



Committee on Academic Freedom's Recommendation on Rule 17, November 20, 1951

The Chairman of the Committee on Academic Freedom received the following communication, dated November 20, 1951, signed by fifteen members of the faculty:

"Recent reports in connection with the ban on Max Shachtman raise a number of questions of concern to the faculty. May we hope that your committee will investigate and report to the Senate as soon as possible?"

The Committee strongly endorses the University's declared purpose, as stated in University Regulation No. 17, of "promoting the intellectual development of its students and preparing them for intelligent participation in society" by fostering free discussion of important public problems. Obviously, this purpose could easily miscarry through arbitrary administrative screening of outside speakers.

The Committee reports for the information of the Senate that it has made what it considers to be appropriate recommendations to the President of the University for the amendment of University Regulation Number 17, Use of University Facilities:

"1. The competence and integrity of the proposed speakers and the educational interest and value of the topics be the primary considerations determining approval.

"2. Disapproval of speakers should not be made merely by reference to any blanket list of organisations.

"3. There continue to be strict adherence to the established procedure of requesting recommendations from the academic departments best qualified to judge the competence and integrity of the proposed speakers and the educational value and importance of the topic.

"4. The recommendations of the department should not be disapproved without consultation with the department. The chairman of the department should be informed of the reasons when his recommendation is not accepted. In the event of disagreement, the case should be referred to the Committee on Academic Freedom for recommendation.

"The Committee suggests that the chairman of departments be reminded that it is their function to recommend the approval of speakers on the campus and that they be given a statement of these guiding principles to assist them in making their recommendations."