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May 11: National & Campus Issues Spark Full Day of Activities

In one of the most dramatic days in the 69-year history of Rockefeller University, representatives of all segments of the campus community joined May 11 in what was variously described as a "strike," a "work stoppage," and a "teach-in and meeting" sparked by concern over the future of the nation and the University. The climax of the all-day outdoor program, organized in large part by a volunteer task group of employees, students, and faculty, came in an hour-long afternoon session at which David Rockefeller, chairman of the board of trustees, President Seitz, and Joseph Richardson Dilworth, trustee and treasurer, all in shirtsleeves, addressed an audience of about 300—roughly 20 percent of the University community—seated on the grassy mall between Caspary and Flexner. The three administrators came to the gathering at 2:15 directly from a regular trustees' meeting, which had been held off-campus. Meanwhile, since mid-morning, the campus audience had been listening to an array of speakers on the political and economic implications of the war in Vietnam and the role of the University in the march of events. Professor Jules Hirsch, representing the Faculty Executive Committee, acted as chairman. Free sandwiches and cold drinks were provided by the strike committee so that the program could continue uninterrupted and all employees, students, and faculty could participate if they wished. Earlier, Dr. Seitz had agreed that everyone was at liberty to attend the day's events after making appropriate arrangements with immediate supervisors for staffing essential services, and that campus facilities would be made available for the meeting.

FOUR MAJOR ISSUES

Four themes dominated the debate and the discussion.

1. Opposition to the invasion of Cambodia and concern with the domestic and international impact of the war in Southeast Asia.

2. Concern at the increasing use of armed troops as a means of containing campus dissent, symbolized by the re-



Meeting, May 11, on lawn between Caspary and Flexner Halls

cent tragedy at Kent State University in which four students were killed.

3. A campus plebiscite urging the University to cast its proxy vote as a General Motors stockholder in favor of the proposals of Campaign GM.

4. The status of the University Judicial Committee.

Growing sentiment for campus action came to a head on May 8 at a general meeting (*photo, page 3*) in Caspary Auditorium, chaired by Graduate Fellow Daniel M. Farrell. At the peak, 310 individuals were in attendance. On a motion to hold a strike, 186 voted approval, 29 voted against, and 20 abstained. A second motion—to send a telegram to Mr. Rockefeller and the other trustees inviting them to attend the May 11 meeting and join in open discussion on the four issues outlined above—was carried by a vote of 297 to 2, with 11 abstentions (*see text, page 4*). The meeting then broke up into workshops.

Later in the day, 212 faculty members held a meeting to discuss the question of what action, if any, to take on May 11. On the question of whether

or not they favored taking action, such as a work stoppage or strike, there were 194 in favor, 3 opposed, and 11 abstentions. On the question, Should it be at least a three-hour work stoppage? there were 183 for, 9 opposed, and 20 abstentions. A final question was whether or not there should be an all-day strike. On this 87 voted in favor, 59 were opposed, and 15 abstained.

ENDORSE COMMITTEE

The faculty members then voted—211 for and 1 abstention—to address a letter to Dr. Seitz and the trustees deploring the course of the war and the Kent State tragedy and inviting them to join in a discussion of the issues (*see text, page 3*). By a vote of 206 for, 1 opposed, and 5 abstentions, the group endorsed the formation of a political action committee to explore what can be done in the way of continuing action to bring about changes in current governmental policies. In addition, it was agreed that two resolutions on Southeast Asia would be made available at several campus lo-

cations for faculty members to sign.

On Sunday evening, May 10, a group of about 50 individuals, some carrying "strike" placards, "stood vigil" on the walk leading to the President's residence as trustees arrived for a formal dinner.

On Monday morning, the campus was decorated with signs and placards. Tables piled with instructions, statements, petitions, and resolutions dotted the various approaches to the campus. Marshals wearing white armbands and buttons helped to coordinate the activities. Dr. Hirsch introduced the first speaker, Rabbi Bruce A. Goldman of Columbia University, shortly after 11. Other speakers included Sam Meyers, president of Local 259, United Auto Workers, economist Victor Perlo, Tony Mazzochi, a director of the Union of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, and Gerry Manning, an associate professor at Rutgers University.

By acclamation, the assemblage approved the draft of a telegram to be sent to President Nixon regarding Vietnam and campus unrest (*see text, page 4*).

CAMPAIGN GM

Graduate Fellow Andrew E. Balber spoke on the Campaign GM issue. In a plebiscite held at the University this month, 476 (out of 520 voting) favored urging the board of trustees to vote the University's proxy at the annual GM meeting on May 22 for a non-management slate of propositions demanding greater corporate attention to environmental problems. Forty voted no, two voted yes with qualifications, and two ballots were blank. Mr. Balber, plebiscite committee chairman, contended that unless the trustees voted in accordance with the results of the plebiscite they would be taking a stand against the concept of a "democratic university."

About 2 P.M., Dr. Seitz and the other trustees returned to the campus and joined the audience outdoors. Mr. Rockefeller spoke first (*photo, page 1*) and was followed by Dr. Seitz and Mr. Dilworth, who read statements from the board on Southeast Asia, the Kent State tragedy, Campaign GM, and the Judicial Committee. Both the Campaign GM and Judicial Committee actions were questioned by several speakers, sharply in some instances.

In summary, these were major points made by the three speakers.

Mr. Rockefeller: Expressed his delight at the growing interest in and concern with issues being shown at the University. The trustees for some time have thought it would be desirable to have on the board individuals who would furnish additional channels of communication to the campus community. The board has decided to establish a new category of trustee—two in number—to serve for three years on a rotating basis. One would be selected from the faculty and the other from the ranks of alumni. In the coming weeks, the administration will consult on this matter with students, alumni, and faculty.

Mr. Dilworth: Took cognizance of the plebiscite on Campaign GM and communicated the board's concern for problems of the environment, but explained that the board had decided to abstain from voting the University's

stock on May 22. The board's reasons are contained in a full statement on page 3.

Dr. Seitz: Read three statements from the board—one on Vietnam, another on Kent State, and a third on the Judicial Committee (*pages 2 and 3*). In the last statement, the board reaffirmed the need for such a committee, but raised several questions about its authority and activities which, it felt, called for clarification. The board recommended that "the administration of the University formalize and place in operation as soon as possible a grievance procedure..." The statement on the Judicial Committee was followed by a lively exchange between Dr. Seitz and members of the audience regarding the steps leading to the formation of the committee.

The program for the day concluded with workshop sessions and a "reassembly," chaired by Graduate Fellow Steven Green, to consider future action.

Texts of Statements and Communications

Trustees: War in Southeast Asia

Each member of the Board of Trustees of The Rockefeller University joins with all those in the University community who have expressed strong hopes for an early peace in Southeast Asia.

The Board believes that the University should not present a single view, as an institution, on political, social, and economic matters outside the normal range of University activities. Rather, the Board believes that because there is a wide spectrum of opinion within the University community on most political issues, particularly foreign policy issues, each member of the University should act on his own initiative according to his own judgments. The Trustees have followed and will continue to follow this course, and will also continue to exchange views with others at the University.

The Trustees endorse the all-day discussions on Monday, May 11, to consider, among other topics, various views on the war in Southeast Asia. Several Trustees will participate in these discussions.

Trustees: Kent State University

The Board of Trustees has observed with

great sorrow the tragic events which occurred on the campus of Kent State University in recent days. It laments the needless death of four students whose years of full promise lay ahead. The Board expresses its deep regret at the unfortunate circumstances which made this disaster possible.

Trustees: Judicial Committee

The Board of Trustees of Rockefeller University authorized the creation of the Judicial Committee of the University, as part of its response to the requirements of Article 129-A of the New York Education Law, in order that the Committee could direct its attention to matters related to the maintenance of Public Order on the campus. While reaffirming the need for such a committee, the Board notes that in constituting itself the Committee has apparently proposed assuming far wider authorities. The Committee is newly formed and its proposed authorities have only today been put to the Board. Furthermore, time has not allowed the Committee to establish a clear-cut pattern of jurisdiction and actions on which its activities can be evaluated. For



*General meeting in
Caspary Auditorium May 8*

this reason I believe it is premature for either the Administration or the Board to consider these matters at this time. However, the Board has suggested and I propose, to appoint a Committee of 12 to work with us in resolving these matters in the period ahead.

I might also note that with respect to matters related to employee grievances, the Board also recommended that the Administration of the University formalize and place in operation as soon as possible a grievance procedure—a procedure that the Board has been actively considering for some time.

Trustees: Campaign GM

The members of our faculty, graduate student body, and employees spontaneously conducted a plebiscite and by a vote of 476 to 40, out of a total of 1,300 possible voters, urged that the University cast its proxy votes in favor of the proposals of Campaign GM.

The Board intends to communicate their profound concern for the problems of the environment to the Directors and Management of GM. The Board will offer the University's assistance, where relevant, to GM in trying to solve these problems, which must be solved aggressively and at an early date.

While we have decided not to follow the recommendation of the plebiscite,

we do wish by this statement to evidence our deep concern that science and the products of scientific discovery shall serve the welfare of mankind and that its by-products should not defeat or undermine this purpose.

The Board believes that a successful plan for meeting the nation's environmental needs must be based upon cooperative efforts among government agencies at the federal, state and local levels, together with the academic and industrial communities. These cooperative efforts should be aimed at achieving wise use of our technology within a framework of comprehensive laws on environmental standards. No one company or industry can accomplish this task. The Board noted that such efforts have, in fact, been successful in the past, as in Pittsburgh's smoke abatement program after World War II.

The Board believes that "cooperative" relationships leading to a working partnership are essential for success in solving environmental problems.

Despite the fact that many people in the financial and investment world for whom we have the greatest regard—as well as some of our Trustees—have urged us to vote for the GM management, the majority of the Board feels that this matter has become so political in nature that it is advisable for the University in

its corporate capacity to abstain from voting its shares of GM in this particular instance.

Faculty: Letter to President Seitz and Trustees

At a meeting of the Faculty of The Rockefeller University on Friday, May 8, 1970 the following resolution was adopted:

We share a deep and continuing concern at the present course of the war in Southeast Asia and particularly with its recent expansion into Cambodia. We are convinced that continuation of present policies can only lead to greater domestic and international tragedy.

We are equally concerned about the increasing use of armed troops as a means of containing student dissent. The recent tragedy at Kent State University illustrates the dangers of this approach; the general reaction to this event points out its capacity to further polarize and divide the nation.

Recognizing your individual and collective influence in national and international affairs, we urge you to use the means at your disposal to seek a rapid termination of the war. We would also urge you to counsel against the use of armed troops on college campuses.

We invite a response to this letter and invite you to join with us today in a discussion of these issues.



General Telegram to Trustees

We faculty members, students, and non-academic employees have met to discuss the invasion of Cambodia, the violation of the bombing-halt over North Vietnam, and the murder of four students at Kent State University. We have called for a general University strike on Monday, May 11, to protest these events.

We have resolved by a vote of 297 to 2 (with 11 abstentions) to request you to adjourn your meeting on Monday at 2 P.M. to meet with the entire University community for an hour in order to discuss these events and certain issues on our campus including the future of our Judicial Committee and the voting of the University on the Campaign to make General Motors Responsible.

At a time when communications across the country are breaking down, we at Rockefeller University would still like to approach our problems through open dialogue. You could greatly aid us in this goal by joining us at this meeting.

General Telegram to President Nixon

Dear Mr. Nixon:

We are a large group (about 350 strong) of faculty, students, and workers on strike today (May 11) to protest your continuing escalation of the war in Indochina and the intolerable domestic repression that is being waged against your critics at home—particularly against black people and students, who are being killed for their efforts to obtain their own rights and to exercise their right to dissent from your war policies.

We at Rockefeller University are scientists, future scientists, and workers engaged in various capacities that enable essential scientific and medical research to be carried on. Our work is important

to us and, we think, to our country—indeed, to the whole of mankind. Hence, it is not without serious reflection that we stop this work. However, we feel that if there is any chance that our earnestness in this action will convince you to abandon your war policies and end the terrible bitterness that is dividing our country, it is worth sacrificing the time we devote to our research.

The motto of our university is "Pro Bono Humani Generis." It is for the good of humanity that many of us do the work we do and it is for the good of humanity that we strike today and demand that you stop the senseless slaughter that has been going on for so long in Indochina and is becoming appallingly common in our own country.

We do not want a written reply to this telegram, from you or any of your aides. We are prepared—indeed anxious—to send representatives from among our faculty members, students, and employees to discuss our reaction to your war policies and to hear your reasons for policies the rationale of which we simply and sincerely cannot understand.

Statement on Campaign GM by Plebiscite Committee Chairman

The most important feature of The Rockefeller University plebiscite on Campaign GM was that 92% of the 520

voters approved of a question that specifically requested the Trustees to vote University stock in a manner that would benefit the general community. The plebiscite on Campaign GM was not, therefore, only an endorsement of the five specific proposals on the ballot and a statement of concern about corporate irresponsibility. It was also a mandate for the Trustees to act. As such, the plebiscite marks the first time that the University community has acted to influence a Trustee decision. The mere fact that so many people participated in the plebiscite indicates that the idea of a democratic university in which employees, faculty, and students all share in making important decisions, including financial decisions, is extremely widely accepted here. Hopefully, the Trustees will indicate that they too accept this idea by following the mandate of the University community by voting for the Campaign GM proposals.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

By Henrik Boudakian, Eduard Kloesman, and Lewis Koster.

