Sproul, Robert Gordon, 1891-1975
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On seven of its eight campuses, students, alumni, faculty and friends of the University of California are this week celebrating, with appropriate ceremonies, the 85th anniversary of that day in 1868, when the University received its charter from the State, and took up its task of the long years. On each of these campuses, the children of Alma Mater hear of the gifts she has received, reach out to her with proud and affectionate regard, and wish for her many happy returns of the day.

At this dinner there is an added and special reason for our presence, in the opportunity afforded us to mark the new and less centralized administrative organization, which has recently been established and hail the inauguration of two Chancellors, who have been appointed to share with the President the heavy responsibility of directing the activities of the far-flung, statewide University of California. To the advent of these Chancellors for the major campuses, at Berkeley and Los Angeles, I respond with deep satisfaction and immense relief. Among all the gifts which have come to Alma Mater in the past year, Dr. Allen and Dr. Kerr are the most gratefully received by me, and the most warmly appreciated.

Appropriate to this occasion, also, I am sure you will agree with me, are a few words of congratulation to our University on the leading role she has played in the progress of our State. Throughout the 85 years of her life, she has been the standard bearer of our whole system of public education. Together with her sister institutions, both public and private, she has been the mainstay of the professions, and the prime agency of recruitment for the sciences and the arts. The names of her students and graduates crowd the honor rolls of three wars, and of public service in times of peace. In the nurture of modern knowledge of man and his universe, and in the notable advancement of science, technology and medicine in our time, she has played a full and fruitful part. By every test she has proved herself an indispensable instrument of the culture and progress of our people.

This greatness of the University has been achieved by adherence to three cardinal principles which together constitute its traditions: first of these principles is the spirit of pioneering which was the heritage bequeathed to it by the founders, and which has found expression in the freedom and vitality and resourcefulness of its teachers and students. Second is the conviction that great universities can be made only by great scholars, and that the only relevant criteria for faculty appointment or promotion, therefore, are professional competence, personal character, and loyalty not only to country but to truth. Third is the principle of unity, of the coordination of diverse talents and activities in a single, supreme academic effort by one statewide institution. These are the principles and the tradition of which the Chancellors and the President are the proud custodians, and to which each of us is sincerely and wholeheartedly devoted.

So much for the record of the past, but what of the present and the future? In these times of international stresses and domestic strains, of arbitrary actions of goverment, and wildly fluctuating demands for university education, and of jet-propelled inflation of costs: of concentrated public interest in peripheral academic aberrations almost to the exclusion of academic contributions to national security; universities have not been able, any more than government or any other of the agencies of society, to pursue the even tenor of their ways. On the contrary, they have been plagued with many new problems and at times have found the going very rough. That they survive and remain basically sound reflects public recognition of the central role they play in our national life; realization that they are the gateways to the professions—to medicine, and law, and teaching; the foreign service, and even military command; confidence that they shape well the ideas and the ideals of a significant fraction of our youth, and that they are, therefore, the best sources of that informed and dedicated leadership which is needed in critical times.

Nor am I thinking, when I speak of leadership, in vague generalities. On the contrary, I am thinking and speaking of leadership expressed in terms of direct contributions to national defense, to the understanding of freedom, and to the advancement of peace. All of you, I am sure, are familiar with the major part played by our University, and others like it, in the training of military personnel and the development of new weapons during World War II; and in the fields of strategic intelligence, psychological warfare, and military government. The success achieved by American higher educational institutions in these areas is attested by the support which the Federal government is today giving to research in colleges and universities—hundreds of millions of dollars a year; by the official designation of the R.O.T.C. programs, by the Department of Defense, as the major source of officers for the Army, Navy and Air Force; by the imploring cries of defense industries for an increase in the university output of scientists and engineers; and by special Congressional legislation to protect the continuing flow of young physicians from the Medical Schools.

Not so familiar are most of us with the part played by American colleges and universities in the creation of ideas, the development of techniques, and the training of personnel for the multifarious agencies that are seeking a better international order, and laying the foundations for a peaceful world. There are in 1953 neither the many worlds with which statesmen of the past have struggled, nor the one world of which they dreamed. Instead, there are two worlds separated from each other by a wide, deep and little explored chasm, dark with ignorance, fear and suspicion. As a renegade engineer I know that bridges to span this chasm will be exposed to great stresses, and will require a strenth of materials almost incalculable. Indeed, I would not tonight hazard the prophecy that bridges strong enough to stand can be built. Yet the effort to build them must be made. For, as Abraham Lincoln said long ago, a human society will not for long endure where men are half slaves and half free.

Of one thing we may be sure, namely, that, to build these bridges between the two warring worlds, will require far larger resources of knowledge than are now available, and in many fields other than science and technology; resources that can be increased only by more and better trained geographers, economists, political scientists, psychologists, statisticians, and other experts conversant with the life and institutions of every people on the globe. It will require, too, that knack of simple, convincing, and persuasive exposition of the fruits of knowledge in public policy which has characterized true leaders of the people such, for example, as Churchill of Britain and Washington of our own United States—exposition which is doubly difficult in an age when wise men seem to be held in lesser esteem than wise guys. For intellectual resources, such as these, our government must look to the colleges and universities, and the schools that prepare for them. There is no other consistent and reliable source.

Yet the very nature of universities makes them suspect in the minds of too many of our people who, in their proper anxiety about Russian Communism and the subversive activities it spawns, raise questions as to whether or not universities may be relied upon to guard the security of the Republic as well as their own freedom; and as to whether or not their faculties are loyal to the United States and its form of government, as

well as to the ideals of scholarship and academic freedom.

Nor are these questions easy to answer, for a university, in the public interest as well as its own, must be hospitable to an almost infinite variety of opinions and theories, not all of which will be immediately popular, and some of which many of us will look upon as absurd and dangerous. Yet, a university must support its professors at times in the study and discussion of such ideas, relying upon constant critical evaluation of wild ideas by the overwhelming majority of sane scholars, and upon the invincibility of truth in competition with error. The essence of a university, as of a democracy is its belief in the dignity and worth of the individual, and since the distinctive element in the individual is his reason, a university must put its faith in the ultimate triumph of reason. To interdict this immemorial tradition of universities would be to destroy their very substance, and inevitably to deprive society of all the benefits they now bring to the achievement of its noblest purposes.

There is, of course, a line at which the freedom even of universities and scholars must stop. For example, no university can tolerate as members of its faculty those who are members, also, of the Communist Party, for the keystone of communist doctrine is the infallibility of the party leaders, and the unquestioning acceptance alone of the party line as absolute truth. To make such a claim is to foreclose academic freedom in any real sense, and to destroy all its values, for the truth of the leaders is not subject to any higher conception of truth, or even to critical analysis and honest debate. Truth in a communist university is what the president says it is, and the professors accept it or else. In an American university truth is something with which the president is supposed to have no more than a bowing acquaintance, and which the professors regard as a scroll continually unfolding as they come to understand it more fully.

Appointment to a university position excuses no one from the affirmative obligation to be loyal and diligent in his citizenship, just as he must be honest and independent in his scholarship. Therefore, if he becomes a member of an organization that advocates the violent overthrow of our form of government, or if he accepts or advocates such principles himself, he forfeits all right to membership in a university, whether it be public or private. Moreover, "academic freedom" exempts no man from his duty to cooperate fully with duly constituted agencies of government, acting within the limits of the authority granted them, in the discharge of their functions of investigation and the prosecution of wrong-doing. Nor does it insure him against punishment if he refuses to cooperate, even under the protection of the Fifth Amendment. Indeed, it seems to me that a professor who refuses to state frankly where he stands on matters of such deep public concern as membership in the Communist Party, does not deserve membership in a university faculty. This is to my mind the very minimum both of the public and professorial responsibility of a scholar.

Unfortunately, the practical problems that must be faced in the application of the principles I have stated are not always simple or their solutions easy to see and to apply. We must not sacrifice our cherished values as a free people, in our efforts to make these more secure, for both freedom and security are necessary to our way of life. There is clearly a communist threat that must be faced, and communist infiltration and subversion that must be destroyed, but there is also a clear and present peril that we may lose our liberties by the very means we employ to defend them. As educated persons who are deeply committed to the cause of liberty under law, we must continue to believe that the only sure defense against communism is a working faith in the creed of democrary.

Confronted by the dilemma inherent in all choices between freedom and security, between free enterprise and government control, our University, betrayed although it may have been by a very few individuals, has made its clear choice. By the official word of its Regents, its administration, and its faculties, it has condemned every form of totalitarianism and its advocacy, and most of all the Communist Party and communist infiltration of the teaching profession. It has demonstrated by its acts that it shares the determination of the American people that an international conspiracy shall not destroy the American Republic. On the basis of the record, it bespeaks from you, its alumni and friends, the confidence and support it deserves. On the timeliness and

wisdom of your considered judgment and decisions, it believes in all sincerity, rests the future of our country, and to a great extent the course of world history.