April 4, 1935, p. 1.

[40] Ann Arbor Daily News, April 5, 1935, p. 1. (On the same day, 1,200 people listened to Professor Robert Morss Lovett of the University of Chicago speak to a Hill Auditorium peace rally which was sanctioned by the Lecture Policy committee and enjoyed the blessing of the President. Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 191.)

involvement and depreciated their numbers. He insisted that only "about three hundred" had listened to a "professional agitator," that most attended the meeting out of curiosity, and that only a few took the "Oxford Oath."[41] He did, however, release a statement to the newspapers saying that "perversive activities" would not be tolerated, and he added:

> No meetings will be permitted on the campus or in University buildings without permission being first obtained from University authorities. Before granting such permission, the officers of the University will ascertain that such meetings are not subversive in nature, that they will not interfere with the work of the University, and that they will not damage the reputation of the University. . . .[42]

Ruthven's statement, he explained to University of California at Berkeley President Robert Sproul, "had nothing to do with thinking or speaking which had been going on . . . I am referring to 'perversive' and not 'subversive' activities of students."[43] He admitted privately that he was entirely in sympathy with the aims, at least, of the anti-war demonstrators.[44] Letters began to stream into the President's office; most concurred with the resolutions of the Manistee Fraternal Order of Eagles and the De Molai Knights Templars of Grand Rapids that student pacifists were a threat to American patriotism and deserved punishment.[45]

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[41]Ruthven to Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC, and Ruthven to J. H. Schouten, April 19, 1935, "National Student League" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[42]April 15, 1935, "National Student League" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[43]Ruthven to Sproul, May 5, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 16, MHC.

[44]Ruthven to Milton J. Shear, April 29, 1935, "National Student League" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[45]"National Student League" folder, ibid.

At the time of the Strachey incident the President had discussed the matter of student activists with the Conference of Deans and had said then that he felt the University could refuse re-registration on other than academic grounds.[46] At the June meeting of the Regents the Board agreed that "it lay in the President's hands to refuse re-registration to any student who has shown himself to be, in the considered opinion of the President, undesirable as a member of the student body."[47] This appeared to be the only public attention the regents gave to the issue; neither do their private papers indicate that they were involved in discussions regarding leftist students.

Ruthven then conferred with the University's Discipline Committee and informed Deans Kraus and Sadler: "I have decided that [certain leftist students] should be asked not to return to the University. . . ."[48] His letters to the deans cited four active

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[46]"Minutes of the Conference of the President and Deans," March 13, 1935, miscellaneous manuscript material, MHC. Dean Bates concurred with Ruthven, saying that the courts recognized the University's power "where a reasonable ground was present."

[47]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, June Meeting, 1935, p. 627.

[48]Ruthven to Kraus and Ruthven to Sadler, June 21, 1935, "Cohen, Feldman, Fisch, and Osview [sic]" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. The "Rules Concerning Student Affairs, Conduct, and Discipline," revised November 23, 1936, appear ambiguous, yet the President's jurisdiction in disciplinary cases seemed omnipresent. "The President shall exercise such powers of discipline as are inherent in a chief executive and as are necessary in connection with the proper performance of his duties. . . ." (The reference cited was the By-Laws, Chapter II, Section. 2(b), which actually read: "The President of the University shall exercise such general powers as are inherent in a chief executive, for the protection of the interests, and the wise government of the University, the improvement of its standards and functions, and the maintenance of health, diligence, and order among the students. . . .") The 1923 By-Laws were operative until 1936, when E. Blythe Stason began supervising a major revision.

members of the National Student League who had been referred to him as "undesirable" by the Secretary of the Lecture Policy committee. The Discipline Committee and the Conference of Deans, with whom Ruthven had conferred, were unanimous in agreeing that the four students should not be allowed to re-enroll at Michigan.[49] Ruthven later admitted to the University's counsel that he had in mind:

> to establish the precedent . . . that . . . attendance at the University is to be considered a privilege and not a right, especially for out-of-state students. The four boys, is it necessary to say, were from New York and New Jersey and they all belong to one particular persuasion.[50]

He then informed each of the four offenders that "the authorities" had decided that he should not re-enter the University. "It has proved to be impossible," the President wrote, "to persuade you to refrain from interfering with the work of the University and with the work of other students."[51]

The summer Daily reacted in heavy, page one print: "Good Riddance of Bad Rubbish!" The summer Daily called the four students "troublemakers" and praised the "courage" and "indisputable rightness" of the University officials.[52] The Student News, organ of the

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[49]Ruthven to George J. Burke, October 19, 1935, "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[50]Ruthven to Burke, September 21, 1935, ibid.

[51]Letter of July 9, 1935, ibid. The terms "dismissed" and "expelled" were avoided by the University so that the four students would be eligible to enroll elsewhere. (George J. Burke to Nicholas V. Olds, October 28, 1935, ibid.) Burke was the University's attorney; Olds represented the four students.

[52]Summer Michigan Daily, August 1, 1935, p. 1. It is impossible to know whether the summer Daily represented student opinion for, although printed by the students, it was admittedly a "house organ" responsible only to the Dean of the Summer Session (infra., p. 110). A handbill distributed by "A Hundred Michigan Men" warned seven of the

Michigan National Student League, ran a cartoon comparing Ruthven to Hitler.[53]

Three of the four dismissed students reacted in righteous indignation and one, Daniel Cohen, brought suit in Federal Court in Detroit. Cohen complained that he was a student in good standing and expelled with no stated reason and without the customary hearing by the disciplinary committee provided for in the Regents' regulations.[54] Feldman and Fisch, two other dismissed students, were equally combative, and applied for re-admission with the understanding that "agreement to adhere and abide by the rules . . . shall not be construed as a relinquishment . . . of any constitutional or statutory rights guaranteeing free speech, free assemblage, free press and freedom of worship. . . ."[55]

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leftist students by name that they would refrain from their "subversive" activities or "meet with our active disapproval." See "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[53]September 27, 1935, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 1. See "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[54]Clipping from the Trenton (N.J.) Evening Times, November 8, 1935, "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. The attorney for the dismissed student based his case on the By-Laws, 1923, Ch. VI., C, Sec. 3,: "A student may be suspended, dismissed, or expelled by a two-thirds vote of a Disciplinary Committee appointed by the Faculty of the School or College in which he is registered, after a full and impartial hearing before said Committee, and with the approval of the proper Dean." (Nicholas V. Olds to Ruthven, October 18, 1935, "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.) It is interesting to note that this section was removed from the By-Laws when they were revised in 1936.

Cohen's case in Michigan was doomed from the start. Harry Toy, the Michigan Attorney-General, assured University counsel George Burke that he was very glad that the University had taken its stand, and would defend it "all the way." Burke to Ruthven, September 26, 1935, "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[55]Joseph Feldman to Ruthven, September 27, 1935, "Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. Fisch and Cohen wrote identical letters.

All three were denied re-admission.[56] Ovsiew, the fourth student, was contrite and pleaded for re-instatement, saying: "If given another chance, I will refrain from all political activity and social agitation so long as I am a member of the University."[57] Ruthven was pleased with Ovsiew's response and agreed to "sponsor" his case before the "proper administrative authorities."[58] Ovsiew was readmitted.[59]

Where previous controversies had prompted a stream of letters, now the dam burst and a veritable flood of responses poured in. By more than a two to one margin, the reactors opposed the University's decision to dismiss the four students. Libertarian organizations, labor unions, and National Student Leagues at other universities were particularly vehement. A New Republic editorial stated that "the reputation of the University among those whose opinions are worthy of consideration has been badly injured. . . ."[60] Ruthven's standard response to those who disagreed was to say:

> You have been badly misinformed. . . . There has been no desire on the part of the University to curtail freedom of speech but we must insist upon honesty and non-interference with the regular activities of the institution.

The President never deviated from this posture, and judiciously refrained from calling the students "communists"—as many did—or "subversives." Even thirty years later he recalled that the dismissals

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[56]Ruthven to Feldman, Cohen, and Fisch, October 4, 1935, Ibid.

[57]Leon Ovsiew to Ruthven, August 14, 1935, ibid.

[58]Ruthven to Ovsiew, August 17, 1935, ibid.

[59]Ruthven to Ovsiew, February 20, 1936, ibid.

[60]The New Republic, Vol. LXXXIV, No. 1080, August 14, 1935, p. 3.

were based upon breaking University rules and dishonesty.[61]

Neither the University Senate nor the University Council had any comment to offer on the dismissals.[62] In fact, faculty reaction appeared mild. Political scientist James K. Pollock told the President that he had done a "magnificent job" in "literally saving the University."[63]

The precedent once established, in October two more National Student League leaders found guilty of distributing handbills on campus without University authorization were suspended by the Disciplinary Committee. The committee ruled that the two students were guilty of "misguided enthusiasms and bad taste rather than malicious intent" and could be re-admitted after written apologies to their deans.[64]

The purge appeared to break the spirit of the student leftists, for campus turmoil abated. An "avowed communist," Scott Nearing, and socialist Norman Thomas spoke without incident in campus auditoriums during 1936.[65] In 1937 a chapter of the National American Student Union was recognized, and, soon after, a Young Communist League succeeded the National Student League. Student activists were concerned with the Spanish Civil War, and the growing militarism of Hitler and Mussolini. In the Spring of 1937, 1,500 students assembled in a

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[61]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 94-95. The intervening years apparently dimmed Dr. Ruthven's memory; he remembered the student dismissals as "after the war."

[62]University of Michigan Council and Senate Records, 1934-1936.

[63]Pollock to Ruthven, August 3, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 19, MHC.

[64]"Cohen, et al." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[65]Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 193.

peaceful anti-war demonstration. Classes were dismissed at eleven o'clock so that students could march and listen to speeches. The ROTC band led the marchers![66] The Michigan Daily and the Student Religious Association sponsored a "Peace Poll"; of the 1,821 respondents, only 202 said that they would support the United States in "any war."[67] A later poll by the Bureau of Student Opinion revealed that most students did not support a European war even if it appeared that Germany was defeating France and England.[68]

Unexpectedly, in the Spring of 1940, history repeated. The student paper reported no spectacular incidents comparable to those preceding the 1935 dismissals, but President Ruthven and his advisors must have grown increasingly alarmed as the American Student Union, an activist group of the student left, gained a growing following in campus politics. Its candidate for the Student Senate, Harvey Goodman, polled 162 votes, sufficient for election.[69] Another member of the American Student Union, Hugo Reichard, was elected vice-president of the Student Senate.[70]

In his Commencement Address of 1940, Ruthven issued the following warning:

> Michigan welcomes any students who are convinced that democracy is the ideal form of government for a civilized people . . . [The

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[66] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLIII, No. 20 (1937), p. 391.

[67] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLIV, No. 20 (1937), p. 124. Of the students polled, 360 said they would support their country in "no war"; 1,259 agreed they would "defend continental United States."

[68] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLVI, No. 7 (1939), p. 150.

[69] Michigan Daily, April 28, 1940, p. 1.

[70] Michigan Daily, May 3, 1940, p. 1.

University] will deal firmly, without fear or favor, with subversive, or so-called 'fifth column' activities.[71]

On June 18 the President sent this blunt letter to twelve Michigan students: "It is the decision of the authorities of the University of Michigan that you cannot be readmitted to the University." Five other students were told by Dr. Ruthven that they could not enroll in the Fall "except with my approval"; they were to request an interview with the President if they wished re-instatement. None of the seventeen students was told why he was not to return; none had had a previous warning; and none was offered a hearing. The students and their parents who responded—two were never heard from again—were shocked and alarmed, and most requested that the reasons for the action be enumerated. Those who requested a hearing were told that the President or one of the student service deans would be pleased to meet with them.[72]

Two of the seventeen were Negroes; many of the group were members of the American Student Union. All but one of the seventeen were in no academic difficulty. The Ruthven Papers do not shed much light on the reasons for dismissal. Perhaps the best clue is found in undated papers in the handwriting of Assistant Dean of Students Walter B. Rea. The names of each of the seventeen offenders were listed with some of their activities following. "Active in the promotion of the rights of colored people," "active in ASU," "displayed radical attitude,"

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[71]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Never to Grow Old," Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review, Vol. XLVI, No. 24 (1940), p. 316.

[72]"Correspondence with Dismissed Students and with Office of the Dean of Students" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. The decisions on three of the twelve dismissed students were eventually rescinded and they were allowed to re-enroll in the Fall.

"distributed handbills in dorms," "attended CIO meetings," were apparently some of the more damning charges against the students.[73] Perhaps the most straightforward explanation was provided by Alice C. Lloyd. "She organized the distribution of pamphlets at the dormitory," the Dean of Women told the mother of a dismissed girl. "In addition, she and several other students used one of the University buildings on a Sunday afternoon, when the building was supposed to be closed, for a meeting."[74]

President Ruthven claimed that the University had "made no inquiry as to the membership of these individuals in any organization, nor as to their political beliefs."[75] "We did not know that they belonged to the American Student Union or any other organization," he claimed.[76]

During the summer, as requests for an interpretation of the University's action mounted, no explanations were proffered. Ruthven's stock response to questions was that the dismissed individuals "were interfering seriously with the work of other students." He would say no more, and remained "as silent as the pillars of Angell Hall," according to The Michigan Daily.[77] Ruthven stated privately to

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Alice C. Lloyd to Sarah Rosenbaum, July 5, 1940, ibid. The uncle of the student in question, Hilda Rosenbaum, was Yale Law School professor, Eugene V. Rostow. Rostow told Ruthven that his action "deprives these boys and girls of the essence of fair play." Rostow to Ruthven, August 28, 1940, ibid.

[75] Ruthven to Honorable John D. Dingell, United States House of Representatives, August 9, 1940, "Favorable Comments A-L" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[76] Ruthven to M. J. Robinson, November 27, 1940, "Favorable Comments M-Z" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[77] Michigan Daily, October 3, 1940, p. 4.

Professor John P. Dawson that one reason he would not make specific statements was "because this would mean the revealing of sources of information which, for the present at least, cannot be disclosed."[78] The papers on the case indicate that the President was in contact with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at this time.[79] Ruthven retired to his summer home in Frankfurt, Michigan, and kept in contact with Assistant Dean Rea, who was conferring with many of the seventeen students and their parents, as well as fielding questions from the press.

Once again the University was careful to point out that the students were "asked not to return" rather than "expelled"; this distinction allowed them to enroll in other universities. President Ruthven also insisted that to give the students an open hearing before the usual University disciplinary bodies would be "unkind," for they would then almost certainly be expelled and their futures would be jeopardized.[80] Most of those who were refused admission eventually matriculated elsewhere.

On and, particularly, off the campus the pot began to boil.

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[78]Ruthven to Dawson, August 8, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 34, MHC. In an earlier letter Dawson, a member of the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA), made reference to the President having obtained, prior to the dismissal of the twelve students, faculty support in SACUA for dismissing "communist" students, "who conspired to commit sabotage." Dawson to Ruthven, July 16, 1940, ibid.

[79]John S. Bugas to Ruthven, February 12, 1941, "Miscellaneous Correspondence, Statements, and Printed and Mimeographed Material" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. Bugas was the FBI agent in charge of the case.

[80]Ruthven to Walter Agard, October 3, 1940, "Unfavorable Comments A-L" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. Agard was a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

The dismissals were page one news in Ann Arbor and in Detroit.[81] The local editor regarded the University position approvingly: "Emissaries of organized revolution from the East or elsewhere carrying out dictates from abroad cannot be permitted to use the University as a tool."[82] A Free Press editorial called the action a "purge . . . and a highly timely one." It, too, spoke of the "ingratitude" of the easterners.[83] The summer Daily did not mention the case of the dismissed students until June 29. Then there appeared in the public letter column a letter by Bill Gram, '42 supporting the University's action and attacking "radical" students.[84] The Michigan Committee for Academic Freedom claimed that Gram "later admitted that the letter was neither of his own composition nor sent in of his own volition."[85] The summer Daily offered no editorial comment on the dismissals. Apparently the student government did not react either.[86]

The Nation called the University decision a "cold, calculated effort to silence a sizable group by the decapitation of a few." The author, S. R. Kaye, charged that four of the dismissed students, all

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[81] Ann Arbor News, June 27, 1940, p. 1; Detroit Free Press, June 27, 1940, p. 1.

[82] Ann Arbor News, July 4, 1940, p. 4.

[83] Detroit Free Press, June 28, 1940, p. 6.

[84] Summer Michigan Daily, June 29, 1940, p. 2.

[85] "Without Fear of Favor," pamphlet published by the Michigan Committee for Academic Freedom, September 1940, "Miscellaneous Correspondence, etc." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. Gram was the son of Lewis M. Gram, Director of Plant Extension.

[86] "Minutes of the Student Senate," miscellaneous manuscript material, MHC. These files are fragmentary, but include most meetings in 1940-1941.

freshmen, had helped to organize a CIO union among the University's 3,000 non-academic employees and had been barred for that reason. Kaye further charged that Ruthven, who "yearns to achieve the reputation of a liberal educator," had been unduly influenced by "a group of reactionary aides."[87]

Hundreds of letters, petitions, telegrams, and resolutions again flooded the President's office from all over the United States. Again, the opposition to the University's action outnumbered the support. Many of the writers either asked or demanded that the President state the University's reasons for dismissal and grant the students an open hearing.

"It seems to me that the situation is reaching a point where some sort of definitive statement from you would serve to clear the air," Provost E. Blythe Stason wrote to Ruthven.[88] Ruthven agreed, and in October, as the Fall semester convened, a public statement was issued. Calling the dismissals "the unanimous decision of the administrative officers in charge of student affairs," it refuted the charges that the dismissals were politically inspired. "All who asked for conferences have been heard by proper University authorities," the statement went on. The reason for the dismissals? "These students were not good University citizens, and as guests of the state they had abused the hospitality extended them."[89]

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[87]"Ann Arbor Hysteria," The Nation, Vol. CLI, No. 11 (1940), p. 215.

[88]Stason to Ruthven, September 6, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 36, MHC.

[89]"Correspondence With Dismissed Students, etc." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC. All of the 1940 offenders who were not

When this pronouncement did little to explain matters, Dr. Ruthven told the Fall meeting of the University Council and University Senate of the ways in which the dismissed students had disrupted the University:

1. Misrepresentation of residence as a result of which the State of Michigan was cheated out of non-resident tuition.
2. Falsification of applications for facilities and opportunities to hold meetings.
3. Attempts to interfere seriously with the operation of residence halls.
4. Interference with the work of freshmen to such an extent that some of them had to leave the University.
5. Jamming locks on University buildings to permit the holding of unauthorized meetings.
6. Attempts to incite racial antagonisms in Ann Arbor to the distress of students who are working with the University authorities to eliminate intolerance.
7. Flagrant dishonesty in conferences with University officials.

These students, Ruthven told the faculty, "interpret their civil rights to include license to do anything they want to do on the plea that they are 'liberals'. This is a perverted concept of civil liberties and not 'liberalism' in the best sense of the term."[90]

Following Ruthven's explanations, the Senate and the Council did not speak directly to the matter of the dismissed students, but the Council did receive without comment "a communication . . . from certain members of the faculty who expressed concern over the recent dismissal of certain students."[91] This, and a later call from Professor Preston W. Slosson for "a general code governing student activities" appear to

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permitted to re-register and all of the students dismissed in 1935 were from out-of-state.

[90]"Statement to the University Senate and University Council," undated, Fall, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 84, MHC.

[91]University of Michigan Council and Senate Records, 1936-1941, October 14, 1940 meeting, p. 56.

be the only faculty response to the matter.[92] There is nothing in the minutes of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to indicate that group's concern.[93]

At the September Regents' meeting a delegation appeared to demand a hearing for the dismissed students. The Regents expressed the "informal and apparently unanimous" view that "a hearing should not be held because the President had acted in accord with the Regents' views . . . and the case was to be regarded as closed when the President acted."[94] This was the Board's only formal consideration of the matter.

The Fall semester proceeded. Tom Harmon led the all-conquering football team, many of the dismissed students had enrolled elsewhere, and those students who did return were apparently bound by a pledge to Dr. Ruthven to refrain from political activities.[95]

The uneasy quiet was broken by the Michigan Committee for Academic Freedom. This group determined that the dismissed students must receive a trial and, after the Masonic Temple, the Methodist Church, the high school, the County Building, and the Armory had refused permission, it was finally agreed that the Committee would sponsor a public meeting and mock trial at Island Park in Ann Arbor on November

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[92]"The Report of the Senate Advisory Committee On University Affairs," February 1941, in L. S. & A. Faculty Minutes, 1939-1941, p. 708.

[93]Papers of the Michigan Chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

[94]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, September Meeting, 1940, p. 377.

[95]See the case of Roger Lawn, "Correspondence With Dismissed Students, etc." folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

ninth. The Ann Arbor News reported: "After hearing 'evidence' presented by two 'ousted' students and by students still at the University, the 'jury' returned a verdict accusing the University of disciplining its students "for exercising their civil rights and democratic liberties."[96]

There was no official response to the Island Park meeting, but when the Daily editorial staff published a letter from the Chairman of the American Student Union containing excerpts from The Nation article of September 14, two editors were suspended for one week by the Board in Control of Student Publications and ordered to publicly apologize.[98]

On December 7, the Discipline Committee of the University Committee on Student Conduct suspended the American Student Union indefinitely.[99] As the European war gained momentum and American involvement appeared imminent, student activism took a back seat to military preparedness.

The Michigan Daily

Disciplinary measures against leftist students caused sporadic outbursts of passion, but President Ruthven's most persistent problem

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[96] Ann Arbor News, November 11, 1940, p. 5.

[97] Michigan Daily, November 10, 1940, p. 1.

[98] Michigan Daily, November 26, 1940, p. 4, and December 5, 1940, p. 4. The offending article pointed out Regent Harry Kipke's ties with the controversial Harry Bennett of the Ford Motor Company and also remarked on the preponderance of corporation executives on the Board. The disciplinary case was initiated by the Student Judiciary Board and unanimously supported by the faculty Discipline Committee. (Ruthven to Roland Goodman, January 29, 1941, "Discipline of Michigan Daily, American Student Union" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.) One suspended from the Daily was Managing Editor Hervie Haufler, who upon his reinstatement, suspended two other editors for a "libelous article." Ibid.

[99] Michigan Daily, December 7, 1940, p. 1.

with the students was undoubtedly the student newspaper. Very soon after he became President, Ruthven told the Daily editor that "certain articles" had caused the public to send him "a storm of letters." He did not want the editor to resign, Ruthven assured him, but he was concerned that "we all do what we can to keep the University from being misrepresented to the public."[100]

In the Spring of 1931 the chairman of the Board in Control of Student Publications told the President that he supported present policy of allowing articles to go "uncensored," for a "sound student criticism" would be beneficial.[101] Ruthven appeared to share this opinion, for he told a parent who wanted careful boundaries to the Daily's prose: "It is educationally a dangerous practice to curb too much the thinking and talking of students. . . . The proportion of students who say things carelessly is very small—I sometimes think too small."[102] Still, when piqued, the President struck at the source of his irritation. "I cannot refrain from expressing my disappointment in this morning's Daily," he told its editor. "It deliberately, and apparently maliciously, misinterpreted the aims, motives, and actions of the administration."[103] That Fall a trio of crusading seniors

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[100]Ruthven to George Tilley, December 4, 1929, Ruthven Papers, box 1, MHC.

[101]Robert Cooley Angell to Ruthven, March 20, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 3, MHC.

[102]Ruthven to H. C. Jones, March 31, 1931, ibid.

[103]Ruthven to Henry Merry, February 17, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 4, MHC. The Daily article condemned administrative disciplinary measures against five fraternities and accused the administration of attempting to please the state legislature at the expense of the apprehended students. (supra, p. 87.)

introduced a series of articles attacking the national American Legion convention for public drunkenness, exposing the exorbitant rates of Ann Arbor taxi drivers, and charging that a Buildings and Grounds foreman required his men to buy homes in a subdivision which he owned.[104]

Vice-President Shirley Smith, a lifetime antagonist of the Daily, temporarily cancelled the 917 faculty subscriptions for which the University paid the Daily $3,600. The Managing Editor, Richard L. Tobin, was temporarily suspended.[105] The Board in Control of Student Publications decried Smith's high-handed action, saying, "If we are not really the Board in Control, we might as well all resign."[106]

Ruthven continued to be ambivalent about the student paper throughout his presidency. He expressed the classic administrator's dilemma when he wrote to ex-regent Edmund Shields and future regent Frederick C. Matthaei. "I am really ashamed of myself that after ten years I am no nearer the solution of the problem than I was at the beginning. . . . ," he told Shields. "All we can do is offer advice and counsel. If we undertake to supervise the paper more closely . . . there is not only an uproar in the student body but also considerable criticism . . . from newspaper men."[107] "On the other hand," he told Matthaei, "whenever the boys and girls step on someone's toes, there

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[104] Michigan Daily, September 30, 1931, p. 4; October 1, 1931, p. 1.

[105] Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 185. Tobin is now Associate Publisher of the Saturday Review.

[106] Robert Cooley Angell to Ruthven, October 5, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 6, MHC.

[107] Ruthven to Shields, February 3, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 32, MHC.

are violent protests out of all proportion to the importance of the paper as a news agency."[108]

Ruthven attempted to resolve this dilemma through influencing the agencies which supervised the student press. In 1931, the Regents approved an "experimental" plan "whereby the Summer Michigan Daily shall be edited and managed in a manner satisfactory to the Dean of the Summer Session."[109] The following year the Regents agreed to continue this plan.[110]

The Board in Control of Student Publications, as its name implied, was the supervising agency for the student paper. The Board in Control was composed of three faculty, including the chairman, three students, and the Dean of Students, ex-officio. The faculty members were appointed by the President; the students were elected by campus-wide ballot. The Board in Control appointed each Managing Editor from a list of nominees supplied by the Daily's outgoing editors. When President Ruthven first inquired as to the extent of the Board's control, he was told by its chairman: "It has not been our notion that we were in any way to censor the publication. . . . We wish it distinctly understood . . . that we cannot guarantee to prevent the publication of items which may offend certain individuals."[111]

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[108]Ruthven to Matthaei, February 16, 1944, Ruthven Papers, box 46, MHC.

[109]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, December Meeting, 1931, pp. 836-837.

[110]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, December Meeting, 1932, p. 87.

[111]Angell to Ruthven, October 5, 1931, Ruthven Papers, box 6, MHC.

In 1932 Dr. Ruthven named Professor Louis A. Strauss chairman of the Board in Control. Ruthven told him:

> Somehow we must make clear the obligations and responsibilities of the Daily staff . . . There is such a thing, of course, as freedom of the press but this has nothing to do with the type of relationship which should exist between the paper and the institution which owns it. It is an anomalous situation to have the official paper of an institution devoting space to attacks on the institution. . . .[112]

The following year The Michigan Alumnus published a lengthy article by Professor Strauss explaining the changes which the Board in Control had initiated under his leadership. The new policy was a "hard line."

> The editors of the Daily and other publications understand that they are answerable to the Board for what appears in their columns. They realize that they stand in danger of losing their positions if their work is displeasing to . . . the Board which appoints them.

Strauss further said that the Daily was regarded by many as the official journal of the University, its ownership was vested in the Board of Regents, and thus the relation of the editors to the University was "virtually the same as that of the editors of a privately owned newspaper to its proprietor." If the student editors did not agree to University policy, Strauss implied, "they may resign or be discharged. No question of censorship is involved, for there is no imposition of external authority. It is, so to speak, a family affair." To be sure that there was no question as to who the head of the family would be, Strauss called for the addition to the Board in Control of two alumni advisors appointed by the president.[113] Two newspapermen, Lee White

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[112]Ruthven to Strauss, June 13, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 7, MHC.

[113]"Publication Policies are Stated," The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XXXIX, No. 29 (1933).

and Stuart Perry, were named to the Board, ex-officio, shortly thereafter.[114]

Strauss's statement seemed to leave little doubt as to the nature of The Michigan Daily. President Ruthven, however, continued to exert pressure. "To me it is very distressing that an official University publication cannot be kept closer to the University and serve the institution," he told Strauss. He added that the University needed "the facts which an organization paper should furnish, but in my opinion we do not need a newspaper in the usual meaning of the term."[115]

The Board in Control must have exerted a positive influence, for in 1937 the Associated Collegiate Press named the Daily a "pacemaker" for the third consecutive year. It was one of seven selected from 355 college papers submitted.[116]

Also in 1937 Ruthven reported to Strauss that it was the feeling of the Board of Regents that the Daily should change the heading on the editorial page to read that the paper is published "by the students of the University of Michigan" instead of "by the Board in Control of Student Publications." He also suggested that each student writer affix his school or college, his class, and his name to any editorial.[117] By the following fall this became Daily policy; as Peckham reported, "The editorials now carried no more weight than letters to the editor."[118]

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[114] University of Michigan Council and Senate Records, 1932-1934, p. 93.

[115] Ruthven to Strauss, April 4, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 16, MHC.

[116] The Michigan Alumnus, Vol. XLIII, No. 20 (1937), p. 391

[117] Ruthven to Strauss, February 2, 1937, Ruthven Papers, box 21, MHC.

[118] Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 194.

President Ruthven still was not appeased. Corresponding with Stuart H. Perry, editor of The Adrian Telegram and alumnus advisor to the Board in Control, Ruthven proposed "a director of student publications."[119] What he had in mind, the President later explained, was a coach for the Daily similar to a coach for the football team.[120]

Apparently the students retaliated as best they could. When the President forcefully told the New York City alumni that university administrators should encourage students to question the status quo, the Daily began to publish this excerpt from his speech under its masthead:

> It is important for society to avoid the neglect of adults, but positively dangerous for it to thwart the ambition of youth to reform the world. Only the schools which act on this belief are educational institutions in the best meaning of the term.[121]

In 1939, Vice-President Shirley Smith complained to the President that an "oligarchy" of student editors had been protesting the journalistic restrictions to the Board in Control and to the Regents.[122]

In October, 1940, the University Council received the report of Professor Axel Marin, who had headed a special committee appointed by President Ruthven to study the educational value of student

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[119]Ruthven to Perry, July 10, 1937, Ruthven Papers, box 25, MHC. Ruthven went on to suggest to Perry: "I wish the suggestion could come from the board to me rather than to the board from me."

[120]Ruthven to Frederick B. Richardson, October 9, 1944, Ruthven Papers, box 50, MHC.

[121]Alexander G. Ruthven, "The Red Schoolhouse," The Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review, Spring, 1938. In the fall of 1938 Ruthven asked the Managing Editor of the Daily to cease quoting this speech. Robert Mitchell to Ruthven, September 20, 1938, Ruthven Papers, box 28, MHC.

[122]Smith to Ruthven, April 19, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 29, MHC.

publications. The Marin committee endorsed the 1933 Strauss report, and further recommended the strengthening of the Board in Control of Student Publications by the addition of two University Senate members appointed by the president. Marin's committee also recommended that the two alumni advisors become full voting members of the Board in Control. At the same time the Daily editors, who had cooperated with Marin's committee, enumerated a comprehensive set of publishing regulations which became part of the Marin committee report. The University Council endorsed the Marin committee report in its entirety.[123]

The following May, at the request of thirty members of the University Senate, a special meeting of that body deliberated a petition of the thirty which called for an investigation as to how the University Council's endorsement of the Marin committee report would effect educational policy. The request of the thirty petitioners was not approved by the Senate.[124]

At the May meeting of the Regents, the President announced he had received "a petition of several thousand names opposing the action of the Regents in increasing the number of faculty representatives on the Board in Control of Student Publications."[125] At least seven former editors of the Daily wrote to Dr. Ruthven protesting the "packing" of the Board in Control.[126] The President and the Board of Regents held

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[123] University of Michigan Council and Senate Records, 1936-1941, pp. 57-58.

[124] Ibid., pp. 112-118.

[125] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, May Meeting, 1941, p. 601.

[126] See Burton R. Benjamin to Ruthven, May 5, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 35, MHC.

firm, and the revised Board in Control was legalized in the revised By-laws.[127]

The University Senate then reversed itself and, with an eye to asking the Board of Regents to reconsider its action, asked to review the University Council's endorsement of the Marin committee report. The Senate reminded the Regents that it had the right to review actions by the University Council.[128] The Board of Regents responded by telling the Senate that the additional appointments to the Board in Control could be postponed no longer; however, any future Senate advice regarding student publications would receive "careful consideration."[129] There the matter rested.

Once again, the students retaliated as best they could. The Daily on January 19, 1943, carried a front-page picture of a student pasting copy paper over the word "Student" on the facade of the building previously named "Student Publications University of Michigan." The student paper lodged a vehement protest against the Board in Control, and an accompanying page one article asked for the resignation of the Board's chairman, Professor G. E. Densmore. Densmore, the Managing Editor charged, had little respect among the students, knew little about the Daily's operations, and "appears to act on the assumption that any protest . . . necessarily means a flaw in The Daily." The battle between the Daily's editors and the Board in Control raged throughout

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[127] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, June Meeting, 1941, p. 666.

[128] University of Michigan Council and Senate Records, 1936-1941, p. 120.

[129] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, June Meeting, 1941, p. 666.

the pages of the paper during much of January. "Board Cripples Michigan Daily," charged eight retiring editors and five incoming editors in another front-page editorial. The student editors were umusually indignant because the Board refused to approve the appointment of "one of the most deserving applicants on the staff."[130] The editors followed this with another sally: "If the present trend of Board policies continues you will soon be reading a Daily which says only what it is told to say, and it will not be able to do that very well."[131] The Daily garnered considerable campus reinforcement for its defiant stand, but the Board's membership remained unaltered.

There was one more attempt to subjugate The Michigan Daily. The Regents acted upon President Ruthven's long-standing idea that the Daily have a "coach." This person, the Regents explained, was not to be responsible for the content of student publications; rather, he was to guide the fledgling journalists in their tryouts for Daily positions so that they might have "a deepened sense of responsibility and more discerning judgement."[132] Despite the objections of at least one staff member to the plan, Ruthven went ahead and Donald Hamilton Haines was appointed to the position.[133]

This ended Ruthven's prolonged struggle with the student paper. After the war, he noted, a "different crowd . . . much more concerned

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[130] Michigan Daily, January 17, 1943.

[131] Michigan Daily, January 19, 1943, p. 2.

[132] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, October Meeting, 1944 pp. 703-704.

[133] Interview, Erich Walter, February 24, 1970. Walter disapproved.

about world affairs than about things nearer home" took over the student publications.[134] The President never felt that he was the winner of this struggle; he admitted that the "annoying" problem of the Daily was never resolved and probably never would be.[135] One of his closest advisors, Erich Walter, concurred with his chief's conclusion; Walter remembers that the Daily was a "hair shirt" which Ruthven could not escape.[136]

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[134]Ruthven to Junius B. Wood, March 7, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 56, MHC.

[135]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 3, 1970.

[136]Interview, Erich Walter, February 24, 1970.

CHAPTER VI

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic freedom was a luxury not afforded students during the years when Dr. Ruthven was President of Michigan, but the precepts of academic freedom for faculty had clearly emerged by then. When the national American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was founded in 1915 the University of Michigan had already experienced one shattering example of what could be called an abuse of academic freedom and it would soon experience another.

The University's first president, Henry Philip Tappan, a brilliant scholar and educator who possessed vision and vigor in equal parts was unceremoniously removed from the presidency by the Board of Regents. There was little question of Tappan's leadership or abilities; among other reasons the Regents had taken offense at Tappan's "eastern" behavior—his thoughts and actions were too progressive for the mid-west of that time.[1]

During World War I, anti-German sentiment in the state and in Ann Arbor, a city with many German families, reached such a crescendo

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[1]The best work concerning Tappan is Charles M. Perry, Henry Philip Tappan: Philosopher and University President (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933). See also the Tappan Papers, 3 vols., MHC; Papers of Alexander Winchell, Vol. 3, MHC; Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White, Vol. I (New York: The Century Co., 1905), Ch. XVI, pp. 266-283; Paul E. Ligenfelter, "The Firing of Henry Philip Tappan, University Builder," MHC; and the usual University histories.

that the Regents in 1917 summarily dismissed a member of the German department. The following year the Regents granted a leave of absence to another member of the German department "indefinitely"; when he attempted to reclaim his position his request was refused.[2]

However, when Dr. Ruthven assumed the Michigan presidency the academic freedom of the faculty was not a primary concern. President Little had encouraged freewheeling expression and President Ruthven, a respected colleague, was expected by the faculty to at least defend freedom of expression if he did not promote it. Ruthven's early efforts to include faculty in democratic governance strengthened this belief, and so did his written and oral pronouncements.

John L. Lovett was General Manager of the Michigan Manufacturer's Association and self-appointed watchdog of the Michigan faculty. When he complained to Ruthven that University professors were preparing a state tax bill without prior clearance from Alfred P. Sloan, President of General Motors, Ruthven said this in reply:

> It will doubtless always be true that university professors will make statements which do not meet with general approval . . . I insist that the university can be a service institution and that information can be given to any citizen if it is requested. . . . I insist, further, that any man on the faculty has entire freedom to express his opinion if the opinion is the result of careful investigation and study. Even carefully considered opinions will from time to time be irritating. This cannot be helped and should, in the long run, prove of benefit. A properly constituted university faculty is composed of men who are going down the road of social progress at least a mile ahead of the institutions of society. These men are, or should be, trail blazers and it is not always going to be easy to follow them.[3]

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[2]See Smith, Harry Burns Hutchins, pp. 198-200; Papers of Harry Burns Hutchins, boxes 35-45, MHC; and the usual University histories.

[3]Ruthven to Lovett, October 20, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 9, MHC.

When the chairman of the Associated Technical Societies of Detroit asked the President to explain the University's attitude "regarding the political persuasions of its teachers," Ruthven responded:

> The University does not pay any attention to the political affiliations of its teachers. . . . The only thing that is insisted upon is that the men shall teach their subjects and not use the class rooms as political forums. So meticulous is the faculty on this score that I honestly think some times they are too conservative . . . The popular conception is that universities are centers of radicalism. As a matter of fact, they are centers of ultra-conservatism.[4]

Those faculty who attempted to break away from the "centers of ultra-conservatism" sometimes found their iconoclasm reported to President Ruthven. English professors were especially vulnerable, particularly if their required reading lists challenged convention. A minister denounced the "unmitigated filth" of John Dos Passos' U.S.A.; a parent claimed that the University was "being used as a tool of undemocratic and subversive propaganda" because his daughter was assigned the New Republic; the same magazine aroused the concern of a national congressman.[5] Ruthven's standard response to these protestations was to give the complaint to the departmental chairman and suggest that he respond. His own attitude was spelled out succinctly:

> It seems to us here at the University that it is only fair to the students to present both sides of every question . . . . We have little sympathy with the attitude that our young people should have their minds developed by propaganda. . . . This is the method of totalitarianism.[6]

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[4]Ruthven to C. W. Ditchy, February 9, 1933, Ruthven Papers, box 8, MHC.

[5]Rev. A. C. Hueter to Ruthven, April 18, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 27, MHC; William C. Dudgeon to Ruthven, February 22, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 34, MHC; Ruthven to Hon. George A. Dondero, November 11, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

[6]Ruthven to Dondero, November 11, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

"Communists"

The Depression years brought disillusionment with democracy for many people; some sought answers in other ideologies. Sagendorph devoted a whole chapter to the incursion of radical thought at the University during this time, not only among the students, but also within the faculty.[7] "Among the younger instructors," he noted, "there were many with radical views."[8] When rumors raced about the state that "socialists" or "communists" dominated the University, President Ruthven was sure to hear from those citizens who felt particularly threatened by the galloping gossip.

Faculty watchdog John L. Lovett wrote again requesting verbatim reports of class discussions on a New Deal course offered in the School of Business Administration. Ruthven's Orders to his secretary were:

> Please tell Jamison [the instructor of the course] that I do not believe a stenographic report of the New Deal lectures should be supplied to anyone. . . . If, as I think most probable, the material is wanted as a basis for criticizing the faculty then Lovett should come out and listen to the talks.[9]

Probably the most dramatic encounter during Depression days involved Wesley Maurer, a young instructor. Maurer had already achieved a reputation as an outspoken advocate of liberal ideas when he was asked to debate Malcolm W. Bingay, an editor of The Detroit Free Press, on the topic "Freedom of the Press." On February 24, 1935, Maurer confronted Bingay in a crowded church in Detroit. According to Maurer, Bingay treated their topic in a "Fourth of July" manner, whereas his

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[7]See Ch. XVIII, "Crisis Marks The Centennial" in Sagendorph, Michigan: The Story of the University.

[8]Ibid., p. 332

[9]Note of Alexander G. Ruthven, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC.

own forthright rebuttal challenged many of the current assumptions of the "establishment," particularly those of bankers and newspapermen. Bingay, incensed, charged that Maurer had, in effect, called him a "murderer, liar, cheat, and a thief," and Maurer then joined the verbal donnybrook by saying, "Mr. Bingay, being an authoritarian, can't stand criticism."[10] Bingay carried his counter-attack to his "Good Morning" column, where he associated Maurer's "fuzzy opinions" with communism. "What are the taxpayers paying for?" he queried.[11] Bingay returned to Maurer in a later column, calling him "the parlor pink of the University of Michigan School of Journalism."[12]

The resulting furor did not escape President Ruthven.[13] Fortunately for the young instructor, over twenty people who had attended the church debate wrote to either Ruthven, John Brumm, chairman of the journalism department, or Maurer, denouncing Bingay's behavior in the church and in his column. There were a few who demanded Maurer's resignation but, as Dr. Ruthven noted on his tally-sheet of responses, they had not attended the debate but had instead taken their cue from Bingay's column. Unfortunately for Maurer, Regent Murfin wanted him fired.[14] Ruthven read Maurer's manuscript carefully, and then he forwarded it to Dean Kraus and some of the Law School faculty for their

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[10]Interview, Wesley Maurer, February 20, 1970.

[11]Detroit Free Press, February 26, 1935, p. 6.

[12]Detroit Free Press, February 27, 1935, p. 6.

[13]See "Maurer" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC.

[14]Murfin to Ralph Stone, March 7, 1935, Murfin Papers, box 8, MHC, and Murfin to Ruthven, March 7, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC.

scrutiny.[15] Ruthven's opinion was probably most candidly expressed in a letter which was dictated but not sent to Dean Kraus:

> I hold firmly to the opinion that a member of the staff has a right to express his own opinions and I shall defend that right.
>
> I wish to record with you, however, my opinion, which is the opinion of the Board of Regents . . . that Mr. Maurer's talk was ill-timed, in poor taste, and delivered under unfortunate circumstances.[16]

Ruthven called Maurer to his office, told him that he had been foolish to tangle with a journalist who would undoubtedly have the last word, and urged him to "keep his mouth shut" until the criticism abated.[17] To pacify the troubled regents he sent them copies of Maurer's manuscript and his own tally-sheet which showed that most of his correspondents favored Maurer's side of the argument. Then, to reinforce the relationship—already worn thin by previous abrasions—between the journalism department and the newspaper editors of the state, Ruthven called them together—sans Maurer—so that they could discuss their differences.[18]

Among those citizens threatened by the "communists" were some of the regents. On October 31, 1936, The Detroit Free Press reported the results of a faculty political poll which was conducted by the Daily. The paper reported presidential preferences as follows: Alfred

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[15]Interview, Wesley Maurer, February 20, 1970.

[16]See "Maurer" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 15, MHC.

[17]Interview, Wesley Maurer, February 20, 1970.

[18]This story had a happy ending. Ruthven eventually appointed Maurer to head the journalism department, and Bingay—a lifetime skeptic of the University—finally succumbed to Ruthven's personal charm. See Ruthven-Bingay correspondence, Ruthven Papers, box 41, MHC.

Landon, 276 votes; Franklin D. Roosevelt, 271 votes; Norman Thomas, 33 votes; and Earl Browder, 10 votes.[19] It didn't matter to Regent Murfin that the Communist Party was not illegal, or that the communist, Browder, received only ten votes. "If we do have communists on the faculty I think they should be eliminated," Murfin publicly threatened.[20] Murfin immediately wrote the rest of the regents that "we should seek to ascertain who are these gentlemen and when we shall have learned that drop them from the payroll."[21] The Murfin Papers indicate that regents Richard R. Smith, Franklin M. Cook, and Charles F. Hemans fully supported Murfin's stand and urged him to pursue the matter further. At least a dozen citizens wrote to encourage Murfin's efforts.[22]

The President attempted to hold the regents in check. The Daily poll was "slip-shod," he told them. A probe would result in unfavorable publicity for the University and, besides, "surely, 10 Communist votes out of [1,000 faculty] are insignificant."[23] Ruthven must have felt relief when the senior regent, Junius Beal, conducted his own investigation and was unable to find any trace of a communist sympathizer on the faculty. Beal called the alarm a "hoax manufactured."[24] At the same time, Murfin's friend, Regent Ralph Stone, pointed out to him that, after all, "the laws permit putting the

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[19]P. 21.

[20]Ann Arbor Daily News, October 31, 1936, p. 1.

[21]See Murfin to David Crowley, November 2, 1936, Murfin Papers, box 8, MHC.

[22]See Murfin Papers, November, 1936, box 8, MHC.

[23]Ruthven to the regents, November 5, 1936, Ruthven Papers, box 21, MHC.

[24]Beal to Ruthven, November 6, 1936, Ruthven Papers, box 20, MHC.

Communist Party ticket on the ballot."[25] Regent Mrs. Cram voiced her suspicion of the poll: "I haven't a particle of trust in the honesty of the University of Michigan Daily."[26] Murfin eventually was forced to conclude: "The response . . . to my recent letter concerning the possible presence of Communism on the campus was not such to justify further proceedings on my part."[27]

The Depression-era "Red scare" prompted the 1935 state legislature to pass the Baldwin-Dunckel Bill requiring an oath of allegiance from all government employees, including University professors. Assistant dean W. R. Humphreys of the Literary College returned his signed oath with a note expressing his distaste, and the President retorted: "I find myself in complete agreement with your point of view." Ruthven did not object to the oath per se, he told the dean, but he was appalled by the "wave of hysteria" which produced such oaths.[28] The faculty grumbled about the oath, but none refused to sign. Ruthven told the secretary of the Flint American Legion that the academicians felt that the legislature was discriminating against them. "They cannot understand why teachers should be compelled to take the oath when business men, musicians, and others are not."[29]

Agitation for removal of campus "Reds" and "pinks" faded as

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[25]Stone to Murfin, November 4, 1936, Murfin Papers, box 8, MHC.

[26]Esther Marsh Cram to Murfin, November 5, 1936, ibid.

[27]Murfin to Ruthven, November 10, 1936, Ruthven Papers, box 21, MHC.

[28]Ruthven to Humphreys, October 9, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 18, MHC.

[29]Ruthven to Hugh Webney, October 2, 1936, Ruthven Papers, box 22, MHC.

World War II consumed the energies of all citizens. Immediately following the fighting war, however, the United States and the Soviet Union joined battle in the "cold war," and "witch hunting" became a national obsession. Fearful legislators and concerned citizens cast suspicious glances at the University of Michigan.

Ruthven's friendly antagonist, Allen B. Crow, President of the Economic Club of Detroit, sent him a constant barrage of clippings and circulars warning about red-tinted student organizations.[30]

Michigan Governor Kim Sigler had gained statewide prominence as a crusading prosecutor. Sigler recognized the political dividends which could accrue from a vigorous persecution of "communists" so, very soon after taking office, he began to direct his attention to "Reds" on the state's campuses.[31]

Faced with increasing pressure from the Governor and the legislature, President Ruthven tried to toe the tightrope. He had been troubled for some time by a student leftist group called Michigan Youth for Democratic Action (MYDA), an offshoot of the national American Youth for Democracy (AYD). University administrators were further alarmed when, in March, 1947, J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities that AYD was a communist-front.[32] Vice-president Marvin Niehuss promptly asked the Department of Justice to substantiate Hoover's statement.[33]

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[30]See Ruthven Papers, box 57, MHC.

[31]See The Detroit Free Press, February 17, 1947, p. 1.

[32]Statement of Hoover, March 26, 1947, in "AYD, MYDA" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[33]Telegram of Niehuss to Wendell Berge, Assistant Attorney-General, U. S. Department of Justice, April 16, 1947, ibid.

Conversations with Justice Department officials ensued, and President Ruthven became convinced that AYD was subversive and was controlling the actions of MYDA. Most of the members of the latter group, Ruthven thought, had unwittingly joined a "cell" which followed the party line prescribed by AYD.[34] On April 22, 1947, Ruthven informed the President of MYDA that, since the organization was an affiliate of AYD, he was declaring that MYDA would no longer be recognized as a University organization.[35] The letters and petitions which flowed in response to the MYDA ban followed the familiar pattern: Hundreds of student signatures protested the President's action; many alumni and state citizens applauded; faculty response was limited to a perfunctory protest by five professors associated with the State Committee for Academic Freedom.[36] A request by MYDA for re-instatement was denied.[37]

The ban on MYDA appeared inconsistent with the President's usual pronouncements during the post-war "Red" anxiety. Except for that one time he belittled communist influences, and staunchly defended faculty members under suspicion.

The state commander of the American Legion wrote to tell Ruthven that his organization gave full support to the Governor's investigations, and he asked the President a series of questions about communist infiltration of the campus. Ruthven sent a long, polite return denying that communist-front organizations existed on the campus. He told the Legion commander:

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[34]See letters of Ruthven to Rex Humphey, April 24, 1947, ibid., and Ruthven to Junius B. Wood, April 28, 1947, ibid.

[35]News release, April 22, 1947, ibid.

[36]Ibid. [37]Ibid.

> Personally, I have no sympathy with the communist ideology, but . . . I cannot act on the assumption that everyone who espouses this ideology is committed to the overthrow of our government by force. I feel that our greatest responsibility is to make our democratic form of government so effective that no type of foreign ism will . . . thrive here.[38]

S. W. Sedgwick, a member of the Alumni Advisory Council, told Ruthven that he was alarmed at the amount of dangerous, un-American activity in the institutions of higher learning.[39] "Our views are wide apart," Ruthven replied, "I believe I know what is going on in the colleges and I cannot see that they present any threat of communism."[40]

Ruthven reiterated his views on a radio panel which included Governor Sigler, President John A. Hannah of Michigan State College, and President David D. Henry of Wayne State University. The Michigan President stated forcefully that he did not fear communistic organizations on the campus, provided they abide by university rules, for discussion of controversial ideologies would only serve to strengthen democracy.[41]

That Fall, speaking to the University of Michigan Press Club, Ruthven expanded on this theme:

> It is certainly no secret to members of this audience that there are large and important state universities . . . in this country in which instructors are afraid to express their convictions . . . and in which administrators are in the position of having to get the approval of certain pressure groups before they announce policies. . . . Communism is not the only threat to liberal

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[38]Ruthven to Earl F. Ganschow, February 13, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 54, MHC.

[39]Sedgwick to Ruthven, May 25, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

[40]Ruthven to Sedgwick, June 19, 1948, ibid.

[41]"In Our Opinion," WJR radio broadcast, March 14, 1948, text in "miscellaneous IV" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 77, MHC.

> education. Pressure groups have perverted instruction in the past and can do so again.[42]

At the beginning of the McCarthy era, the President's stand won the plaudits of at least two distinguished faculty.[43]

In 1949 the University received a request from John S. Wood, Chairman of the Un-American Activities Committee of the United States House of Representatives. Wood demanded a list of textbooks and supplementary reading materials currently in use at the University.[44] After communicating with George F. Zook of the American Council on Education, Ruthven sent this curt response: "University of Michigan cannot supply list of books you request. In our opinion your request is not within the rights of the Committee on Un-American Activities."[45]

One of the last men Ruthven was called to defend was a new appointment in the School of Education. An alarmed citizen wrote:

> I am told that Algo D. Henderson has joined the faculty at the University of Michigan.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Mr. Henderson's name appears in the House Un-American Activities proceedings. Evidently at one time he was on the Committee of Education of the Council of American-Soviet Friendship which the Department of Justice has declared a subversive organization.[46]

Ruthven did not share the alarm, for he replied: "I understand that . . . before appointing Mr. Henderson we consulted with a number of

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[42]Alexander G. Ruthven, "Some Facts and Fears," speech to University of Michigan Press Club, September 30, 1948, ibid.

[43]Rensis Likert to Ruthven, October 5, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 59, MHC, and Theodore M. Newcomb to Ruthven, October 7, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 60, MHC.

[44]Wood to Ruthven, June 1, 1949, Ruthven Papers, box 60, MHC.

[45]Telegram of Ruthven to Wood, June 13, 1949, ibid.

[46]W. T. Donkin to Ruthven, July 31, 1950, Ruthven Papers, box 63, MHC.

persons. . . . We came to the conclusion that we were making no mistake in this appointment. . . ."[47]

The AAUP and Tenure

That traditional guardian of academic freedom, the American Association of University Professors, was at Michigan a large organization, but hardly active. "This chapter has had a case of lethargy running for years," reported Professor Carl E. W. L. Dahlstrom to the national president of AAUP.[48] That year there was a local membership of approximately 150, of whom only 30 were active.[49] By 1948-1949 total membership had increased to 358, but the attendance at meetings averaged only about 35.[50]

The attendance must have increased when President Ruthven gave one of his frequent talks before the local chapter, particularly when the subject was tenure. In 1935 he told the Michigan AAUP that, while the principle of tenure must remain inviolate, many faculty took advantage of that principle. If "drones and superfluous men on the staff" are to be tolerated, the President said, those able professors who tolerate them must realize "that they are contributing to charity." Ruthven went on to suggest a code of ethics for the profession.[51] "Your speech was quite

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[47]Ruthven to Donkin, August 16, 1950, ibid.

[48]Dahlstrom to Anton Carlson, February 20, 1936, Papers of the Michigan Chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

[49]Dahlstrom to Carlson, February 25, 1936, ibid.

[50]"Report of the Secretary for 1948-49," ibid.

[51]Alexander G. Ruthven, "A Code For Professors," Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors, Vol. XXI, No. 6 (1935), pp. 482-486. The AAUP Bulletin also printed a Ruthven speech, "Leadership or Regimentation in Higher Education," in which he warned

devastating in its effects upon our old Bourbons," political scientist James K. Pollock told Ruthven, "You punched them in the nose and they had to take it because they knew it was true."[52]

The records of the AAUP indicate that one of the main concerns of the chapter during the Ruthven regime was faculty tenure. When Ruthven became the chief executive, the Michigan tenure regulation read:

> Unless otherwise provided by the Board of Regents, it is understood that Professors and Associate Professors are appointed on indeterminate tenure.[53]

The 1930 Regents expanded this to read:

> Assistant professors shall be appointed for terms of one, two, or three years, as in each case specifically designated in the terms of appointment. Whenever the term of appointment to an assistant professorship is not specified, it shall be for one year only.[54]

Despite the fact that it was outlined in the By-Laws, tenure was a concept foreign to some of the regents. "I am well aware of the fact that the amalgamated order of collegiate professors has always claimed some union rule to the effect that after he passed the rank of instructor he was engaged in perpetuity," Regent Murfin caustically observed. Murfin went on to say, "I have always insisted and still insist that the tenure of our teaching staff is from year to year . . .

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against state legislatures and "partisan political influences" as the "most imminent danger" to state universities. Vol. XXIII, No. 8, (1937), pp. 674-681

[52]Pollock to Ruthven, February 9, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 16, MHC.

[53]By-Laws, 1923, Ch. 5, Sec. 6(a).

[54]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, April Meeting, 1930, p. 239.

as a matter of law it is not necessary for us in order to drop a professor to prefer formal charges and have a hearing to justify our action."[55]

There is no record that either AAUP or the faculty governing bodies addressed themselves to the question of tenure until 1939 when the AAUP established a Resolutions Committee "to report on a plan for Faculty Committee Hearings in Cases of Dismissal and Demotion. . . ."[56] This report was discussed in the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) and then presented to the University Senate.[57] The Senate adopted the SACUA report, which contained the following provisions:

> (1) Whenever it is proposed to dismiss or demote any member of the University faculty who is on indeterminate tenure [i.e. associate professor or full professor] . . . the grounds for such dismissal or demotion shall be stated in writing to the individual in question, and he or she shall have an opportunity . . . to appear in person for a hearing before an appropriate committee. . . .
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> . . . . . .
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> (2) In schools or colleges in which an executive committee has been appointed, the hearing . . . shall be held before such executive committee or before a special committee appointed for the purpose by the executive committee. [If] no executive committee has been appointed, the hearing shall be held before a special committee appointed by the governing faculty. . . .
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> In all cases [SACUA] may be requested by the person whose dismissal or demotion is in question to review the procedure

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[55]Murfin to Ruthven, June 14, 1932, Ruthven Papers, box 6, MHC.

[56]Letter of D. C. Long to "Harold" (probably Professor Harold Dorr), July 23, 1945, Papers of the Michigan Chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

[57]SACUA was a nine member body elected by the University Senate. Its charge was to "consult and advise the President upon matters of University interest." (Frank E. Robbins to Jesse E. Adams, February 13, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 38, MHC). In actual practice, SACUA concerned itself largely with faculty interests such as tenure and salaries.

followed and to receive any evidence that the committee deems relevant."[58]

The report went on to say that full reports of all hearings would be sent to the individual involved, to the president, and to the dean. This report was approved by the Regents.[59]

In 1942, the Regents revised the tenure regulations so that assistant professors and instructors who had been on the staff for six years or more were granted the same procedural safeguards as those faculty on tenure.[60]

Two years later the Regents changed the regulations to read that instructors and assistant professors must serve eight years before falling under the procedural protections. The Regents further agreed that any faculty member threatened with dismissal or demotion could appeal to SACUA if he was aggrieved by the initial hearing. SACUA's report of its hearing would be "deemed advisory" and dismissal or demotion would not be final until the complete record of the case had been transmitted, along with the president's written recommendation, to the Regents. No specific justifications for initiating dismissal or demotion procedures were cited by the Regents; rather, the plastic phrase "causes accepted by University usage, properly connected with

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[58] University of Michigan Council and Senate Records, 1936-1941, pp. 111-112.

[59] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, Second July Meeting, 1941, pp. 688-689.

[60] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, December Meeting, 1942, pp. 170-171. The Papers of the Michigan Chapter of the AAUP, 1935-1959, show that the chapter had been advocating this safeguard since 1939.

the improvement and efficiency of the faculty" was instituted.[61]

The By-Laws of 1945 incorporated these 1940-1944 tenure decisions.[62]

The Cuncannon Case

The first actual case to test the evolving tenure regulations was that of Dr. Paul M. Cuncannon, an assistant professor of political science.[63] Cuncannon had been on the Michigan faculty since 1923, but in April, 1942, the executive committee of the political science department voted unanimously that he be given a one-year terminal appointment. The department cited as reasons Cuncannon's declining effectiveness as a teacher, lack of cooperation in administrative duties, absence of work with graduate students, and paucity of publications (Cuncannon had published only two brief articles since 1929). The departmental decision to terminate Cuncannon's services after one year was supported, again unanimously, by the executive committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Cuncannon, as an assistant professor,

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[61] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, January Meeting, 1944, pp. 523-524

[62] Sec. 5.09 and 5.091. Although the record is nowhere explicit, one can infer that the usual "bargaining" between faculty interests and Regents' interests produced the finalized tenure regulations. For example, when AAUP and the University Senate agreed that junior professors should be safeguarded by procedural guarantees, the Regents first capitulated, then decided that eight years rather than six years of probationary status was required. Originally, the Regents agreed to hearings by executive committees. The president appointed executive committees from lists submitted by the school or college, and thus could exercise some control. The AAUP records show that that body pressed for a hearing committee chosen entirely by the faculty, and the Regents eventually agreed that SACUA, elected by the faculty members of the University Senate, might act as an appeal board.

[63] The explanation of Cuncannon's case which follows is taken from testimony presented before the Regents' Committee on Educational Policies, April 23, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 81, MHC, 123 p.

did not have tenure, and at the time the department decided that his contract would not be renewed, the By-Laws which provided for a hearing and for appeal procedures were not yet operative. Cuncannon did avail himself of the opportunity to present his views to his department in a brief hearing, although no records of the hearing were kept. When the Regents changed the By-Laws (see supra, p. 133) Cuncannon was invited to present his case at a hearing before the executive committee of Literature, Science, and the Arts. He appeared and agreed that, rather than submit to a formal hearing, he would answer the charges against him in writing and abide by the executive committee's decision. In answer to Cuncannon's rebuttal—a lengthy, rambling epistle—both of the executive committees concerned agreed that they would not reverse their original decision. Cuncannon appealed to President Ruthven, and Ruthven referred the appeal to the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs. SACUA heard the case fully, found that "all the required procedures were conformed with," and refused to overrule the previous decisions. The SACUA decision, too, was unanimous.[64]

At this point, after the three appropriate faculty committees had delivered their unanimous verdicts, there was a very unusual turn of events. Regent Herbert, the chairman, spoke for the Regents' Committee on Educational Policies and delivered this surprising opinion: "This committee [deems] the record to date as being insufficient to base a considered opinion as to the procedures and merits of the matter involved."[65] Regent Herbert and his committee arranged for their own

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[64]Minutes of a special meeting of SACUA, March 22, 1943, SACUA files, administration building, University of Michigan.

[65]Testimony before Regents' Committee on Educational Policies, April 23, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 81, MHC, p. 4. One wonders what

"entirely informal" hearing.[66] Regents Herbert, Connable, and Kipke, President Ruthven, Provost Stason, Deans Kraus and Woodburne, Professor Brown, acting chairman of political science, Professor Cuncannon, and a variety of witnesses met in an all-day session to consider the Cuncannon case. The transcript of the meeting is interesting in that Regent Herbert, who did the lion's share of the questionming, appears as an apologist—and practically the only one—for Dr. Cuncannon. President Ruthven was mute during the entire proceedings. The proceedings were at times heated, and it was particularly evident that the members of the political science department who testified were unhappy with Regent Herbert's attempt to resurrect the fortunes of their colleague Cuncannon.

After the testimony before Herbert's Educational Policies Committee, that committee reported to the Regents that "the charges against the individual concerned had not been sustained." The Educational Policies Committee then recommended that Cuncannon be appointed for two more years, and receive any blanket salary increases to which he was entitled.[67] The committee further recommended that the final year of Cuncannon's two-year appointment be a "leave of absence, with pay . . . to pursue his work on publications . . . and establish other connections." As will be seen in Chapter Seven, these recommendations came at a time

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influenced Herbert to intervene in the Cuncannon case. It has been established that Herbert's daughter was a student of Cuncannons'; this, apparently, was the only connection between Cuncannon and Regent Herbert.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, June Meeting, 1943, p. 319. Cuncannon's salary in 1929 was $3,000; at the time of his "case," 1943, his salary was $2,800. Testimony before the Regents' Committee on Educational Policies, April 23, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 81, MHC, p. 118.

when Ruthven's influence with the Regents was at its nadir. Ruthven apparently made no effort to intercede in what was, basically, a quarrel between the faculty and the Regents. The recommendations of Herbert's committee were approved by the Regents.[68]

Predictably, the Regents' action infuriated the faculty bodies which had been involved in the Cuncannon case. The executive committees of the political science department and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, as well as the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs, sent "communications" to the Regents. A motion to "table" the faculty communications (i.e.,ignore them) was defeated and the Regents, by split vote, agreed to hear the disgruntled faculty committeemen at the next meeting.[69] At the August meeting Dean Kraus presented these requests of the executive committee of Literature, Science, and the Arts: (1) that the Board "delete the severe and unjust criticism of the good faith and procedure of the faculty committees which have reviewed the evidence in this case"; and (2) that "the action of the Board of Regents in giving Dr. Cuncannon a two-year terminal appointment be modified to the extent that Dr. Cuncannon be not a member of the staff of the Department of Political Science and that his salary be not a part of the budget of the Department, effective as of July 1, 1943."[70]

Faced with an insurrection from the most powerful dean of the

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, July Meeting, 1943, p. 363.

[70] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, August Meeting, 1943, p. 369.

most powerful faculty on campus, the Board's only retreat was to say that they had not intended to question the "good faith" of the faculty committees. The Regents, however, flatly refused the request to immediately sever Cuncannon's connection with political science.[71] The Regents' directives were followed, for the University's General Register listed Cuncannon with the political science faculty (on leave) during 1944-1945.[72]

Wenger-Dahlstrom

Christian N. Wenger joined the Department of English, College of Engineering, in 1919, and his friend, Carl E. W. L. Dahlstrom, joined the same department in 1920.[73] Each was a stalwart member of the struggling Michigan AAUP and, by 1942, each had attained the rank of associate professor. For many years, both Wenger and Dahlstrom had been in conflict with their departmental chairman and departmental policy.[74]

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[71] Ibid.

[72] General Register, p. 218. Two of Cuncannon's former colleagues recall that after leaving Michigan, Cuncannon joined the faculty of a Chester, Pennsylvania "teachers college" (Pennsylvania Military College?). He is not listed in the Directory of the American Political Science Association for either 1945 or 1953, nor is he listed in any of the standard directories.

[73] Since October, 1969, this department has been part of the Department of Humanities, College of Engineering.

[74] "Documents Considered By The Executive Committee, College of Engineering in Connection With the Case of Associate Professors C. N. Wenger and Carl E. W. L. Dahlstrom," Ruthven Papers, box 81, MHC, pp. 43-50. Unless other sources are cited, the text which follows is taken from the voluminous transcripts of the Wenger-Dahlstrom hearings before the executive committee of the College of Engineering, the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs, and a brief submitted by Wenger and Dahlstrom. All are found in the Ruthven Papers, box 81, MHC.

In the academic year 1942-1943 Wenger and Dahlstrom were each assigned two sections of a required course known as English I. On November 19, 1942, departmental chairman Carl Brandt met Professor Wenger in a hall corridor and, during a stormy argument, accused him of refusing to conform to the uniform departmental plan for teaching English I. The "plan" included readings from a standard bibliography and a predetermined number of essays and other written exercises. Instructors were allowed some latitude in planning their individual courses, but only if they stayed within the prescribed departmental limitations. Brandt, after consulting with Dean Crawford of engineering and Dr. Yoakum, Vice-President in Charge of Educational Investigations, then sent letters to Wenger and Dahlstrom outlining in detail the departmental requirements and requesting that the professors conform to these requirements by November 30. The professors refused. Brandt then took the matter to the executive committee of the College of Engineering, which ruled that the professors must follow the uniform program. Dean Crawford communicated the executive committee's decision to President Ruthven, and Crawford told Wenger and Dahlstrom that, unless they agreed to the departmental plan, they were not to meet their classes after December 29. Wenger and Dahlstrom appealed to the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs and met their classes on December 30 as usual. Dean Crawford and Chairman Brandt entered the classrooms and dismissed the students. Naturally, the students were curious and, by January 6, The Michigan Daily began to give the story front-page coverage. Wenger and Dahlstrom, however, would not present their arguments to the students, and the Daily refrained from editorial comment until January 19. Then the student editors called for an airing

of facts, and condemned the manner of dismissing the classes of the two professors, "as if they were juvenile delinquents."[75] The same day that Crawford and Brandt dismissed the classes, President Ruthven wrote to Wenger and Dahlstrom and told them that they were no longer to meet their English I sections "until the matter can be thoroughly canvassed."

The Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs, meanwhile, called witnesses and considered Wenger and Dahlstrom's appeal in three January, 1943, meetings. SACUA decided that, since the controversy did not present any question of demotion or dismissal, tenure was not at issue and the governing faculty of the College of Engineering should resolve the dispute.

The engineering executive committee, in assigning teaching loads for the spring semester, then reduced the class time of Wenger and Dahlstrom by half. The executive committee further ruled that each professor's salary would be adjusted accordingly. These rulings, then, did involve tenure regulations, and so Wenger and Dahlstrom appealed again to SACUA, which recommended that salaries should not be reduced until the matter was resolved.

On January 23, 1943, Dean Crawford wrote to President Ruthven expressing his view that the recalcitrant professors should be dismissed.[76] Provost E. Blythe Stason carefully explained to Dean Crawford that he must follow the tenure procedures as prescribed in the By-Laws. At this point the engineering executive committee appointed a special fact-finding committee to determine whether the uniform program in the basic

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[75] Michigan Daily, January 19, 1943, p. 2.

[76] Crawford to Ruthven, January 23, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 41, MHC.

English courses had been properly established, and whether Wenger and Dahlstrom had followed the uniform program. The deliberations of the fact-finding committee consumed the better part of a year. During these deliberations, the engineering governing faculty agreed that a policy requiring uniformity in basic courses had been followed for many years and voted unanimously to retain such a policy.

In February, 1944, the executive committee of the College of Engineering set forth the "Grounds on Which the Executive Committee, College of Engineering, Proposes to Ask for Dismissal of Associate Professors Christian N. Wenger and Carl E. W. L. Dahlstrom." The basic charges were that the two professors (1) obstructed the work of the department; (2) consistently failed to cooperate with their colleagues; and (3) refused to cooperate with any chairman of the department. Each of the basic charges was detailed in a five page document which was presented to the two professors.

Wenger and Dahlstrom, acting in accordance with regulations found in the Regents' Proceedings, requested a formal hearing before the executive committee of the engineering college. The hearing was held in April, 1944, and a transcript of the proceedings was made.

Following this hearing the executive committee, again voting unanimously, formally requested President Ruthven and the Board of Regents that Wenger and Dahlstrom be dismissed. Ruthven, carefully following the recently-established procedures, informed Wenger and Dahlstrom that they were entitled to appeal to SACUA if they wished. They did, and in the summer of 1944 SACUA heard the arguments in five lengthy sessions. A stenographic record was made of the proceedings. The SACUA review upheld the engineering executive committee, although

one SACUA member, Arthur Aiton, filed a minority report in which he stated that the dismissal proceedings had been so slow as to cause the professors unjustified "uncertainty and insecurity." Furthermore, Aiton said, he feared a damaging full-scale investigation by the national AAUP, for he felt the case "a poor risk on which to stake the hard-earned laurels of over a century."

Wenger and Dahlstrom then appealed to the Regents, who upheld the work of the faculty committees and agreed that if the professors refused to resign, as requested, it would be the duty of "the proper administrative authorities to sever the connection of either or both. . . ."[77]

The embattled professors had one last recourse: AAUP. The national office of AAUP sent two fact-finders to Ann Arbor and the Associate Secretary filed a sixteen page report with Dr. Ruthven.[78] The AAUP report was highly critical of the action of Professor Brandt and Dean Crawford in dismissing Wenger and Dahlstrom's classes in November, 1942. The report also criticized the hearing conducted by the engineering executive committee in April, 1944, for, AAUP contended, this committee had prejudged Wenger and Dahlstrom and could not hear them objectively. The AAUP findings detailed further criticisms of lesser import, and requested that President Ruthven give the report wide circulation. However, AAUP did not pursue the matter further, and Wenger and Dahlstrom were dismissed at the end of academic year 1944-1945,

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[77] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, January Meeting, 1945, p. 826.

[78] Report of Robert P. Ludlum for the American Association of University Professors to Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven, November 14, 1946, Ruthven Papers, box 81, MHC.

approximately two and one-half years after the controversy began.

The case has since faded into the hazy world of memory, but one ex-professor, Robert Cooley Angell, recalled it rather vividly. Wenger and Dahlstrom were given every opportunity to present their story, Angell remembered, but "they had very little sympathy among the faculty."[79]

Campus Speakers

During the tense days prior to World War I the Regents agreed to ban "politics" from the campus. "The use of Hill Auditorium for free discussion of all topics is not now necessary nor expedient," the solons resolved.[80]

By the time Dr. Ruthven became President, Michigan's Regents had formulated some rather elaborate statements concerning campus speakers. The 1923 By-Laws stated: "Lecturers may not be invited by students nor by student associations to lecture in University buildings, without the approval of the appropriate authority, obtained in advance."[81] The By-Laws went on to call for a "guaranty that during . . . meetings or lectures there shall be no advocacy of the subversion of the government. . . ." No addresses would be allowed, the By-Laws warned, "which advocate or justify conduct which violates the

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[79]Interview, February 4, 1970. Wenger and Dahlstrom's few remaining colleagues remember only that the professors "headed West" after leaving Michigan. The AAUP Bulletin, Vol. XXXVII, Winter 1951-52, has an article by Dahlstrom, then Assistant Professor of English, Oregon General Extension Division. The 1957 Directory of American Scholars lists Wenger as a professor of English, Olympic College, Bremerton, Washington.

[80]Smith, Harry Burns Hutchins, pp. 152-153.

[81]Ch. VI, Sec. 7.

fundamentals of our accepted code of morals." Furthermore, "Speeches in support of particular candidates of any political party or faction shall not be permitted." It was also stated that the Regents encouraged "the timely and rational discussion of topics whereby the ethical and intellectual development of the student body and the general welfare of the public may be promoted and a due respect inculcated in the people for society at large and for the constituted government of the state and nation."[82]

In 1935 the Regents approved a Committee on University Lectures with jurisdiction for all University public lectures. The committee was authorized to make its own rules and procedures for registering campus speakers.

The 1940 By-Laws reiterated these procedures, and added that only student organizations recognized by the Dean of Students' office would be permitted to sponsor lectures.[83] The By-Laws, as amended in 1945, carried the 1940 statements with only minor wording revisions.[84]

On December 15, 1947, Gerhart Eisler and Carl Marzani, both free on bail from Congressional contempt citations for refusing to say whether they were communists, were denied permission to speak in the Michigan League. Eisler was generally believed to be a high official of the American Communist Party. The event was to be sponsored by the Michigan Youth for Democratic Action. President Ruthven released the following statement:

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[82] By-Laws, 1923, Ch. III B, Sec. 2(a) and 2(b); also Ch. III A, Sec. 6(c).

[83] Ch. VIII, Sec. 8.08.

[84] Ch. VIII, Sec. 8.08.

> Michigan Youth for Democratic Action's request for space to hold a public meeting for an address by Gearhart [sic] Eisler has been disallowed for two reasons:
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> (1) MYDA's recognition as a student organization was cancelled last April. . . .
>
> (2) Mr. Eisler will not be permitted to speak on the University of Michigan campus at this time under any auspices.[85]

The speech was then scheduled for an Ann Arbor public park, but cancelled by Mayor William E. Brown, Jr.[86] It seemed that the decisions not to hear the speakers in public met with general favor. The Ann Arbor Daily News editorial caption read, "University Within Rights in Banning Eisler and Marzani."[87] Later, when Eisler and Marzani visited Ann Arbor anyway, a large crowd of hostile students pelted the private home where they stayed with snowballs and began the threatening chant, "We want Eisler."[88]

Provost James P. Adams was concerned and predicted that the University must decide whether it would permit "certain persons of Communist persuasion to speak on the campus. The University should have a formal policy," he cautioned Ruthven.[89] The President apparently did not respond in writing; neither was there any written response to Erich Walter when Walter, then Dean of Students, said that the By-Laws governing campus speakers did not provide sufficient guidelines for deciding which organizations should receive campus recognition.[90]

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[85]Press release, December 13, 1947, "Eisler-Marzani" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 79, MHC.

[86]Ann Arbor Daily News, December 15, 1947, p. 3.

[87]Ibid., p. 4.

[88]Ann Arbor Daily News, December 16, 1947, p. 3.

[89]Adams to Ruthven, December 26, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 57, MHC.

[90]Walter to Ruthven, January 19, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

Ruthven must have been mulling over the matter, for it was of paramount concern to campus groups and to the Regents as well. At the March, 1948, meeting the Regents received a resolution from the Student Affairs Committee asking them to "clarify and possibly liberalize" the ban on political speakers.[91] The Regents agreed to ponder the question and one regent, at least, thought he had the answer. "Limited amounts of time and space are available at the University for extra curricular activities," Regent Eckert reasoned, and, ipso facto, "a limited amount of time and space may be devoted to political discussions." Eckert hastened to add, "No person, not an employee of the University or a student, may carry on a political discussion on University property, without the invitation of the President or his authorized representative."[92]

In April, 1948, the Board of Regents reaffirmed existing By-Laws effecting political speakers, but agreed that political speeches would be acceptable provided meetings were open solely to members of the sponsoring group.[93] President Ruthven was absent from this meeting and confided to Professor Carl Brandt, chairman of the Committee on University Lectures: "I hope the decision of the Board will not cause your committee too much inconvenience. I would have like to have seen them worded somewhat differently."[94]

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[91] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, March Meeting, 1948, p. 1205.

[92] Otto E. Eckert to Ruthven, March 19, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 57, MHC.

[93] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, April Meeting, 1948, p. 1210.

[94] Ruthven to Brandt, April 19, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 57, MHC.

When Professor Preston W. Slosson wrote to suggest that the Regents further relax their political regulations, Ruthven replied: "I believe it is rather generally known that I do not approve of the present regulations. I realize that the Regents were sincere . . . but the regulations adopted are not . . . appropriate for a great democratic institution."[95]

The Young Democrats of the University of Michigan sent a letter to the Regents "requesting that this group and other interested organizations be allowed to meet with the Regents to discuss these issues." The Board's opinion was that "further discussion would lead to no useful purpose," and the request was denied.[96]

The students were not deterred, and the Regents agreed to allow the officers of the Student Legislature, led by Blair Moody, Jr., to offer their recommendations to the Regents in a presentation not to exceed thirty minutes.[97]

Meanwhile the faculty, too, prepared to contest the Regents. The University Senate established an ad hoc Special Committee on Public Discussions of Political Issues which also requested that a Senate delegation meet with the Regents. The Michigan chapter of AAUP passed a resolution supporting the concern of the Senate.[98]

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[95]Ruthven to Slosson, November 15, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 62, MHC.

[96]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, May Meeting, 1948, p. 1264.

[97]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, Annual June Meeting, 1948, pp. 1357-1358. Moody, Sr. was appointed U. S. Senator from Michigan in 1951.

[98]Minutes of the University of Michigan chapter, AAUP, December 14, 1948, Papers of the AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

The Board of Regents met with both student and faculty representatives in January, 1949, following which a regental committee was appointed to study the regulations relating to political speeches.[99] The committee reported in February, and the Board agreed to delete entirely the current By-Law paragraph banning political speakers.[100] Instead the Board substituted this ambiguous statement: "These regulations [concerning political speakers] shall be administered by the Committee on University Lectures, with the understanding that they are designed to serve the educational interests of the academic community rather than the political interests of any party or candidate."[101]

As might be anticipated, this official policy adaptation led to frequent hassles as to who could and who couldn't be a campus speaker. It was soon obvious that the question of a communist speaker would again be raised as the first test of the new policy. In 1950, the Committee on University Lectures refused permission for Dr. Herbert J. Phillips, an avowed communist who had been fired by the University of Washington, to debate with Dr. John Phillip Wernette, director of the University's Bureau of Business Research, on the topic "Capitalism vs. Communism."[102] The Lecture Committee cited the By-Laws statement that no "advocacy of

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[99] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, January Meeting, 1949, p. 214.

[100] I.e., By-Laws, 1945, Sec. 8.08 (1).

[101] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, February Meeting, 1949, p. 239.

[102] Wernette had been President of the University of New Mexico, but was fired by the Regents of that institution in an unsavory political dispute. Wernette wrote to Ruthven inquiring about a position at Michigan and was appointed a professor soon after. Ruthven Papers, box 60, MHC.

the subversion of the government" would be permitted. The Lecture Committee ruled that "any Communist who seeks to promote the interests of the Communist Party is advocating the subversion of the government. . . . "[103] The decision was interpreted as meaning that no member of the Communist Party could speak in any Michigan building.[104]

Dr. Ruthven was off-campus when the decision to deny Phillips permission to speak was reached, but his letters indicate that he supported that decision. "You may be sure that at all times the University authorities have in mind the protection and the promotion of the American way of life," was his standard assurance to those citizens who applauded the University's stand. To an alumnus who condemned the University's position, its president said: "We can see no good reason why Mr. Phillips should come to the campus. . . . His only purpose was to publicize himself."[105]

The Michigan Daily, however, reacted with indignation. "The unfortunate decision of the University Lecture Committee . . . can do nothing but lower the University in the esteem of the academic world," the editors remarked. They charged that the Lecture Committee was motivated by "irrational panic."[106] The Student Legislature, too, disapproved the Lecture Committee's stand, and voted overwhelmingly to ask

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[103]"Report of the Committee on University Lectures," April 7, 1950, Ruthven Papers, box 62, MHC.

[104]Michigan Daily, April 18, 1950, p. 1.

[105]Ruthven to Richard Nahabedian, June 5, 1950, Ruthven Papers, box 62, MHC. Phillips later appeared in Ann Arbor and debated history professor Preston W. Slosson off-campus before a crowd of 2,000 people. Michigan Daily, April 28, 1950, p. 1.

[106]April 18, 1950, p. 1.

the Board of Regents to place four students on the Lecture Committee.[107]

The following year the "communist" of the moment was J. Edward Bromberg. Bromberg was not to speak, but was appearing on the University stage in "The Royal Family." Over fifty letters and telegrams protesting Bromberg's appearance on campus came to the President's desk and the public relations department was forced to issue a strong statement asserting that the University was steadfastly anti-communist.[108]

Thus, as the Ruthven regime drew to its close, the President successfully continued to steer the University on a precarious course between the scylla of societal solicitude and the charybdis of communistic caprice. His successor was not to be so fortunate.[109]

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[107] Michigan Daily, April 20, 1950, p. 1.

[108] Ruthven Papers, box 63, MHC. One of the more vivid letters declared: "I would like to be among those in the first row . . . so that I could heave a few eggs at your friend Bromberg." Spencer Carter to Ruthven, May 28, 1951, Ruthven Papers, box 63, MHC.

[109] Very soon after Dr. Harlan Hatcher became President of Michigan he was faced with an academic freedom case which resulted in an official national AAUP censure of the University. See Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors, Vol. XLIV, No. 1, (1958), pp. 53-101. See also a 1970 senior honors thesis by Marsha Novick in the Department of History, University of Michigan, and The Ann Arbor News, May 8, 1954 to May 25, 1954.

CHAPTER VII

NADIR: THE WAR YEARS

That sensitive cases involving academic freedom should manifest themselves during the war years seems appropriate, if one is to believe the old saw about trouble coming in bunches,[1] for without question the war years were the most trying of all for President Ruthven.

The "Minority Group" of Regents

Ruthven's relationship with his first Board of Regents was unusually harmonious. Even Junius Beal, who had opposed Ruthven's ascension to the presidency, grew to be one of his strongest backers. When inevitable disagreements of policy would arise, the regents and the President would frankly—never acrimoniously—discuss their differences and usually arrive at a solution agreeable to all. For example, when Regents Stone and Murfin voiced their concern about the lack of direction of certain schools and colleges, Ruthven replied with his candid and thorough evaluation, not only of the educational units, but of their leadership as well. He concluded: "I hope you will never hesitate for a moment to bring criticism to my attention. I will probably err from time to time but I have set for myself the objective of making Michigan take her place among the great universities. . . ."[2] The

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[1]"Ill luck, you know, seldom comes alone." Cervantes, Don Quixote.

[2]Ruthven to Murfin, November 30, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 18, MHC.

regents were satisfied.

But criticism was the exception. The Ruthven Papers and the papers of the regents indicate that there was general accord on policy, mutual respect for personalities and opinions, and an absence of internecine politics.[3]

Harmony appeared to prevail even after the composition of Ruthven's original Board was altered. Upon the death of the respected veteran, Dr. Walter H. Sawyer, in 1931, Dr. Richard R. Smith, a surgeon of Grand Rapids, was appointed his successor. The solid phalanx of Republican regents was broken in 1932, when the Roosevelt landslide brought the unexpected election of Democrats Franklin P. Cook, retired banker from Hillsdale, and Charles F. Hemans, an attorney from Lansing. Democratic representation was further bolstered when Governor Comstock appointed Edmund C. Shields, like Hemans an attorney from Lansing, to the Board to replace L. L. Hubbard, who had resigned after twenty-two years as a regent. Shields was well-known to the other regents, and Regent R. Perry Shorts, a Republican, told him: "You are the best democrat [sic] and also the best citizen I know of for the job. The Board will welcome you with open arms."[4] Shields was readily accepted by the regents and the President and it became apparent that both Smith and Cook were quiet men who, judging by their dearth of correspondence with President Ruthven,

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[3]In fact, the regents were so loyal to each other that when Regent Murfin was tricked out of the Republican nomination for regent in 1933, a "plan" was devised to bring him back on the Board. Murfin was by then the most active and most interested of all the regents, and R. Perry Shorts, a Republican, agreed to resign his post as regent if Democratic Governor William A. Comstock would appoint Murfin to Shorts' place. The fascinating story can be pieced together from the Shorts Papers, box 1, MHC.

[4]Shorts to Shields, January 10, 1933, Shorts Papers, box 1, MHC.

preferred to leave the bulk of University decision-making to the faculty and the president. When Regent Murfin returned to the Board in 1934, Ruthven remained blessed with regents who were, generally, able, interested in the University, and cooperative with its president.[5]

The one exception was Regent Hemans. The Democrats were customarily the minority party in Michigan, and Hemans had had a long history of championing unsuccessful political activities. He had himself been an unsuccessful candidate for Circuit Judge and an unsuccessful candidate for Congress.[6] Hemans must have been a devotee of the political adage, "to the victors belong the spoils," for as a regent he began to request that President Ruthven deliver favors.

During the Depression Hemans casually suggested that his mother would like a job at the University. The President dutifully reported that he had checked with Librarian Bishop and Dean of Women Lloyd and no positions were vacant.[7] Regent Hemans did not consider his request improper and was upset to think that Ruthven seemed reluctant to cooperate. He told Ruthven:

> It seemed to me of so little consequence that it could be cared for without the slightest effort on your part. . . . This came naturally to me . . . because for about fifteen years I have made similar requests of many state officials for many other people and without hesitation or remarks these people were secured a position.[8]

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[5]In July, 1937, the Regents voted Ruthven an increased salary and expressed their confidence in his administration. He wrote to each regent, declaring his gratitude. See Ruthven to Beal, July 13, 1937, Ruthven Papers, box 23, MHC.

[6]Who's Who in Michigan, 1936, p. 174.

[7]Ruthven to Hemans, October 29, 1935, Ruthven Papers, box 18, MHC.

[8]Hemans to Ruthven, November 15, 1935, ibid.

Dr. Ruthven explained to Hemans that he could not "hire and fire at will," and suggested that perhaps the question of employment for Hemans' mother should be raised with the Board.[9] Hemans retreated from this kind of showdown and Ruthven glossed over the incident.

On another occasion Hemans told Ruthven that a state civil service bill, advanced by political scientist James K. Pollock, was causing "a very, very decided ill feeling towards the University," particularly among the Democrats who then controlled the legislature. "If Mr. Pollock continues to shoot off on its principles," Hemans warned, "the natural sequence is going to be that the University is going to suffer on his account." The regent suggested to Ruthven that he "curb" Professor Pollock.[10] Ruthven had no intention of shackling Pollock. He pointed out to Hemans that Pollock had been asked by two governors to prepare a civil service bill, and his work was "non-partisan." Ruthven concluded:

> I cannot possibly serve notice on the members of the faculty that they must not express any opinion contrary to that held by the ruling party in the State. I do not believe you would want me to do this even to save the appropriations of the University. If our funds are cut . . . I will be perfectly willing to go to the people of the State and lay the facts before them.[11]

Hemans' ethical shortcoming eventually landed him in jail, but not until he had served a seven-year term as regent.[12]

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[9]Ruthven to Hemans, November 18, 1935, ibid.

[10]Hemans to Ruthven, April 1, 1937, Ruthven Papers, box 21, MHC.

[11]Ruthven to Hemans, April 3, 1937, ibid.

[12]Two years after he left the Board of Regents, rumors involving Hemans' name began to circulate around the capitol. It was charged that legislator's votes were being purchased. "Hemans turned state's evidence and it was revealed that in a little black book he had made a record of payments to legislators from bankers, loan companies, racetrack operators, slot-machine owners, and others. Twenty of the defendants were

The elections of 1937 saw Democrats Shields—who had been defeated in the 1935 election by David H. Crowley—and John D. Lynch of Detroit replace Murfin and Dr. Smith. Lynch was interested in forcing a program of reform on the "old conservative Republicans" who had been running the University, and he proposed to start by liberalizing athletic scholarships to ensure winning football.[13] Lynch, like Hemans, began to request favors from the President.[14]

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convicted in 1944. In the continuing investigation Senator Warren G. Hooper of Albion, who was about to testify, was murdered. The killer was never found. Total convictions numbered 46 out of 125 indicted." [Willis F. Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), p. 650.] During the series of trials Hemans suddenly refused to testify, and fled the state. He was later arrested and spent a term in federal prison. F. Clever Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), pp. 450-451.

[13]Letter of Herbert E. Wilson to Ruthven, January 18, 1938, Ruthven Papers, box 24, MHC. Wilson was a Judge from Indianapolis and a friend of Lynch. He had visited Lynch in his home and had been so concerned about the new regent's attitude that he had written to warn Ruthven.

[14]For example, on October 20, 1939, Lynch wrote to Ruthven (Ruthven Papers, box 31, MHC) requesting that a friend receive a faculty appointment. Ruthven replied, saying that the man Lynch proposed was not qualified. "In addition to his unimpressive record, he has a very poor command of the English language and certainly could not teach a course." (Ruthven to Lynch, October 28, 1939, ibid.). On another occasion, Lynch urged the acceptance of a friend to the Dental School. When Dean Bunting replied that the lady in question would be admitted "if it is possible," Lynch stated: "I shall not go into further detail at this time other than to tell you that there are times when it becomes quite essential . . . that the recommendations of a regent be followed without too much detail of the reason being required." (Lynch to Bunting, June 14, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 33, MHC). The lady was admitted. (Bunting to Lynch, June 16, 1941, ibid.) On still another occasion Lynch complained bitterly to Ruthven of the treatment his son had received from the business administration faculty. (Lynch's son had changed his program of study and had not received full credit during the transfer). (Lynch to Ruthven, October 2, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 42, MHC). The President referred the case to young Lynch's advisors, then reviewed it thoroughly with them, and reported back to Lynch. The son did not receive course credit. (Ruthven to Lynch, October 3, 1942, ibid.)

Lynch and Hemans, occasionally aided by Shields, began to consider the possibility of changing some of the standard practices of the Board. Honorary degrees, for example, were, by established custom, recommended from the faculties and approved by the Regents. In 1938 the Board asked the president to appoint a regental committee to consider the question of honorary degree recipients. Regents Lynch, Shields, Crowley, and Beal were appointed.[15] The following year the Board voted two honorary degrees without consulting the faculty.[16] President Ruthven told the Board that the change in traditional procedure had proved an embarrassment to all concerned, and he urged a return to the old method of selection.[17]

Also in 1939 President Ruthven received a letter from Regent Shields which raised some questions about University policy. "It seems to me instead of the insurance being dished out by one man from the University [Vice-President Shirley W. Smith] there are several of the Regents who have friends that we would like to accommodate," Shields informed Ruthven. The regent also called for a review of the Board in Control of Physical Education.[18] Ruthven responded in separate letters in which he masterfully answered each question. The University administration was convinced that its present method of handling insurance was

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[15] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, March Meeting, 1938, p. 501.

[16] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, Second May Meeting, 1939, p. 938, and Annual June Meeting, 1939, p. 964.

[17] Letter of Ruthven to the Regents, June 6, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 28, MHC.

[18] Shields to Ruthven, February 2, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 29, MHC.

the most economical, he said, but the Regents could change this if they wished. The President also retorted that it would not be wise for the Board to "take over the policies governing athletics," for athletics are controlled by the faculty—a requisite for membership in the Big Ten conference.[19] Apparently the Board of Regents had its way on the insurance question, for the company which had written the University's policies for twenty years was abruptly discharged.[20]

In 1939 Regents Stone and Beal, who had served a combined total of forty-eight years, retired from the Board. J. Joseph Herbert, an attorney from Manistique, and Harry G. Kipke, the ex-football coach (see supra., p. 86), were elected as their replacements.[21] In 1941 Alfred B. Connable, businessman of Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo, was elected to the Board. Like Herbert and Kipke, Connable was a Republican. With Connable's election to the Board began an alliance among Lynch, Herbert, and Connable which was to distress Ruthven during the war years and even until he retired. He called them the "minority group."[22] Although there is little in the record to indicate the extent of the disagreements between the President and the "minority group" during those years, the

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[19]Letters of Ruthven to Shields, February 6, 1939, ibid.

[20]Letter of J. R. Sutton to Shirley W. Smith, May 5, 1939, Smith Papers, box 6, MHC. Sutton, the President of the Policyholders Service and Adjustment Co., reminded Smith of their history of amicable relationships and good service, and charged that the University's new insurance company was chosen because one of the regents was connected with it.

[21]According to Dr. Ruthven, Kipke did not seek to avenge his firing as football coach, and proved to be an able, hardworking, and cooperative regent. Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, February 10, 1970. See also letter of Ruthven to Kipke, December 19, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

[22]See Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 38-45.

sub-surface tensions must have tried the patience of the remaining regents.[23]

It was suggested once again to Ruthven that perhaps the Regents should investigate purchasing procedures at the University.[24] This prompted Vice-President Shirley W. Smith to tender his resignation to President Ruthven.[25] This Ruthven refused to accept, and he told Smith that he must understand that "the members of our interesting group [the Regents] all have different temperaments." Ruthven expressed his hope that he, Smith, and the Regents could "continue as a group, at least until better times," for it was important to "do what we can to keep the old boat on an even keel."[26]

During the 1942 Fall Term a controversy concerning the President's attitude toward the war effort (see infra, pp. 167-168) erupted in public print. In today's parlance, Ruthven was too "dovish" to suit the regental "hawks." The "minority group" of regents told the newspapers that the regents had had a stormy four-hour session, and that further "defeatism" on the part of the University administration would not be tolerated.[27] Ruthven, when called to comment, said that the dispute was only a "minor administrative matter" and "nothing to get excited about."[28] This

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[23]Apparently Regents Kipke and Shields remained friendly to all parties, and occasionally acted as go-betweens.

[24]Letter of Lynch to Ruthven, May 9, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 35, MHC.

[25]Smith to Ruthven, March 11, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 44, MHC.

[26]Ruthven to Smith, March 16, 1942, ibid. This interesting exchange is also found in Ruthven's Naturalist in Two Worlds, pp. 42-44.

[27]Ann Arbor Daily News, October 17, 1942, p. 1.

[28]Ibid.

public disclosure of the Board's differences with the President could only be aimed at embarrassing the chief executive.[29]

It seems almost certain that Regent Herbert's successful intervention in the Cuncannon case (see supra, pp. 135-138) must have contributed to the antipathy existing between Ruthven and the "minority group" of the Regents.

President Ruthven was further embarrassed by a strange incident involving his former colleague from the University Museums, Dr. Carl L. Hubbs. Hubbs was a longstanding member of the Michigan faculty and a prominent ichthyologist. In May, 1943, Hubbs was arrested by Ann Arbor police as a "Peeping Tom."[30] Hubbs contended that he had been caught in a compromising position because a previous encounter had left him with an unreasonable fear of the police. The University attorney reviewed Hubbs' case and concluded that a plea of "nolle contendre" was in order.[31] Hubbs was tested at the Neuropsychiatric Institute, where it was found that he had a genuine fear of the police. No evidence of sexual abnormality was discovered.[32] Ruthven decided that Dr. Hubbs should remain on the faculty. However, two of the regents conducted their own investigation and concluded that Hubbs must be dismissed. Ruthven

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[29]Regent Shields noted, "I was very startled to read the interviews of Connable and Lynch in the newspapers and learn that a four hour acrimonious discussion had been carried on about a subject which, if my memory serves me, did not take a minute." Shields to Ruthven, October 30, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 44, MHC.

[30]The story which follows is from the "Hubbs" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 46, MHC.

[31]Louis E. Burke to Ruthven, July 13, 1943, ibid. Nolo contendere means that the suspect does not deny his guilt, but remains free to do so at any later hearing.

[32]Dr. Raymond W. Waggoner to Ruthven, August 26, 1943, ibid.

regarded their amateur sleuthing as "amusing," and stated: "In my opinion this is a very poor method of handling personnel problems in the University. . . . "[33] Nevertheless, the "minority group" pressed the issue and the Regents, by split vote, resolved: "That Professor Carl L. Hubbs be and is hereby requested to resign and if he does not resign that he be discharged."[34] Hubbs resigned, but Ruthven issued a formal statement to the Board saying that he disagreed with the judgment which made Hubbs' resignation necessary.[35]

With the friction between the President and the "minority group" mounting, it was not surprising that some of the regents wished Ruthven replaced. Ruthven has recorded: "For several months they carried a copy of what was to be my resignation to the meeting hoping to persuade a majority of the Board to ask for it."[36] However, the "minority group" never gained the extra votes needed to replace the President. The elections of 1944 pleased Ruthven for, he confided to ex-regent Ralph Stone, he had known R. Spencer Bishop and Ralph A. Hayward for years, and "they have the qualifications of a good regent."[37] Still, there is

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[33]Ruthven to R. Spencer Bishop, September 29, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 45, MHC. Bishop, a close friend of Ruthven, began a term as regent January 1, 1944.

[34]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, April Meeting, 1944, p. 582.

[35]Statement of Ruthven "To the Members of the Board of Regents," May 9, 1944, Ruthven Papers, box 46, MHC. Hubbs joined the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, University of California at San Diego; he is currently a professor of biology there. Leaders in American Science, Vol. VIII, 1968-69.

[36]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 39. Regent Connable told the writer that he did not want Ruthven fired outright, but wanted him to become the "Chancellor" so another man could become the chief executive, or "President." Interview, May 6, 1970.

[37]Ruthven to Stone, February 3, 1945, Ruthven Papers, box 50, MHC.

evidence that, as late as 1949, the dissatisfied minority of regents kept pressing for Ruthven's replacement. Then, Regent Herbert told Regent Vera Baits that he had wanted a full discussion of the matter for some time, and he added resignedly, "Another academic year will begin, and I am afraid another year lost."[38] In Ruthven's opinion the Board stabilized during the final few years of his presidency, and "again demonstrated in its actions the singleness of purpose, wisdom, and ability which has guided the University during most of its history."[39]

The President and World War II

With the shaky support of a fragmented Board, President Ruthven faced the challenge—following the Depression—of a second national calamity: World War II. Ruthven anticipated the war years with genuine dread, for he had been on the Michigan campus during the first World War, when military training units had totally disrupted the academic program and fifty-seven men had died in an influenza epidemic.[40] Ruthven determined to do what he could to aid the war effort, while at the same time preserving the educational integrity of his institution. He resolved not to allow a repetition of the World War I fiasco.

The University had had a voluntary ROTC unit since the end of World War I. This unit annually enrolled about a thousand men and graduated about one hundred commissioned officers a year.[41] In addition,

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[38]Joseph Herbert to Mrs. Stuart G. Baits, June 25, 1949, Herbert Papers, transfer case 2, MHC.

[39]Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 45.

[40]See Smith's Harry Burns Hutchins, Chs. XXII, XXIII, and XXIV, for the best exposition of the University during World War I.

[41]Much of the background material which follows is from F. Clever Bald's unpublished manuscript, "The University of Michigan in World War

a Civilian Pilot Training Program was established in 1939. However, Ruthven's determination that new military units not disrupt the campus was evident from the beginning. In April, 1939, the Bureau of Navigation proposed to establish an NROTC unit at Michigan.[42] The President consulted with his faculties and replied that the proposal was "deemed inadvisable," for "curricular adjustments are not entirely satisfactory to [the] University and it has been found quite impossible to provide necessary physical facilities."[43] Rear Admiral Chester W. Nimitz received the same reaction when he proposed that Michigan students embark on a thirty-day cruise and then attend a ninety-day Reserve Midshipmen's School, for which University course credit would be given.[44] Ruthven and Provost E. Blythe Stason again consulted the faculties and concluded: "The subject matter of instruction does not overlap on any of our required courses, and the type of training does not . . . seem to be the kind contemplated . . . in satisfaction of requirements for our . . . undergraduate degrees."[45] When Nimitz persisted, some units of the University agreed to grant one course credit for the venture.[46]

In the year prior to Pearl Harbor the paramount concern of the University community was a bill proposing national compulsory military training for single men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-six.

II," 2 Vols., 478 p., MHC.

[42]Rear Admiral J. O. Richardson to Ruthven, April 28, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 35, MHC.

[43]Night letter of Ruthven to Richardson, May 4, 1939, ibid.

[44]Nimitz to Ruthven, August 10, 1940, ibid.

[45]Stason to Nimitz, August 20, 1940, ibid.

[46]Ruthven to Nimitz, January 14, 1941, ibid.

Congress debated the bill throughout the summer of 1940 and it became law in September, 1940.

When Ruthven realized that compulsory military training appeared inevitable he began to advocate an on-campus summer ROTC corps, for he reasoned that such a program would enable young men to avoid the draft longer and enter the service as officers.[47] He also joined with other educators in urging Congress to allow men to complete the academic year before reporting to the armed services.[48] At the same time, Ruthven took advantage of every opportunity to attack the new law. Speaking at the Centennial Celebration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, he said that drafting men out of college was a disservice to democracy. To his surprise, Ruthven's remarks received over thirty favorable responses and only two that were unfavorable. His stock reply to the writers was: "All we are trying to do at the University of Michigan is to say that defense should be accepted in the full meaning of the word, and that we should not unnecessarily sacrifice our gains as free people."[49] Throughout 1941 Ruthven continued to be a forceful antagonist of compulsory military training. "I have been speaking my mind very frankly about the effect of the present Selective Service Act on college students," he told the editor of the Portland, Oregon, Journal. "I expected to be very severely criticized for my remarks, but have never said anything, even about the weather, which met with such

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[47]Ruthven to A. C. Willard, September 26, 1940, ibid. Willard was President of the University of Illinois.

[48]Ruthven to Cyrus J. Goodrich, February 6, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 34, MHC. Congress agreed to defer all college students until July, 1941.

[49]See Ruthven Papers, box 37, MHC.

general approval."[50] Later, Ruthven refused to take part in a discussion with General Lewis B. Hershey, Admiral Nimitz, and President Harold Dodds of Princeton before the Association of American Universities. Ruthven's secretary wrote to the Secretary of the Association that her boss "feels so strongly that conscription has been bungled and there is so little we can do about it that he would prefer not to take an active part in the discussion."[51] The blandishments of Dr. Ruthven and other educators must have had some effect, for in March, 1941, General Hershey of the Selective Service issued orders deferring students in certain critical disciplines such as engineering and chemistry.

As war appeared more and more imminent, the President was motivated by fears which caused his position to crystallize. First of all, he worried about the physical safety of his own children (his two sons were draft age) and also for the Michigan students, whom he regarded with paternal affection. The complete text of a Ruthven letter read: "If I knew that the world would stop in its mad rush and listen to me for one minute, I would say just one thing: War under any name is murder."[52] Equally important to Ruthven, he saw war as a destroyer of the humanizing goals he had worked so hard to promote. He told Robert M.Hutchins that he was "trying to convince prominent educators in this country that total defense must include protection of moral and intellectual values . . . defense which permits the wrecking . . . of the educational programs of

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[50]Ruthven to Donald J. Sterling, April 9, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 36, MHC.

[51]Ruth Rouse to Dean E. B. Stouffer, August 16, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 37, MHC.

[52]Ruthven to Rev. William Hainsworth, July 12, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 34, MHC.

young people is no defense at all in the long run."[53] He complained to the Secretary of State that the federal government was apparently willing to spend billions of dollars for defense, but its support of inter-American cultural programs was niggardly.[54] Ruthven was not proposing that the country's educational institutions be exempt from serving the country; rather, he thought their greatest service would come if they trained doctors, dentists, engineers, chemists, and teachers as well as soldiers and sailors.[55] Ruthven did recognize that the coming war would mean the displacement of students and faculty, changing curriculums, and war-related research. Though reluctantly, he accepted this. Yet he implored the nation's educators to give "conservation of citizen resources" equal attention with "conservation of material resources," and he added:

> As the greater part of the world sinks slowly into the slough of barbarism, they should hold up the heads of young people as long as possible in the hope that when danger is past it will be found that plans for reconstruction have been drawn and that there are some persons left who will be prepared to reorganize a society of free men. Otherwise there is not much use in trying to win the struggle.[56]

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and war was declared Ruthven faced the task of speaking to the students about their duties in war-time. He had never, he confided to Chase Osborn, faced a task he dreaded more.[57] In typical Ruthven style he urged calm, and he counseled the

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[53]Ruthven to Hutchins, December 30, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 34, MHC.

[54]Ruthven to Cordell Hull, October 3, 1940, Ruthven Papers, box 35, MHC.

[55]Alexander G. Ruthven, speech to the Howell Forum, December 11, 1941, "Miscellaneous IV" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 78, MHC.

[56]Alexander G. Ruthven, speech to the National Association of State Universities, October 23, 1942, ibid.

[57]Ruthven to Osborn, December 26, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 39, MHC.

distraught students:

> If you honestly believe you will be of more value as a sailor or soldier at the present time, you should offer your services at once. The University not only will oppose no objections, but will endeavor to make equitable adjustments in fees and credits.
>
> If, on the other hand, you believe more education would increase your value in the struggle, then with no apologies to anyone, you should remain in school until you are called.
>
> I would not be misunderstood here. War is tragedy. . . . College men must, of course, accept their share as Americans have done in past generations. I do not counsel a young man to remain in school . . . if his main reason . . . is to avoid personal sacrifices. . . .
>
> I am asking that in making your decision you examine yourselves carefully and take the long view of your country's need.[58]

Shortly after war was declared, Ruthven established a University "War Board" charged with formulating "plans for the adjustment of the operations of the University to war demands."[59] The War Board, which consisted of six faculty and administrators, met daily for several months. One of its first innovations was probably its most significant: In order to accelerate its program, the University's calendar was changed to three terms. This plan, first proposed in January, 1941, was subject to considerable skepticism by the deans but was operative throughout the war.

Major new programs were introduced to the campus. Chief among them were the Judge Advocate General's School for military lawyers, and the Army's Japanese Language School. Many of the faculty began to engage in classified research. By the Fall Term, 1942, enrollment for men

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[58]Alexander G. Ruthven, speech to students in Hill Auditorium, December 16, 1941, "Students" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 78, MHC.

[59]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, January Meeting, 1942, p. 856.

showed a 17 per cent decline, and many of the faculty began to leave for government service. Still, as President Ruthven had hoped, the academic regimen was not appreciably altered, and Michigan continued to function as an institution of higher learning.

By October, 1942, critics of Ruthven's position began to be heard. The Michigan Daily published a page one editorial accusing the administration of insufficient determination in supporting the war effort. The editor urged the students to assume aggressive leadership.[60] A student rally in Hill Auditorium ignited student passions and, after a series of patriotic speeches, Bald reported the campus "agog with the newly aroused interest in war work."[61]

It was against this background that, at the October, 1942, meeting of the Regents, the following resolution was passed:

> It is the policy of the University to encourage its students to participate actively and patriotically in the war efforts; to aid them in their preparation for war service. . . .
>
> Now therefore to assist in implementing such policy there is hereby created a Regents' Committee on War Activities, which committee shall consist of Regents Lynch, Crowley, and Connable to study the war problems of the University . . . and to make its recommendations to the Board of Regents from time to time.[62]

The Regents' committee, in the lengthy press release previously referred to (see supra pp. 158-159), left no doubt that their group was to be an "action committee." "I'll resign from the committee rather than

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[60] October 7, 1942.

[61] Bald, "Michigan in World War II," p. 91

[62] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, October Meeting, 1942, p. 58. The "minority group" of the Regents included a graduate of Culver Military Academy (Connable) and a past state commander of the American Legion (Herbert). (Michigan Official Directory and Legislative Manual, 1943, pp. 638-639). It is little wonder that they clashed with Ruthven's war policy.

see it operate in a merely advisory capacity," Regent Lynch threatened. He added: "Michigan can't go on as usual when other young people are fighting for their very lives. Education isn't going to be much good if we don't win this war."[63]

Lynch, Secretary of the Regents' War Committee, wasted little time demanding that a "complete survey" of the activities of the University War Board be undertaken immediately. He imperiously addressed a series of questions to Ruthven and concluded: "Your prompt reply will assist the Regents' War Committee in its survey preliminary to an evaluation of the entire University of Michigan War attitude and program."[64]

The efforts of the Regents' War Committee triggered campus support, for following the October meeting of the Regents a petition was circulated among the faculty. This petition supported the Regents "win the war" policy and condemned the University administration for failing to give wholehearted support to the war effort. Over 150 faculty members signed the petition, and when it was presented to President Ruthven he signed, too, saying, "any loyal American would be glad to sign it."[65]

The Michigan Daily again attacked the President's position, this time more openly. "Students, faculty members and Regents have placed a sizeable share of the blame for our inadequate contribution to the war effort . . . on President Ruthven's own doorstep," the editors charged.[66] The following day Daily editor Homer Swander assailed Ruthven's

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[63]Ann Arbor Daily News, October 19, 1942, p. 5.

[64]Lynch to Ruthven, October 19, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 43, MHC.

[65]Ann Arbor Daily News, October 20, 1942, p. 5.

[66]October 20, 1942, p. 1.

"psychological attitude." Swander demanded fast, aggressive leadership, and he said of the Michigan President: "He has not been able to shake himself loose from his pre-war ideas and methods and he has let the lessons of the last war affect him too much."[67] However, in succeeding days the Daily published letters from three students who wrote to defend Ruthven's stand.

Ruthven also received staunch support from the state's newspaper editors. The Flint Journal, edited by Ruthven's close friend, Michael Gorman, deplored the action of the Regents in smearing the good name of the University and its president.[68] The Detroit Free Press called criticism of the University's policy "war hysteria by some super patriots." The editorial suggested that "what the University of Michigan needs is not so much a star chamber guardian of its faculty and president as it does a better board of regents." This article concluded: "Using newspaper headlines to 'try' an educator of the reputation of Dr. Ruthven doesn't strike us as 'cricket'."[69]

Bald reported: "President Ruthven remained calm during all this hubbub. He apparently was convinced that an investigation of the University's activities in furtherance of the war effort would reveal a well-rounded program of cooperation."[70] Yet if Ruthven remained outwardly calm, it is probable that he was upset by the public row the regents had created. He confided to Howard Mumford Jones that "some

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[67]October 21, 1942, p. 2.

[68]October 21, 1942, Reported in Bald, "Michigan in World War II," p. 95.

[69]October 21, 1942, p. 6.

[70]Bald, "Michigan in World War II," p. 96.

trustees and regents are taking a very narrow view of the responsibility of the institutions in these times."[71]

Just prior to the November meeting of the Board of Regents the President—as was his custom—addressed the annual dinner of the University Press Club, an organization of state newspaper editors. In one of his longest and strongest speeches Ruthven reiterated his resolve:

> Educators, whether preachers, teachers or newspapermen, are traitors if they do not cling to a faith in the ability of man to live in a state of independence, self-respect, and good will, and to activate this faith by the courageous dissemination of knowledge, by the encouragement of thinking even in the face of engulfing emotionalism. . . .[72]

During this speech Ruthven made a special point of deploring the recent incursion of technical curriculums which were prostituting the traditional humanities and "pure science," but he insisted that the universities were doing their part in winning the war.[73] The University Press Club was so enamored of Ruthven's remarks that it passed a resolution declaring: "The Press Club is happy that the University has such leadership in the emergency and extends to Dr. Ruthven good wishes along with its gratitude."[74]

Meanwhile, the University War Board drew up a 124 page document detailing its extensive activities and submitted it to the Regents' War

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[71] Ruthven to Jones, November 6, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 42, MHC.

[72] Alexander G. Ruthven, "Universities Today," November 6, 1942, "Miscellaneous IV" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 78, MHC.

[73] In 1945 Ruthven exchanged an interesting series of letters with Russell Kirk, then a sergeant in the army, on the subject of liberal education. Both agreed that there was very little educational value in the technically and vocationally oriented programs espoused by the military in war-time. Ruthven called these programs "education for death." See Ruthven Papers, box 52, MHC.

[74] Bald, "Michigan in World War II," p. 97.

Committee. The Regents' committee was apparently satisfied with the War Board's efforts for it "expressed its appreciation of this carefully prepared report which was made available so promptly."[75] It seems probable that the firm backing of the "fourth estate" and the prompt and thorough report of the University War Board were instrumental in deterring the "minority group" from forcing a showdown over Ruthven's war-time leadership.

President Ruthven encountered one other military controversy at the war-time University, although compared to the battle with the regents it was but a skirmish. This dispute concerned ROTC commandant William A. Ganoe, described as "self-confident, agressive with his views, and impatient."[76] Ganoe authorised an article criticizing the University's curriculum for producing "a hot-house, indoor, flabby manhood. . . . Too largely have we succeeded in turning out low-browed gladiators and high-browed anemics," the Colonel asserted.[77] Then he wrote directly to the regents to complain that the University would allow no more than twelve hours credit for ROTC.[78] Ruthven hastened to chastise the Colonel, and told him that his actions did not "contribute to good relations between the University units. In my opinion," said Ruthven, "it would have been much better if you had asked for a conference with Dean Kraus and the members of the Faculty Personnel Committee to discuss the matters which

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[75] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, November Meeting, 1942, p. 114.

[76] Peckham, Making of Michigan, p. 204.

[77] Bald, "Michigan in World War II," p. 48.

[78] Ganoe's letters to the regents were written on December 8, 1942 (see reference in Ruthven Papers, box 43, MHC), but no copies appear in the Ruthven Papers.

concern you."[79] Ganoe, in turn, retorted that he was "genuinely surprised" to receive Ruthven's letter, for "it is accepted practice for a head of a unit in the University to address the Board of Regents directly."[80] Ganoe was promoted by the Army; he left Michigan, and there was no further discord with the ROTC.

As the war continued, Dr. Ruthven turned his attention to the role of the post-war University. He felt that the confusing directives of the national government left universities "in the dark" and he asked the federal Budget Director, "Why, oh why, doesn't the President create a new cabinet position for education. . . . "[81] During 1943, following a visit to England at the invitation of the Ministry of Education and the British Council, he began to extoll the virtues of adult education as the best means of meeting the post-war educational demands of workers and ex-servicemen. The President continued his opposition to universal military training in peacetime, then under consideration, and he communicated his opinions to political and educational leaders all over the United States.[82]

Over 32,000 Michigan students served in the armed forces, and 520 of them died. In all, the Regents granted leaves to 223 faculty members for government service. Much of the classified research at the University was later cited as instrumental in winning the war. At war's end, President Ruthven had the satisfaction of knowing that the University

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[79]Ruthven to Ganoe, December 11, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 43, MHC.

[80]Ganoe to Ruthven, December 15, 1942, ibid.

[81]Ruthven to Harold Smith, January 31, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 40, MHC.

[82]See Ruthven Papers, box 49, MHC.

had made a major contribution to the national defense, while simultaneously preserving its basic reason for existence.

The Workers' Education Service: "What's good for General Motors . . ."

In October and November of 1943, when Ruthven journeyed to embattled England, he observed that a nationwide Workers' Education Service was carrying on an extensive program of educational discussions among laboring groups, even in the discomfort of bombed out buildings.[83] Tutors from the universities were the instructors. In the armed services, too, Ruthven noticed, the fighting men would meet to discuss their role in post-war Britain. Dr. Ruthven, a firm advocate of adult education even as early as the "platform statement," was impressed by the British example. Upon his return to Ann Arbor he spoke to the Michigan faculty and told them that British efforts in adult education had far outstripped the efforts in this country, yet the needs were similar. "Our universities," Ruthven told the faculty, "are still only very timidly looking over the fence at the field of adult education." He urged the educators to accept the responsibility for providing instruction for adults and out-of-school youth.[84]

Adult education was a major consideration of his 1943-1944 President's Report as well. He called the common assumption that education is only for the young "deplorable" for it "menaces national safety." Individuals who believe this, he continued, "are poorly equipped to perform the duties of citizenship, for they are inclined to react emotionally

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[83] Ruthven, Naturalist in Two Worlds, p. 64-68.

[84] Speech of Alexander G. Ruthven to the faculty, "Faculty" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 77, MHC.

instead of reasonably to mutations in their environment."[85]

Ruthven's next step was to confer with Charles A. Fisher, director of the University's Extension Service, and Howard Y. McClusky, who headed the University's adult education program. At this meeting the three agreed that the University should undertake, as soon as possible, a program of education for workers. They further agreed that a state-wide committee, to include labor leaders, should be appointed to advise the program. As a final consideration, it was decided that "a full-time person attached to the University staff" should direct the program.[86]

The 1944 state legislature provided the means for President Ruthven to see his fondest dreams take form, for that body voted $250,000 for an "experimental program in adult education" to be organized by the educational institutions of the state. The University of Michigan, already primed by its president, promptly offered a number of new programs which consumed the bulk of the state appropriation. The most significant of the new programs was the Workers' Education Service (WES). Its director was Arthur Elder, a former Detroit school teacher who was President of the Michigan Federation of Teachers, an American Federation of Labor (AFL) affiliate. The activities of WES were to be supervised by a six-man State Advisory Committee composed of two members representing the state, two representing the University, and the state secretaries of the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) and the Michigan Federation of Labor.

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[85] The President's Report for 1943-1944, p. 16.

[86] Memo of Ruthven to Fisher and McClusky, December 20, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 46, MHC.

The purpose of WES was to train the workers of Michigan to be better citizens. To this end, lectures or discussions were held either before or after the regular business sessions of local unions. These courses were taught for the most part by regular University of Michigan professors, although occasionally the instructors were high school teachers or union officials temporarily on the University payroll.[87] Topics were suggested by the workers themselves and included labor legislation, social security, labor's responsibility to society, parliamentary procedure, consumer's problems, and collective bargaining. In addition, WES sponsored conferences, films, and discussion forums throughout the State. Speakers for these programs were often recruited from the ranks of labor leaders.

By the close of the first year of operation, it was estimated that approximately forty thousand people took part in various WES activities.[88] The following year director Arthur Elder estimated that an additional three thousand workers had participated, and he noted that several other universities had sent representatives to study the Michigan program.[89] Charles A. Fisher, Director of the Extension Service, referred to WES as giving promise of becoming "one of the most significant and interesting developments ever undertaken by the Extension Service." Fisher reported that WES had "succeeded admirably" in gaining the "confidence . . . of organized labor" and "an increasing amount of

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[87]Wesley Maurer said that from the beginning Elder had been told by Fisher to live in Ann Arbor, and to employ only instructors from the University. Interview, February 20, 1970. Neither condition was adhered to.

[88]The President's Report for 1944-1945, pp. 266-268.

[89]The President's Report for 1945-1946, pp. 338-339.

respect from the industrialists." Fisher was cognizant, however, of "the controversial field in which Workers' Education Service operates" and he stated firmly that "no individual or pressure group can for one moment be permitted to dictate to those who teach in any school or department of the University."[90]

Nevertheless, there were indications that management was growing uneasy. Allen B. Crow, President of the Economic Club of Detroit, represented management's point of view and, as the Workers' Education Service began to attract more and more support from the workers, Crow complained to Fisher of the program's inherent dangers.[91] Ruthven responded for the University with this bit of sermonizing:

> The sound program of workers' education which we visualize for the State of Michigan should be equally supported by labor and management and it should have the result of teaching both labor and management the dangers of selfishness, the advantages of interest in the common welfare, and, above all, the fact that no one group has a monopoly on wisdom.[92]

Despite the storm warning, the President and the University forged ahead. Ruthven began to attract a national reputation as a leader in adult education, and was named by Governor Harry F. Kelly to the Educational Advisory Committee to develop a statewide adult education program. He became a member of the Committee on International Adult Education, and was elected to membership on the Executive Committee of the American Association for Adult Education. The University announced that, since the state appropriation for WES had expired, it would continue

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[90] Ibid., p. 340

[91] Crow to Fisher, March 27, 1945, Ruthven Papers, box 48, MHC.

[92] Ruthven to Crow, April 5, 1945, ibid.

the experimental program from its own general budget.[93] Ruthven expressed the University's backing in a letter to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Michigan Federation of Labor. "This program has proved so successful that it should not be dropped unless it is absolutely impossible to find funds for its support," the President wrote.[94]

By the end of academic year 1947, over 56,000 Michigan citizens were being served annually by WES. The report of the Director of the Extension Service again observed that the Detroit industrial area was the "hottest" in the United States, but he noted that WES was impartial in labor disputes, and its director was "honest, fearless, and intelligent, and . . . has established a program which is unquestionably one of the most forward-looking in the country."[95]

Early in 1948, WES director Arthur Elder was called to Washington to present the Michigan program as a model for a federal Labor Extension Service bill then under consideration by Congress. The bill would authorize $10 million (or $30 million--reports differed) in federal funds to be given to colleges and universities for the operation of special classes for industrial workers. Elder's support of the Labor Extension Service bill was seconded by Regent Connable, who also testified before the congressional sub-committee hearing on the merits of workers' education.[96] Economics professor Z. Clark Dickinson read a similar laudatory statement from President Ruthven into the record, and Victor Reuther,

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[93] The President's Report for 1946-1947, p. 16.

[94] Ruthven to John Reid, May 7, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 55, MHC.

[95] The President's Report for 1946-1947, p. 385.

[96] Connable told the writer that the director of public relations for General Motors had approached him and was "all upset and wondered why I was testifying in Washington." Interview, May 6, 1970.

Educational Director of the United Auto Workers (UAW), added his support. Press reports predicted that the bill should have little difficulty passing the Congress.

Everything looked rosy for WES but, as one follows the model program in succeeding President's Reports, it mysteriously faded from existence. The academic year 1947-1948 saw the number of citizens served reduced to 29,181, and WES rate only two terse paragraphs in the Extension Service director's report.[97] The following year there was no mention of WES. What had happened?

Management's uneasiness with WES increased to the point where General Motors Corporation (GM) apparently decided that it would be well to begin a surreptitious investigation of WES.[98] In April, 1948, Adam K. Stricker, Jr., a minor GM official, enrolled in a WES class taught by Sam Jacobs, like Elder a former Detroit school teacher who had become a union official. During the class meeting, labor pamphlets were distributed.[99] One pamphlet included a cartoon depicting C. E. Wilson, President of GM, applauding vigorously as a huge bull gored prostrate workers. (It was common knowledge that Wilson lavished money and affection on his prize bull). When he saw this pamphlet C. E. Wilson was obviously upset, for Regent Charles S. Kennedy soon reported to

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[97] The President's Report for 1947-1948, p. 361.

[98] Material on the Workers' Education Service fills most of boxes 81 and 82 in the Ruthven Papers, MHC. Unless otherwise indicated, this is the source of the background material in the text which follows. The story is a big one, and is worthy of further examination by future scholars.

[99] Jacobs claimed they were distributed upon request of the class as examples of union literature; Stricker claimed they were required reading.

Ruthven that he and Wilson had had a "long talk" and Wilson had "already taken some of the questions up with the Governor."[100] Stricker also reported his experiences directly to Michigan Governor Kim Sigler, and then went to Washington, where he testified before the House sub-committee hearing on the Labor Extension Service bill. Stricker presented the labor pamphlet as an example of WES offerings, and he charged that Jacobs was presenting a "Marxist idea of class economics with the support of public funds."

Predictably, in labor-tense Detroit the charges were headlined in the city papers.[101] President Ruthven refuted Stricker's charges as "a distortion of a very small incident," and he said publicly that Jacobs had a good educational background for teaching the course. Ruthven stated privately that Stricker's charges were part of a calculated campaign by GM to kill the Labor Extension Service bill then under consideration.[102]

Crusading anti-communist Governor Kim Sigler then called for a special meeting with the Board of Regents during which he disclosed to the Regents the results of a special investigation into WES by the State Police.[103] Media accounts of the meeting varied, but some radio

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[100]Kennedy to Ruthven, April 27, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

[101]See Detroit papers, May 19-21, 1948.

[102]Letter of Ruthven to Charles S. Kennedy, May 24, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC. The bill, which had seemed certain of passage, was never reported out of committee.

[103]It seems probable that the "evidence" from the "State Police investigation" referred to in the media was actually a series of booklets produced by GM. The booklets attempted to link the supporters of the Labor Extension Service bill with communist-front organizations. A set of these booklets is in the Ruthven Papers, boxes 81 and 82, MHC.

commentators and news editors claimed that Sigler had exposed the Labor Extension Service bill as part of a nationwide communist plot to take over all workers' education. The conspiracy rumors must have touched even President Ruthven, for Regent Kennedy wrote: "Be assured that I have not even the slightest suspicion that your colors are red or even pale pink but believe, as do all the rest of the Regents, that they are red, white, and blue, now and forever."[104]

If Ruthven remained above suspicion with the Regents, WES and its director did not. The Board, at its June meeting, agreed that WES programs then in session would be completed, but that, pending further investigations, no new WES programs would be scheduled.[105]

WES remained in limbo during the summer. For those connected with the program it was a time for soul-searching. It was generally agreed that Jacobs, as a union representative, was guilty of poor judgment in dispensing pamphlets so blatantly anti-management. Ruthven, wholeheartedly committed to the concept of workers' education, had had previous experience with C. E. Wilson and regarded him as "arrogant."[106] He did not want to knuckle under to pressure from GM. There is little evidence that the faculty felt any compulsion to retain WES; indeed, Professor William Haber later testified that certain faculty had "a number of

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[104]Kennedy to Ruthven, May 26, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

[105]Proceedings of the Board of Regents, Annual June Meeting, 1948, p. 1326.

[106]Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 30, 1970. On another occasion Dr. Ruthven told the writer that his friend Orm Hunt, a GM vice-president, arranged a meeting between Ruthven and Wilson, for Hunt thought that Wilson could profit from some of Ruthven's ideas about management. Ruthven recalled that they talked until three o'clock in the morning, but he "couldn't make a dent" in Wilson's autocratic managerial theories. Interview, February 13, 1970.

questions over a long time concerning the method of selection of teachers, the procedure in launching courses, the contents of those courses, teaching methods and related problems."[107] Two professors closely involved with WES recall that faculty interest in WES was, at best, "indifferent" and "apathetic."[108]

A number of letters from off the campus urged the President and the Regents to reinstate the program. One came from the Acting Secretary of Labor, John W. Gibson, who wrote:

> I have been very much disturbed to learn of current attempts to use an incident occurring in one of your classes to discredit the program within the State and also to embarrass the movement to secure the enactment of a national extension service for workers. . . . It seems to me that . . . you are developing one of the most comprehensive programs, a type of program that labor, management or the general public can sincerely support.
> . . . . . .
> It is my sincere hope that the university service for workers will continue to operate on an effective basis with full support from you and . . . the Board of Regents.[109]

As the Board of Regents had directed at its June meeting, the executive officers of the University made a full investigation of WES during the summer. It is not altogether clear what the executive officers recommended to the Regents. Their first report, signed by President Ruthven, Provost Adams, and the three vice-presidents, was presented to the Regents in September. Its major conclusions were: (1) The director of WES had "exercised poor judgment" in selecting

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[107]Statement of Haber, April 13, 1949, Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

[108]Interviews with Wesley Maurer, February 20, 1970, and Harold Dorr, February 6, 1970. Dorr used this analogy to describe the demise of WES: "If you have a lot of people striking at a snake with sticks, and the snake dies you can attribute the last blow to whomever you wish." Maurer attributed the demise more to General Motors than to faculty indifference.

[109]Gibson to Ruthven, August 10, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

Sam Jacobs as an instructor, and it had been "inappropriate" for Jacobs to distribute union pamphlets; (2) The WES should be more closely allied with the University's Extension Service; (3) Except for Jacobs' course, there was no evidence of propaganda, and there had been much of educational value in the program; (4) General Motors had no right to interfere with the University in a manner which disregarded the University's constitutional autonomy; (5) WES should not be continued if it has less than the wholehearted support of the Regents or if it has lost public confidence; (6) Despite Arthur Elder's enthusiasm and integrity, there are doubts about his judgment which give reason to question his remaining as director.[110]

In essence, this statement of the administrators equivocated. The program had been beneficial, but the University should exercise more control; General Motors had no right to interfere, but since it had perhaps the Regents should discontinue the program; Elder was expendable if necessary.

However, there is strong evidence that the September statement did not indicate the real opinion of the executive officers. On October 1 [italics mine] prior to any official action at the October 16 Regents meeting, Ruthven wrote this to Regent Charles S. Kennedy:

> I did not intend to continue to argue about workers' education. It has always been my opinion that the Regents and the administrative officers could have honest differences of opinion but when the decision had been arrived at we should all cooperate to make it effective. As you know, I believe the Workers' Education Service has done a very good job despite the fact that one mistake in judgment was made. I am convinced that Mr. Elder is thoroughly honest and that he did not stir up opposition to the Regents' action. . . . All this, however, is now quite beside the point.

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[110] "To the Members of the Board of Regents," September 21, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

> The Regents have come to definite conclusions. . . . I am quite content to let time decide the wisdom of our decision.[111]

In addition, there is an unsigned letter "To the Board of Regents," dated October 15, 1948, and probably written by Provost Adams. The letter states that the executive officers, the president included, "cannot refrain from expressing our conclusions." This letter went on to call unequivocally for the continuation of the WES program and the retention of Arthur Elder. "We believe," the letter stated, "that if the continuation of the program is authorized and Mr. Elder is dismissed, the intentions of the University will be misconstrued and it will not have the support of labor. We believe that, if this should happen, the effect will be as serious as if the program were discontinued."[112]

In retrospect, it seems almost certain that there was a fundamental disagreement between the administrative officers and the Regents concerning the future of WES and its director. It also seems probable that the Regents, in a power struggle with the administrative officers, had decided to overrule the President and his staff and dismiss Elder at least three weeks before Elder was notified and the official decision was announced. In all likelihood the equivocal September statement was either pap to please the Regents or an attempt by the administrators to defend regental action already arrived at.

At the October meeting the Regents agreed to continue WES as an "experimental" program, but to administer it entirely through the

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[111] Ruthven to Kennedy, October 1, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 59, MHC.

[112] Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

University's Extension Service. Elder was to be informed that his position was discontinued.[113] As a later commission pointed out, neither the Regents nor the administrative officers consulted the State Advisory Committee, the group ostensibly overseeing WES, prior to these decisions.[114] Press releases from the University stressed that the WES had always been and still was "experimental" and that administrative reorganization of the program had been contemplated even before the incident in Jacobs' class.

"U.M. Fires Teacher in 'Marxist' Row," bannered The Detroit News.[115] The Detroit Free Press also headlined Elder's dismissal. The Free Press quoted Elder as saying that the University administration had no part in abolishing his job. "Only the regents, acting under pressure from General Motors officials, are responsible for this apparent plan to kill off the Workers Educational Service," Elder declared.[116]

Twenty-one members of the "Staff of the Workers Education Service" signed a letter protesting with "utmost vigor" Elder's dismissal.[117] The University received a number of requests, including one from the members of the State Advisory Committee to WES, that Elder

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[113] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, October Meeting, 1948, p. 113. Elder received the news in a letter from Provost Adams, October 19, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

[114] "Report of Commission of Inquiry on the Workers Educational Service of the University of Michigan," an undated report prepared by the Michigan Committee on Civil Rights, Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

[115] October 20, 1948, p. 1.

[116] October 21, 1948, p. 2. A later Free Press editorial commended the Regents for bringing WES more closely under the aegis of the University. October 22, 1948, p. 6.

[117] Louis A. Golezynski et al. to Ruthven, October 29, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

be reinstated. These requests were considered by the executive officers and the Regents and denied.

On January 18, 1949, the University released a statement to the press that the Workers' Education Service program would be resumed at the end of the month. E. J. Soop, director of the University Extension Service [Fisher had died], announced that seven organized courses for workers would be held at the University's Rackham Building in Detroit. The courses would be conducted by members of the regular teaching faculty of the University. However, Soop's announcement included the proviso that additional courses, to be held in areas most convenient for workers, would be initiated at the request of the workers.

The attempt to resume the program did not satisfy labor. In fact, the program which had originally aroused the wrath of management now felt the sting of angry labor leaders. Barney Hopkins, secretary-treasurer of the Michigan CIO Council, said that his organization would not participate in the remodeled WES, a program which, Hopkins claimed, "is cleared only with the General Motors Corporation."[118] Robert P. Scott, secretary-treasurer of the Michigan Federation of Labor (AFL) charged: "The new program . . . gives no consideration whatever to the wishes or expressed needs of labor." He, too, called for Elder's reinstatement.[119] Organized labor then announced a boycott of WES classes and, when University of Michigan instructors appeared at the Rackham Building in Detroit, only one person was present to enroll.

"The difficulties we are now having are with labor rather than

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[118] Detroit Free Press, January 19, 1949, p. 17.

[119] Detroit Free Press, January 21, 1949, p. 7.

management. . . . ," Ruthven observed. He was "startled," he said, at the insistence of labor leaders that they should "hire and fire the instructors."[120]

On February 7, 1949, the University released this announcement:

> In view of the boycott of the workers' education program by organized labor and its effect upon the enrollment, the University of Michigan is withdrawing its program in this field. We regret that the response of the workers for whom the program was designed has not matched the efforts which the University has made to serve their needs. We shall continue to give consideration to the interests of workers in the general programs in adult education conducted by the Extension service of the University.[121]

Regent Kenneth M. Stevens had the last word. The Detroit Free Press reported that Stevens, speaking at a Republican caucus, "called upon Republicans to fight in the spring election to prevent labor unions and minority groups from gaining control of the University. . . . " "The caucus," reported the Free Press, "adopted a resolution endorsing Stevens' views and pledged a fight to preserve collegiate freedom at the University."[122] WES had come full circle!

Titular President

The campus crises of World War II ended and, as President Ruthven faced the inevitable post-war adjustments, he found that his administrative team had suddenly grown old. Retirement claimed Vice-President James D. Bruce in 1942 and Vice-President Shirley W. Smith in 1945. Vice-President C. S. Yoakum was asked to devote his full time to being dean of the graduate school. E. Blythe Stason, the youngster in the

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[120]Letter of Ruthven to Phillips Bradley, January 31, 1949, Ruthven Papers, box 59, MHC.

[121]Ruthven Papers, box 82, MHC.

[122]February 1, 1949, p. 15

group, expressed his wish to become full-time as Law School dean and surrender his responsibilities as Provost. At war's end Ruthven was himself sixty-three years old.

The President and the Regents began to search for a younger team. In October, 1944, the Regents formed a special committee to "survey . . . the administrative structure of the University."[123] In a letter to the Board the committee proposed that the provost should be the key appointment in a new administrative plan. The committee suggested for that post James P. Adams, a former Michigan economics professor at that time vice-president of Brown University.[124] The committee also suggested that Law School professor Marvin Niehuss become Vice-President in Charge of University Relations, and it was agreed that he would be a liaison between the legislature and the University. The Regents' committee thought that this plan, with the addition of a business officer to replace Vice-President Smith, "would leave the President in the position of counseling and directing the efforts of these men. It would leave him time to work on the longer range programs for developing the University," they added.[125]

President Ruthven concurred with these suggestions, and appeared pleased when Adams, Niehuss, and Robert P. Briggs (Vice-President for Business and Finance) accepted the proffered appointments. "I do not

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[123] Proceedings of the Board of Regents, October Meeting, 1944, p. 705.

[124] Adams had previously been recommended for dean by the faculties of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts, and the School of Business Administration.

[125] Letter from the Regents' committee on organization to "Board of Regents," November 7, 1944, Ruthven Papers, box 50, MHC.

believe it is possible to find three men more capable of sharing the administrative burdens," he wrote Regent Ralph Hayward.[126] Adams was forty-eight years old and both Niehuss and Briggs were forty-one.

At about the same time two crucial deanships were filled. Hayward Keniston of Romance Languages replaced the retiring dean of the Literary College, Edward H. Kraus, and physicist Ralph A. Sawyer replaced C. S. Yoakum, who died very soon after accepting the full-time deanship of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. Both appointments met with general faculty favor.

Very soon after the new appointments were announced it became apparent that President Ruthven was giving up many of the responsibilities which had been his. It was announced that Clinton P. Anderson, Secretary of Agriculture, would deliver the Commencement Address, for many years a Ruthven function. When a communiqué went to the University Senate listing University goals, it bore Provost Adams' signature.[127] Indeed, Adams increasingly appeared to be in charge of executive duties previously the province of the president. By 1946, Adams was communicating directly and frequently with the regents. When social psychologist Rensis Likert was approached to establish a survey research center, it was Adams who discussed the conditions of appointment. When Professors McClusky and Fisher disagreed about the control of the University's program in adult education they rested their case with Adams.[128] The Minutes of the Conference of Deans show that Adams dominated conversations there. The Ruthven Papers

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[126] Ruthven to Hayward, December 1, 1944, ibid.

[127] See "The University of Michigan: A Statement of its Policies," March 1, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 54, MHC.

[128] See Ruthven Papers, box 54, MHC.

indicate that, as Ruthven edged closer to retirement, Adams was taking the initiative on such crucial matters as faculty salaries and appointment of administrative personnel. It was generally assumed on the campus that Adams was being groomed for the presidency upon Ruthven's retirement.

The post-war changes seemed overwhelming to Ruthven. He felt strongly that the University's enrollment should not exceed 17,000 students.[129] The President's Reports from 1945-1946 onward reveal that the President's mind was constantly grappling with the problem of the University's optimum size. Yet, despite the President's desires, the crush of returning veterans, the expanding population, and the growing significance attached to higher education forced student enrollments to almost 28,000 by 1950.

Ruthven was suspicious of government research, for he feared that it would ultimately lead to federal control. Furthermore he foresaw a problem for the University if federal projects were not continuously funded. If projects were discontinued or even temporarily halted, Ruthven reasoned, the faculty attracted to Ann Arbor by these projects would have to be assimilated into the regular Michigan faculty. They would be unwelcome parasites, he felt. Again, despite the President's reservations, research on the campus blossomed, and by 1951 government and industry were spending over $3.1 million a year on sponsored research at the University of Michigan.[130]

The Regents began to talk of a University fund-raising program in the hopes of undertaking special projects which would not be possible

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[129] Interview, Alexander G. Ruthven, January 30, 1970.

[130] The President's Report for 1950-1951, pp. 388-389.

from state appropriations. Ruthven was skeptical. "I believe that while we want the University to receive substantial gifts, it would be dangerous to the future of Michigan to set up an organization with the objective of obtaining large sums for general use," he told Regent Ralph A. Hayward. "Whether the organization was successful or not, we might thereby give the impression that in our opinion the State should be expected to have diminishing responsibility for the support of higher education."[131] Ruthven also noted: "I have many times been informed by our alumni that a super-salesman would result in the long run in alumni irritation and in the drying up of support."[132] Nevertheless, a development program was begun, and Ruthven found himself the Honorary Chairman of the Mortimer E. Cooley Foundation and, later, the chief spokesman for the University's Phoenix Project, a $6.5 million endeavor aimed at exploring the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

As the Ruthven era at Michigan drew to its conclusion, the President appeared more and more the titular leader of the University. Instead of the usual weighty problems of university administration, much of his correspondence dealt with requests for better housing, responses to friends and prospective donors, admission of out-of-state students, and other problems essentially of a public relations nature. He confided to a zoologist friend of many years:

> As you undoubtedly know, higher education is in a boom period. The University of Michigan seems to be expanding all over the map. These institutions are also changing . . . so rapidly that I am beginning to feel out of place among them. For the first time since I have been in college work I find myself in considerable doubt as to the

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[131] Ruthven to Hayward, May 21, 1946, Ruthven Papers, box 52, MHC.

[132] Ruthven to Hayward, January 18, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 55, MHC.

futures of universities. It is possible to preserve the old values but I am not certain just how this can be done with the increase in size.[133]

The times were beginning to pass the President by and he knew it. He was ready for retirement when it came in 1951.[134] His tenure of office had been the second longest in Michigan's history and, upon retirement, he had more years of service than any other active state university president.

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[133]Letter of Ruthven to Calvin Goodrich, March 24, 1948, Ruthven Papers, box 57, MHC.

[134]Although Ruthven vowed to the Regents that he would not, as Presidents Angell and Hutchins had, serve a single day over the retirement limit, he finally consented to remain in office over the summer of 1951. President Harlan Hatcher replaced him in the Fall of 1951.

CHAPTER VIII

RUTHVEN IN REVIEW

The irresistible temptation, after having unfolded the record of Ruthven's relationship with faculty, students, and regents, is to attempt a dispassionate review and analysis of what the record reveals. The danger in attempting this is that universities are rapidly changing institutions; today's standards do not necessarily fit the standards of Ruthven's time. Take, for instance, the single striking example of student activists. Today's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) make the National Student League (NSL) or the American Student Union (ASU), the radical groups of the Ruthven era, seem almost reactionary by comparison. After the recent student revolts at Berkeley, Columbia, Cornell, and elsewhere it would be folly to equate the care and treatment of current radicals with that exercised upon their counterparts in the 1930's. The assessment of Ruthven's regime which follows, then, cannot escape some inevitable discoloration from recent events in higher education and current standards of effective university administration.

Peace and Progress

It has been written that the effectiveness of a university president can be measured by asking two simple questions: (1) Did he keep the peace? and (2) did he contribute to progress?[1]

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[1]Clark Kerr, The Uses of the University (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 38.

Under what conditions does peace exist in a university setting? Obviously, one answer is that peace exists when there is an absence of conflict. From the beginning Ruthven was a master at seeking out and eliminating potential conflict.

It was extremely important to him to "keep the University out of the newspapers." Ruthven realized that every controversial topic which was publicized inevitably made new enemies for the University. The contrast in the public relations approaches of Ruthven and his tempestuous predecessor was striking. Little believed in birth control and promoted its merits to civic groups all over the State; Ruthven believed in birth control and made casual reference to it in one speech to the faculty nineteen years after succeeding Little.[2] Little told the Ann Arbor landladies that they were gouging students for their rooms and therefore he would build dormitories to supplant rooming houses; Ruthven waited until there were so many students that dormitories were an obvious necessity even to the landladies. Little utilized faculty expertise to urge new bills on state legislators; Ruthven told the legislators that faculty experts were at their service whenever called.[3] Little held press conferences; Ruthven organized a University news service. Ruthven established cordial relationships with key newspaper editors of the state, and when there were controversies involving the President or the University, a "good press" was assured. Except during the war, it was not Ruthven's nature to speak out on national issues.

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[2]Alexander G. Ruthven, Speech to "The Club," December 11, 1948, "Miscellaneous IV" folder, Ruthven Papers, box 77, MHC.

[3]See letter of Ruthven to Ralph Stone, December 20, 1930, Ruthven Papers, box 4, MHC.

Neither was he a "joiner" of causes; despite frequent invitations he limited his national exposure to membership in such non-controversial organizations as the Conference of Thirteen Midwestern Universities, the Rhodes Scholarship selection committee, various adult education groups, and the governing board of the National Association of State Universities.[4]

Ruthven was also adept on occasion at changing the station of individuals whom he regarded as potential threats to peace. One thinks of the new positions created for Professors Kraus, Reeves, and Bruce, the dismissal of Cabot, or the "distinguished professorships" which enabled the President to replace two deans whose units were not as strong as he desired. Over the course of a twenty-two year presidency, however, these few displacements could hardly be called the work of a manipulator of people. On the contrary, Ruthven was usually patient, particularly with faculty, and rather than attempt to replace the few academics who were his detractors (for example, Dean Bates or Professor Louis Karpinski) he outwaited them, for they were old and near retirement.[5]

Ruthven's patience did not apply equally to student activists. They were, he felt, an irritant to be exorcised. The student purges in 1935 and 1940 were the work of the President; he preferred to face a temporary outcry rather than have the University subjected to the continuing embarrassment of activist-inspired publicity.[6]

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[4]He was president of the latter group in 1941-1942.

[5]Karpinski was a feisty old mathematics professor who delighted in harangues against administrators.

[6]A check of alumni files shows addresses for eleven of the eighteen survivors of the 1935 and 1940 purges. The writer sent letters to these eleven people asking them to give their account of the incidents leading to their dismissal and the effect of the dismissal on their subsequent lives. Three responded. One is a housewife who said she voted

When Ruthven sensed that trouble was developing his first thought was to call the contending parties together. Face-to-face discussion of disagreements, he felt, was a means of settlement much superior to letters or even phone calls. A standard Ruthven practice was to offer a conference to anyone disagreeing with a Ruthven pronouncement. Judging from the number of times this tactic elicited positive response from those who accepted his offer, Ruthven must have been particularly persuasive in informal tête-à-têtes.

Not only did President Ruthven seek to eliminate potential conflict, he promoted harmony by more positive methods. Certainly faculty participation in democratic governance is in itself a peace-maker, for faculty discontent smolders when crucial academic decisions are made by the often suspect administration. Ruthven's usual manner of choosing a new dean was a model of positive practice designed not only to find the best man, but also to gain his acceptance from those who would work with him. Ruthven described the procedure to the President of the University of Kentucky.

> The President and the Provost interview all the professors of the school or college individually. On the basis of the opinions of the members of the staff, the candidates are rated and then without divulging the ratings, the three or four principal choices of the staff are taken to the committee of the Board of Regents with the recommendation of the administration.[7]

Faculty involvement in this process, in the executive committees, and in the University Senate and Council fostered an institutional committment.

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for Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election; another is a physician active in positions of civic leadership; the third is a full professor at Case Western Reserve University.

[7]Ruthven to H. L. Donovan, May 28, 1946, Ruthven Papers, box 51, MHC.

It was also typical of Ruthven to allow the machinery established for academic governance to grind along until it produced a decision. Ruthven seldom looked for rapid solutions to complex problems, nor did he often interfere with either the method or results of a faculty or regental committee.

Ruthven's speeches, too, enhanced the atmosphere of prevailing calm he desired for his institution. A Ruthven speech was short, often included a few lines of self-deprecating humor, and was free from platitudes. He was not an orator, but he spoke directly to the issues in a manner his listeners understood. Reading the Ruthven speeches, one is struck by how seldom his rhetoric outran his reason for speaking. He made no effort to vary his remarks to please a particular audience, but a Ruthven address, no matter what the subject, was couched in non-abrasive terms and almost always elicited favorable responses. He was his own speechwriter.

Despite the demands on President Ruthven's time from alumni, legislators, and prospective donors, he was not—with the exception of some globetrotting for the Phoenix Project—an absentee president. Students found him available in his office or at the Ruthven teas. He worked hard. The Michigan Daily reported that Dr. Ruthven followed an "exhausting schedule" of University activities for six days a week, for he would rise at 6:30 a.m. and not retire until 11:30 p.m.[8] Even during the summer months at their vacation retreat in Frankfurt, Michigan, the Ruthvens were frequent hosts to regents, faculty, and friends of the University. From all reports, Dr. Ruthven was at his bucolic best in

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[8]May 21, 1951, p. 5.

the casual environment of his summer home, for his ready humor and unpretentious charm never failed to delight his guests.

So, if one uses the criterion of keeping the peace as an indicator of an effective university president, Ruthven receives very high marks indeed. It was appropriate that, when he was inducted as an honorary sachem into the Michigan honor society Michigamua, he was assigned the tribal name "Peace Maker."

Progress is more difficult to assess. One is inclined to ask immediately how much progress was possible during almost ten years of Depression deprivations followed by almost ten years of war-time weariness. One is tempted to say that a president afflicted not only with these national calamities but, in addition, with a contrary Board of Regents for almost ten years did well just to keep himself and his institution intact. On the other hand, one is also mindful that ordinary men are not chosen to administer an educational giant such as the University of Michigan. In fact, a common interpretation of history postulates that great men are able to control the direction of institutions despite the events of any given time. To assess progress, this question must be answered: What did Michigan accomplish from 1929 to 1951, and what did President Ruthven contribute to that accomplishment?

Unquestionably, Michigan progressed materially and absolutely. In 1929, student enrollment stood at approximately 13,000; by 1951 it was almost 30,000. The libraries in 1929 contained 718,425 volumes; by 1951 the number had increased to 1,472,837.[9] The faculty had grown to

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[9]Statistics in this section are from the President's Reports and from an "Extra" of The Michigan Daily, May 21, 1951. The figures differ depending on source; Peckham, for instance, lists enrollment in 1951 as 21,000 and library volumes at two million. (Making of Michigan, p. 216.) The differences result from the method of measurement. Some enrollment

over 1,300 by 1951; the 1929 figure was 804. Endowment funds had increased to over $20 million, approximately five times the less than $4 million endowment when Ruthven took office. Ruthven's presidency oversaw construction of the Law Quadrangle, Burton Tower, Rackham Graduate School, Health Service, Administration Building, School of Business Administration, new athletic facilities, and a number of residence halls. Building assets during the Ruthven reign increased from over $30 million to over $90 million. The annual appropriation from the state legislature was three times as large in 1951 as in 1929. It has been recorded that Ruthven's administration, like that of President Marion Burton, was characterized by unusual financial generosity to the University.[10]

As Allen Schoenfield reported in The Detroit News Pictorial, "no similar period compares with Dr. Ruthven's two decades for expansion of the university's physical plant or for the multiplicity of its activities. . . ."[11]

One suspects, however, that these figures, impressive though they are, are not necessarily meaningful. Saltations following World War II, for example, were common to just about all state universities. The war effort, which heated up the economy, and the return of the veterans assured that. In Michigan during those years Michigan State College experienced phenomenal growth, particularly following John A.

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figures include summer school and extension students; some librarians count each copy of a book as an additional volume.

[10] M. M. Quaife and Sidney Glazer, Michigan (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), p. 335.

[11] January 7, 1951, p. 13

Hannah's appointment as President in 1941.[12] It seems likely that the University of Michigan would have experienced growth—perhaps more, perhaps less—under another president. Furthermore, it must be remembered that Ruthven did not welcome growth per se with open arms; he struggled against growing government contracts and swelling student enrollments.

Perhaps more meaningful measurements of institutional progress would be possible if such elusive criteria as quality of faculty, faculty and administrative morale, faculty compensation, executive leadership, and the University's standing vis-à-vis other leading educational institutions were reviewed.

During the summer of 1929 and in the succeeding few years Michigan lost an extraordinary number of renowned scholars. Historian Ulrich B. Phillips went to Yale; Herbert F. Goodrich became dean of the Law School at Pennsylvania; engineering mechanics professor Stephen Timoshenko left for Stanford; and O. J. Campbell and Howard Mumford Jones of English resigned to accept appointments at Columbia and Harvard, respectively. Unexpected death felled such academic giants as historian Claude H. Van Tyne, philosopher Robert M. Wenley, sociologist Charles Horton Cooley, astronomer Ralph H. Curtiss, Max Winkler, head of the German department, and deans John R. Effinger and G. Carl Huber. The Michigan Alumnus took special note of the unusually heavy faculty attrition.[13] It was a difficult beginning for a president who professed that faculty excellence was his primary concern and whose Depression budgets would not allow

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[12]For a comparison of the growth of Michigan colleges and universities, see Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963).

[13]See Vol. XXXV, No. 36, (1929) and Vol. XXXVI, No. 23, (1930).

immediate replacements.

The 1932 edition of American Men of Science listed Michigan as having twenty-nine starred scientists, not including those retired or emeritus. In rank with other universities, Michigan placed tenth.[14]

In 1935 The Atlantic Monthly published a ranking of universities in order of their scholarly eminence. This report, based on a 1934 survey of the American Council on Education, listed Michigan as having fourteen academic departments of "High Excellence." Overall, Michigan was ranked sixth behind Harvard, Chicago, Columbia, California, and Yale.[15]

By 1947, the Director of Information Services reported that Michigan was ranked fourth (tied with Chicago) in the number of starred scientists. Only Harvard, California, and Columbia exceeded the University. It was also reported: "Michigan has more than 200 staff members listed in 'Who's Who in America,' probably the highest percentage of any major large university—more than 20 per cent of its regular staff."[16]

Two complete studies of graduate education bracket the Ruthven years. A 1925 study by President Raymond Hughes of Iowa State College placed Michigan eighth in overall quality of graduate instruction.[17] By 1957, a study by Hayward Keniston indicated that Michigan's overall standing had risen to fifth, and the quality of its graduate programs was exceeded only by Harvard, California, Columbia, and Yale.[18] A comparison of these rankings by academic discipline reveals that Michigan made substantial gains from 1925 to 1957 in the humanities, slight gains in

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[14]Edwin R. Embree, "In Order of Their Eminence," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CLV, No. 6 (1935), n. 657.

[15]Ibid., p. 655.

[16]Memo of A. L. Brandon to Life magazine, October 15, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 58, MHC.

[17]See Hayward Keniston, Graduate Study and Research in the Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), p. 119.

[18]Ibid.

the biological and physical sciences, and showed a slight decline in the social sciences.[19]

Again, one is disinclined to conclude outright that the University's faculty during the Ruthven era gained stature, or that Ruthven was responsible for such a gain. One can conclude, however, that faculty excellence did not decline and probably exhibited some gains.

Faculty morale is an even more elusive measure of institutional progress. The faculty probably appreciated President Little more than any other constituency of the University, for he was a vigorous man of ideas, a scholar and an orator, and they were not as offended as some by his personal foibles. They likewise appreciated Ruthven as an honest scholar—one of their own. He was content to wait for their collective judgment before moving new programs, he encouraged faculty participation in governance, and he was sound on the issue of academic freedom for faculty. Interviews with faculty from the Ruthven era reveal only a little of the suspicion with which faculty customarily regard their president. There appears to be very little evidence of faculty carping at either the President's policy or his person in the campus newspaper, SACUA minutes, AAUP records, papers of faculty, or University Senate and Council minutes. Four key lieutenants from the Ruthven years recall the President with respect and genuine affection.[20] Again, one recalls that times change; it was fashionable in that bygone era to regard university presidents with respect and even affection.

One element contributing to high faculty morale is compensation, and Michigan's faculty did not appear to fare especially well in matters of salary. A 1929 survey of instructors at the University disclosed that the average salary was about $2,100.[21] The Regent's Proceedings indicate

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[19]Allan M. Cartter, An Assessment of Quality in Graduate Education (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1966).

[20]Interviews with Erich Walter, Walter B. Rea, Marvin Niehuss, and E. Blythe Stason.

[21]The President's Report for 1929-1930, p. 20.

that salaries for full professors in 1929 averaged about $5,000. A 1926-1927 study of 302 American colleges and universities placed the average salary at $2,958 for all faculty at these institutions.[22] One can conclude from these figures that Michigan's salaries were above the national average, but not conspicuously so. Indeed, for a university enjoying a position of national prominence, they were low. Ruthven, in his first President's Report, noted with alarm that "the University is in danger of losing its most noted men because of inability to meet even approximately the offers made by other institutions." Other universities, the President declared, had offered some of Michigan's best men "salaries up to two and more times the salary they have been receiving."[23]

The lower ranks of faculty were the first to complain, for their needs were the most acute. SACUA reported that a number of instructors and assistant professors had trouble subsisting on salaries that ranged from $1,500 to $2,500 annually. In 1941, a SACUA study revealed, a junior faculty member could expect an annual budgetary deficit of 7 per cent.[24] In 1941-1942 the average salary for full-time, undergraduate faculty at Michigan was $3,805.[25] In 1943-1944 the average salary for a full professor in the Literary College was $5,606 and the maximum was $7,500.[26]

AAUP confronted the salary question in 1943, and resolved "that the President be requested to appoint a . . . committee . . . for the

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[22]Trevor Arnett, "Teacher's Salaries," Association of American Colleges Bulletin, Vol. XV, No. 1, (1929), p. 9.

[23]The President's Report for 1929-1930, p. 24.

[24]See "Special Meeting of University Senate," February 15, 1943, Ruthven Papers, box 44, MHC.

[25]See "Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions" questionnaire, June 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 56, (filed under "Visitors"), MHC.

[26]L. S. & A. Faculty Minutes, 1943-44, 1944-45, p. 998. Ruthven's salary at this time was $20,000.

purpose of investigating the economic status of the faculty. . . . "[27] The President designated SACUA to conduct the investigation, and Professor James K. Pollock began an exhaustive survey of faculty compensation. The Pollock committee reported that a published salary plan was essential, as were across-the-board raises, for "only one general university adjustment of salaries upwards has occurred in twenty years (budget year, 1943-44). . . . " The 1945 median salary for the whole university faculty was placed at $4,050, and it was noted that "in most cases salaries have not risen above the level reached in 1930-31."[28]

The executive officers responded by recommending salary increases to the Board; by 1947 the average full-time undergraduate faculty salary was $5,060, and the ceiling for full professors was up to $8,500.[29] Salaries continued to rise, and the local AAUP chapter responded to a national questionnaire by saying, "In 1948-49 and 1949-50 over 90% . . . received selective merit increases."[30] By 1951 SACUA was commending the executive officers and the Regents for "initiating plans for the salary increase . . . without pressure from the faculty. . . . "[31] Still, faculty reports indicated that cost of living was climbing even faster than faculty compensation and Michigan salaries when compared with other

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[27]Papers of the Michigan chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

[28]SACUA "Preliminary Findings and Recommendations," Ruthven Papers, box 49, MHC.

[29]"Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions" questionnaire, June, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 56, MHC.

[30]Papers of the Michigan chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

[31]"Report on the Economic Status of the Faculty," February 6, 1951, Ruthven Papers, box 64, MHC.

institutions continued to be only slightly better than average.

The record shows little evidence of faculty pressures for other incentives, so presumably these were not at issue during the Ruthven years. Teaching load, for example, ranged from nine to twelve hours in 1935 and from eight to sixteen hours in 1947, perhaps indicative of a slightly increased average workload.[32] On the other hand, faculty sabbatical leaves showed a slight increase during the period 1929-1936.[33]

In the matter of executive leadership, the Ruthven regime seems to divide itself neatly into two equal time periods. From the beginning until about 1940, Ruthven was a "mover and shaker." His initiative resulted in a "platform statement," a "Michigan System" of University organization, a scheme to replace the mill tax, and a program for residential living. To some extent, the force of his quiet leadership was controlling events and moving the University forward.

"Dear Prexy," the chairman of the journalism department wrote in 1939, "I felt very strongly that you had completed a great year and that the public had rallied to you, not only with approval, but with deep affection. You must have felt a sort of strident loyalty in the very air you breathed. . . . More power to you!" "Jack" Brumm concluded.[34]

In 1939, at the age of fifty-seven, Ruthven complained to "Pete" Little: "The only way to keep from being discouraged is to realize that

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[32]See 1935 national AAUP questionnaire, Papers of the Michigan chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC, and "Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions" questionnaire, June, 1947, Ruthven Papers, box 56, MHC.

[33]1935 national AAUP questionnaire, Papers of the Michigan chapter of AAUP, 1935-1959, MHC.

[34]Brumm to Ruthven, August 26, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 30, MHC.

new ideas are usually accepted only by the young, and one must be contented to let the graybeards die off in their ignorance and conservatism."[35]

As the decade of the 30's drew to a close, Ruthven appeared vigorously and confidently in control. With uncharacteristic braggadocio he told Dr. Karl Litzenberg, who was in charge of the residence halls, not to be afraid to raise the rents. "Do not be impressed by references to proceedings of the Board of Regents," Ruthven remarked, "the boat is where the captain says it is . . . The only approval you need is mine."[36]

Then, quite suddenly and almost concurrently, Ruthven collided with two unwelcome and unanticipated obstacles. One was a Board of Regents which began to question rather than support his policies. The other was World War II. After having so successfully negotiated the Depression years, Ruthven must have anticipated golden years of fulfillment for himself and his university. Instead he faced the frustration of one crisis after another. He was no longer able to control events and, when Provost Adams and a new administrative team took over in 1944, Ruthven became more the titular president than the persuasive leader he had been. This showed up even in his correspondence, for in the final few years of his presidency some letters would remain unanswered for as long as two or three weeks—a practice which he would not previously have allowed. One suspects that executive credit for the University's post-war progress must go more to Ruthven's administrative team than to the

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[35]Ruthven to C. C. Little, August 14, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 31, MHC.

[36]Ruthven to Litzenberg, July 16, 1939, Ruthven Papers, box 30, MHC.

President himself.

Executive leadership, of course, depends not only on the president, but on the quality of his administrative appointments as well. From all indications Ruthven's selections were almost uniformly good. Some faculty and administrators interviewed expressed reservations about Vice-Presidents Yoakum and Briggs, but all spoke favorably of the ability and dedication of Provosts Stason and Adams, Vice-Presidents Smith and Niehuss, and Deans Kraus, Sawyer, Anderson, and Keniston. One charge levied against some of Ruthven's appointments was "cronyism," but there is no indication that the deans in question were less than competent.[37]

In retrospect then, based on the twin criteria of peace and progress, Ruthven must be judged an effective president. Kerr has written that peace and progress are not always compatible and that peace must at times be sacrificed to progress.[38] Ruthven, on the other hand, seemed to operate successfully on the premise: If there is peace, progress will take care of itself.

The Man

However, to conclude that Ruthven was an effective president does not begin to explain the man, what motivated him, and why he reacted to specific situations as he did. A number of questions come immediately to mind. Why, for instance, did he remain as President for twenty-two years when his training and his primary interest were in zoology? Why did he react so arbitrarily to student activists but tolerantly allow

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[37]Dean Furstenburg of the School of Medicine and Dean Bunting of the School of Dentistry were summer neighbors and friends of the Ruthvens.

[38]Kerr, Uses of the University, p. 38.

the faculty to resolve difficulties itself? Why did he so mildly accept so many Regents' decisions which ran counter to his own views?

When one first talks with Alexander Ruthven, two seemingly contradictory aspects of the Ruthven personality are readily discernible: commonality and charm. Ruthven appears open, friendly and uncomplicated. He is a teller of anecdotes, yet he listens well to others. His interests at nearly ninety years of age appear to include any topic imaginable. There is no pomp and no pretense about the man.[39] There is a charming air of rusticity—perhaps even naivité—as a natural carry-over from rural Iowa and scientific expeditions in the field. He is immensely likeable. It is easier to think of him as a wise and kindly grandfather than as a man who consorted with magistrates, magnates, and potentates. Despite the commonality and charm, however, there is also a certain air of reserve, dignity, and even loneliness.[40]

Actually, this is in character for a man who always claimed to be a reluctant university president. We will never know how sincere Ruthven was in denouncing his own administrative ambitions—making light of administration is a popular gambit for any successful university executive—but the record indicates that he did not strive for power.

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[39]Letter of Norman Anning, mathematics department, to Professor Ralph A. Sawyer: "You suggest that I confer with the President. By visiting him in his office I have proved the truth of his statement that a little fellow with a little request gets treated as courteously as if he were a prince." January 29, 1940, SACUA files, administration building, University of Michigan.

[40]Ruthven felt he could not, as a university president, allow himself close friendships. He told an old friend from his museum days: "I find now that I get little satisfaction in looking back over the years. I have only done what my conscience dictated but in driving ahead I have failed to make friends and to enjoy life . . . the job has been a lonesome one. . . . " Ruthven to Calvin Goodrich, March 14, 1952, Ruthven Papers, box 63, MHC.

People who knew Ruthven well do not know his national politics; he was scrupulous in avoiding political clashes within the state (for example, he refused to take sides in regental elections); he preferred to limit his public exposure; and neither his memberships nor his utterances give any indication that he welcomed national attention in any way.

In fact, the reverse was true. It will be recalled that Ruthven was selected by the Regents because they had an overwhelming desire to see the University once again stabilized. Ruthven was their man. He did not attract attention to himself or his policies. He dressed conservatively; he spoke cautiously; when time allowed he gathered a consensus before making a judgment. None of the people interviewed ever recalled seeing Dr. Ruthven lose his temper. His natural inclination was to cooperate and reconcile rather than to confront.[41] Ruthven appreciated his role in the University's history and carried always in the back of his mind the dictum, "keep the University out of the papers."

This, and one other overriding motivation, guided many of his decisions in matters of controversy. He had a life-long love affair with the University of Michigan. A Michigan professor first introduced him to the wonders of zoology. His family and his friends were all Michigan people and, upon completing his term of office, he retired in Ann Arbor.

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[41] Ruthven was not happy when the newly-installed President of Michigan State College, John A. Hannah, began an aggressive campaign to set a regular season date for the UM-MSC football game and also criticized the University for offering correspondence courses in agriculture. "I will be glad to talk with Mr. Hannah at any time," wrote Ruthven to Regent Edmund Shields, "but I can tell you now that it will do little good because we do not, and never will, speak the same language." (October 16, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 38, MHC.) Yet within a few years Hannah was sending Ruthven gifts of produce from MSC agricultural experiments and a reconciled Ruthven was working hard to promote inter-institutional cooperation.

Erich Walter said:

> There's no question in my mind that he loved the University. In this sense it was almost as though it were a part of his family. He would have given his own life . . . if he needed to, to have kept this place from having any kind of mortal wound.[42]

There is one other facet of the Ruthven make-up which deserves mention. He was a man of integrity. Although he was inclined to be cooperative, there is no evidence that he was willing to grant unwarranted favors to anybody. When dealing with either students or faculty, Ruthven had little sympathy for a person if he perceived an untruth. Ruthven's own durability was possible because he honored "the facts"; there is no evidence in the Ruthven record of anything less than the truth as he saw it. He was consistent, whether consistency meant telling the same story in the same way to different parties or sticking to a cherished educational ideal over the years. Despite the entreaties of bank boards, Ruthven refused their offers of directorships until he had retired from the presidency. He noted that there could be "embarrassment in dealing with financial organizations with which I am associated" and he pointed out to the President of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company that "state supported universities are delicate plants which have to be nurtured continually in congenial soil."[43]

Ruthven's Legacy to Michigan

On balance, one can only admire a man whose ability, personality, and—perhaps most of all—character saw one of the leading universities in the world through twenty-two of its most difficult years. The trials

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[42]Interview, Erich Walter, February 24, 1970.

[43]Ruthven to A. J. McAndless, March 23, 1942, Ruthven Papers, box 39, MHC.

which confronted Ruthven cannot be emphasized too much; bringing the University intact through one crisis after another was perhaps his major contribution.

It must also be remembered that Ruthven's "Michigan System" was the forerunner of contemporary university organization and administration. To anticipate the present need for democratic faculty governance and shared administrative responsibility indicated remarkable prescience. Former vice-president Marvin Niehuss recalled that the organization which Ruthven established helped to keep faculty morale high during hard times and allowed Michigan to adjust more rapidly than other institutions when boom times followed the war.[44]

In fact, high faculty morale was characteristic of the Ruthven era at Michigan. This is somewhat surprising in view of the fact that Michigan's faculty salaries were never more than modest. Also, there is little evidence that Michigan attempted to attract top scholars from other institutions; the truth is that Ruthven frowned on raiding.[45] Despite these limitations, there was high morale and one main reason, apparently, was Ruthven's genuine regard for the ability of professional men to conduct their own affairs.

In retrospect, democratic faculty governance and shared administrative responsibilities at Michigan paid dividends in high morale and also—for Ruthven had the necessary patience—in progress for the University. In fact, the governing machinery which Ruthven had

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[44] Interview, April 30, 1970

[45] The writer asked Dr. Ruthven if he had ever tried to lure established scholars from other institutions to Michigan. He appeared to regard this as a silly question and dismissed it with a short and emphatic "no!" Interview, January 27, 1970.

established moved Michigan slowly and steadily forward even during the final years when his own executive leadership declined.

Still, the evidence indicates that Ruthven remained in the presidency too long. He apparently did not realize that, after World War II, the University's needs had changed, or perhaps he had put so much of himself into the institution that he was psychologically unable to surrender the presidency to another man.[46]

Until the post-war period, though, Ruthven demonstrated a keen appreciation for his place in Michigan's history. Just as on the national scene there was a yearning for "normalcy" following two world wars, following the controversies of the Little regime at Michigan it was natural for the Regents to turn to Ruthven. He represented a stabilizing influence; as such he was regarded by the Regents much as the American public regarded Presidents Coolidge or Eisenhower. It was Ruthven's role to combat the confusion and suspicion which followed in Little's wake. He did this successfully from the beginning—one has only to recall the effect of the masterful "platform statement" on a University community which yearned for positive direction. Contrasted with Little, whose long-term effectiveness was impaired because he persisted in speaking out on issues only tangentially related to higher education, Ruthven understood so very well that there are times when tact, discretion, and even silence best promote a university's interest. He was able, during the almost incessant years of crisis, to be the calm, confident, unflappable leader which the times demanded.

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[46]Erich Walter and others suggested that, as Ruthven became more familiar with Provost Adams, he became convinced that Adams was not the man to succeed him and stayed on to prevent the Regents from appointing Adams. Interview, February 24, 1970.

Ruthven and the University probably received more public criticism during the crises over the war effort and the Workers' Education Service than on any other occasion between 1929 and 1951. Whether Ruthven was "right" in these controversies depends on one's personal bias. Now that the evidence is in it is difficult to fault the University's achievement toward the war effort. Given such notable achievement, Ruthven's determination not to allow the war to change the University's basic academic objectives was all the more commendable. With regard to WES, it must be said that Ruthven appeared somewhat naive in underestimating the reactions to WES of first management and then labor. Ruthven the idealist saw WES as the model for educating the nation's workers for higher citizenship, a plan leading to eventual rapprochement between labor and management. Who can blame him for espousing such a worthy goal? But his enthusiasm for WES outran his usually cautious political judgment, and WES—which had little appeal for either the faculty or regents—fell easy prey to General Motors. The demise of the Workers' Education Service was perhaps Ruthven's keenest disappointment of his entire presidency.

No matter how one admires Ruthven, it is difficult to excuse the high-handed manner in which the President suppressed student activists. It will be recalled that students of that era claimed few "rights" and that the faculty and the public in general not only failed to condemn Ruthven's actions, in many cases they openly approved. Even given these caveats, the feeling persists that to arbitrarily dismiss students without regard for established disciplinary procedures, without stated cause, and without hearing was, to borrow a word used by one of the dismissed students thirty years afterward, "disgraceful." It was equally disappointing

to see Ruthven's continual behind-the-scenes attempts to suppress The Michigan Daily, particularly so since the President was a frequent and forceful speaker on the topics of tolerance and the necessity for free exchange of ideas in a university community. Ruthven realized that the student newspaper was a "hair shirt" designed to irritate the university president but, unfortunately, his response often appeared stronger than the irritation justified.

There were times when one must also question Ruthven's relationship with the Regents. Throughout the Ruthven story, but particularly when the influence of the "minority group" was felt, one is frequently surprised at the regents' lack of understanding of the roles of the various segments which constitute a university community. The regents were, generally, men of stature, experience, and dedication, but all too often they attempted to govern the University as if it were the more familiar bank, industry, or law firm. The example of a Regent Murfin calling for the removal of "communist" faculty, a Regent Lynch or Regent Hemans expecting personal favors, or a Regent Herbert overriding the unanimous and legitimate decisions of three faculty committees did not augment the view that regents are paradigms of wisdom.

In addition to these unhappy examples, there were larger issues (WES, the Hubbs episode) on which the President was overruled by the Regents. These issues involved important principles. Who, after all, was to make decisions on academic programs and faculty appointments? The President had stated very precisely very early in his regime that the Regents' responsibility was primarily to ensure fiscal stability and to educate themselves to the broad needs of the University. It was not their place to meddle in specific academic or personnel decisions.

Ruthven should have fought long and hard to retain this principle, even if it meant his own resignation. Instead, his protests were mild and his usual reaction was to remain "silent as the pillars of Angell Hall" until the turmoil subsided. There were times when Ruthven, by nature the mediator, should have become the gladiator, to borrow Clark Kerr's terminology.

He didn't, one surmises, simply because he loved the University and abhorred adverse publicity for it. He had pride, but it was more for the University than for himself. He did not believe that he was a man of such significance that his University should once again be convulsed by chaos because its President couldn't get along with his Board of Regents. "I was under no illusions," Ruthven recalled, "I knew I was just a garden variety president."[47] Despite Ruthven's own modest assessment of his abilities and despite the shortcomings already noted, the Ruthven story reveals a man and a president of many exemplary qualities. The history of higher education bypasses the Ruthvens of the university world for more glamorous leaders, but Ruthven made a positive and enduring contribution to his University. His main strength was his quiet, yet effective skill in dealing with his major constituencies—faculty, students, and regents. On balance, one would have to place Ruthven in the front rank of Michigan presidents. Indeed, Marvin Niehuss, who has been on the Michigan scene approximately fifty years, has said that Ruthven was one of the most able and the most underrated of all the University's leaders.[48]

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[47]Interview, January 27, 1970

[48]Interview, April 30, 1970.

Just prior to a particularly strenuous year, Ruthven told the aged Chase S. Osborn that in times of crisis he drew strength from a proverb taught to him by a Chinese friend: "Pure gold does not fear the furnace. I have no idea that I am pure gold," Ruthven hastened to add, "but if I am sound I will come out all right, and if I am not I will be destroyed, probably for the good of the institution."[49] Ruthven was sound, and his institution has prospered.

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[49]Ruthven to Osborn, December 26, 1941, Ruthven Papers, box 39, MHC.

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Without question the Alexander G. Ruthven Papers in the Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, are the indispensable resource in portraying any aspect of the presidency of Alexander Ruthven. The Ruthven Papers are the files of the President's official correspondence; they include very little of a personal nature. The Michigan Historical Collections has been given a grant to reorganize the papers of Michigan's presidents, and it is very likely that the boxes and materials referred to in this dissertation may be re-classified in the near future.

Of the regents' records available, the best by far are the Walter H. Sawyer Papers and the James Orin Murfin Papers. Both Sawyer and Murfin were leaders of the Board; both expressed themselves freely; and both kept careful records. There is little in the Michigan Historical Collections from the more recent regents; only the J. Joseph Herbert Papers are available, and these are fragmentary and of little use to students of University history.

The Shirley W. Smith Papers were a disappointment, for they contain mostly family correspondence and there is very little mention of University affairs. Likewise the papers of faculty members reveal only an occasional insight into University history, for they are limited primarily to professional correspondence.

Also on file at the Michigan Historical Collections are many of the speeches of Alexander Ruthven, as well as Ruthven citations, pictures, and newspaper clippings. Most of the major Ruthven speeches were published in various national periodicals, in The Michigan Alumnus, or in the Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review.

Published official documents of the University are an essential source of presidential history. The President's Reports are especially helpful in determining a chief executive's major concerns at a given time and also in comparing statistics, new programs, and institutional trends. The Proceedings of the Board of Regents record, among other things, motions, votes, business transactions, and faculty appointments.

The Michigan Alumnus, the weekly alumni magazine, is a boon to understanding the ongoing campus ethos. Although most alumni magazines are not known for candor, and The Michigan Alumnus is no exception, it is particularly useful as a tool in relating events and dates, and in gaining an overview of University activities. Its offspring, the Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review, is more a literary magazine than a chronicle of University events.

Of the available newspapers, the Detroit Free Press, the Ann Arbor News, and the Michigan Daily were the most helpful. The national news coverage, objective reporting of campus events, and liberal, reasoned editorials of the Daily throughout the 1930's and 1940's are especially impressive. Complete microfilm records of these papers and many others are deposited in the General Library, University of Michigan.

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The most complete source of University history to the 1940's is

Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey (1942-1958), edited by Wilfred Shaw. This four volume work is an indispensable reference tool, yet it is so replete with facts and figures that very little campus "flavor" emerges from its pages. For anecdotes, traditions, and general "flavor" there is Sagendorph's Michigan: The Story of the University (1948). Shirley W. Smith's biographies James B. Angell: An American Influence (1954) and Harry Burns Hutchins and the University of Michigan (1951) are a nice blend of nostalgia and authenticity. The most recent of the Michigan histories is Peckham's The Making of the University of Michigan (1967). It, too, is an indispensable reference tool, although one wishes that Peckham had drawn more from primary sources.

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