

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON HISTORY TO THE  
STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE REVISION OF THE  
CURRICULUM IN THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

I. History in the Core Curriculum

The Steering Committee has realized the serious implications of a number of aspects of the Liberal Arts Curriculum as it now exists. They are aware that the youth who come through a fragmentary and specialized training fail to see their own lives and their contemporary world as parts of an integrated whole. In the thesis of the "inner core," the Steering Committee seeks to provide an integrated educational program that would replace a system possessing little coherence, where students' lives are fragmented, where they have insufficient knowledge of the interrelationships, where they are often confused by problems of personal philosophy, adjustment, use of leisure, and historical perspective in the changing pattern of society.

One of the fundamental and traditional aims of the Liberal Arts College is the general training and preparation of youth for life. To this end the study of history is most naturally adapted. If history be taught with that degree of intellectual competence, pleasing personality and imagination without which no man should enter the profession, it is not difficult to open the mind to several precious intellectual possessions. One is in its simplest terms "the continuity of history." This means no mechanical continuity, but a living organic unity, the continuous and cumulative experience of mankind, which makes us today, not in a poetic sense, but as a bald and literal fact, the heirs of all the ages. The past is tremendously in us, and the experience of the past as embodied in language, law, literature, traditions, ideals, institutions, gives to society what system and stability it has. Another essential teaching of history is the iron fact that society is ever in the process of change, that an old order must needs be modified to meet the living expanding energies of men. The conflict and confusion of interests and ideas of an old order striving to maintain itself and new forces struggling for recognition have engendered great human crises. The mind of the student can be brought into contact with every species of political upheaval, economic distress, intellectual unrest, and moral struggle through which mankind has passed.

A study of history will open the mind of the student to breadth of view and maturity of judgment. He will see that the problems which trouble mankind cannot be understood solely in terms of black and white. Something, for example, is to be said for the upholders of orthodoxy, something for the opponents of established authority. In brief, the study of history develops the power of intellectual discrimination. And further out of the study of history will come a sense of the worth of individual effort. The conclusion draws itself that personal effort of the education man in society is not in vain, that through endeavor in the face of social differences and difficulties the good result in the end is secure.

A course in history should not be taught simply for the purpose of purveying information. The concrete facts are fundamental, else history hangs in the air with no foundation beneath. The teacher who makes himself a drill sergeant in historical facts overlooks the general experience that no matter how

well a body of details has once been learned, they necessarily fade out of the mind in time. What remains as a constant possession is the general impression made on the mind by the details. The main end should be ideas, cause and consequence, thrusts, the nature of movements, drawn and enforced by the special, which for the moment is sound and clear. Thus one deals with the most abiding of educational results. If history be taught in this fashion it is directed to the broadening and liberalizing of the mind.

## II. The Nature and Content of the Core Course in History

1. The Sub-Committee on History proposes a basic and required course on "The Development of Modern Civilization," to be offered at the freshman-sophomore level for eight semester credits.

It is designed to provide the youth with a knowledge and understanding of the varied and various forces, closely interrelated and constantly interacting in the making of western civilization in the modern age. The course should be limited in time, say from the later Middle Ages, the fourteenth century to the present. This period is short enough in time to permit a certain depth of study within one academic year. It is a span of history which has a large measure of continuity and unity. It is an era of civilization particularly pertinent to the present. It should be comprehensive in the sense that it brings into focus the interrelations between the Old Europe and the New America which is the outgrowth of the expanding Christian civilization across the world. To single out either Europe or America for special treatment would be to destroy the unity and continuity of western civilization.

The approach should not be from any one special angle of vision. Many forces and factors played their compelling parts in the evolution of the human drama. Economic and political factors, ideas, traditions, religious predilections, patriotism, to mention a few, should be brought into proper focus.

It would be a wearisome and unprofitable task to take up each nation, political, religious, economic group, for particularity of treatment. There are of course fundamental differences in the evolution of various organized groups, and yet there are essential similarities in the making of modern civilization. Each group in its own peculiar way and its own special genius contributes to the totality and richness of the whole.

To meet the argument of those who would urge a basic year course on the History of the United States it should be said that it is not proposed to make our history an appendage of the history of Europe. The place of the United States in directing and coloring western civilization is eminently powerful. Too long our history has been interpreted too much in American terms, as if America was unconnected and unconcerned with the sweep of life in the modern world. This singularity of treatment has been in part responsible for the deep-seated insularity of the American mind and outlook. The richness which the United States has contributed to the totality of civilization will be best understood by explaining its proper place in the whole scheme. Nothing would be lost, much gained in an appreciation of what is called the "American heritage."

2. There is appended to this Report a general statement of the content of the course. It should be perfectly understood that such a statement implies nothing obligatory. This outline is by no means exhaustive but merely general and suggestive.

The course should certainly not be planned in an inflexible manner at the outset. It should grow gradually by experience and thereby become richer as it takes its way to perfection.

### III. Instruction and Administration of the Core Course in History

1. The task of organizing, administering and teaching a required course in history is one of no small dimensions. It is one of great challenge and demands a Director whose talents are eminently suited to assume these responsibilities.

He should command respect as a historian and should be a forceful and stimulating lecturer. The significance of the course and the work involved demand that the Director be prepared to devote a large part of his time and energy to the course.

The initiation of the course will place a new and heavy burden upon a department now understaffed. This predicament presents an opportunity. The possibility should be considered of bringing to the Department of History a new man for the express purpose of assuming responsibility for the course.

2. The Director of the Course should be assisted by an advisory committee appointed by the Dean and composed of, say, five members selected from members of other departments concerned with specialized aspects of history. The Director should be chairman of the committee.

The members of the committee would be expected to devote time and energy to the evolution and success of the course. They should meet from time to time, frequently attend the lectures and discussion groups, so that as problems arise and new approaches are suggested, they can be examined by a group of men conversant with the actual working of the course. They would, furthermore, make available to the Director their knowledge of their several fields both in discussion and by gathering bibliographies and references. To emphasize their responsibility for the success of the course and to recognize the time they are expected to give, it would be desirable to relieve the members of the Committee from two hours of their regular teaching burden.

3. The course should be designed to be more than a traditional lecture and Textbook affair. The lectures should be interpretative and not a mere handing out of detailed information. The process of filling the mind of the student with information is not education in the honest sense. Learning on the part of the student is more to be desired than teaching. Self-education is the main thing under the wise guidance of the teacher.

4. To insure excellence of instruction, a matter of key importance at the Freshmen-sophomore level, the discussion sections should be limited to twenty-five students.

The discussion groups should be in charge of mature and qualified instructors. Post-doctoral teaching fellowships might well be created to bring together from this University and elsewhere a number of promising young men who would welcome the opportunity to begin their teaching careers and continue their work in cognate fields (Social Science, Philosophy, Art, etc.). Such a scheme would have the added advantage of making possible a greater amount of personal association between the student and qualified men in the field of history.

It is devoutly to be hoped that the course may consist of two lectures and two discussion groups a week. Two weekly discussion groups weekly are necessary to give the instructor ample opportunity to draw out the minds of the students.

5. A special room should be provided for students in this course. The advantages are obvious. Here the material for the course would be easily available. Here the student would be able to consult about his work with an instructor. And here the opportunity to associate in the work of the course would lend a certain unity of spirit to the enterprise.

6. And it is worthy of suggesting that some administrative provision be made for linking up the various core courses (e.g. History with Required English) by regular contact with those in charge.

7. Some coordination of the content of the core courses in history and the social studies could be attained provided the concepts about which the later course is organized were incorporated into the history course. By relating these concepts to the historical conflicts in which they emerged and from which they acquired their initial meaning, the student would be better prepared for their understanding and intelligent use when the point of view becomes analytical rather than historical.

(Signed)

W. D. Coder, Speech  
 G. R. Davies, Commerce  
 F. C. Ensign, Education  
 J. H. Haefner, History and  
 Education  
 C. W. Hart, Sociology  
 E. P. Kuhl, English  
 A. F. Megrew, Art  
 I. H. Pierce, Pharmacology  
 W. S. Sellars, Philosophy  
 Goldwin Smith, History  
 W. T. Root  
 (Chairman)

Absent: S. H. Bush

## THE GENERAL PATTERN OF A COURSE ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION

### I. The Great Transition

Here should be presented the forces which indelibly mark the dawn of the modern age, the transition from mediaevalism to modernism. It would catch up the threads of the story from the fourteenth century. (See Cheyney, Dawn of the Modern Age.)

The rise of the nation-state should be emphasized, a persistent, massive and vexatious factor through the whole course of modern history. The unity of Latin Christendom is shattered bringing in perduring problems of trying to reconcile nationalism with the presiding power of a world state.

There enters a new class rising to power, the merchants, the towns of commerce in response to the dictates of an expanding trade and capital. The merchant class becomes a power in the molding of a new order. There is also the strivings of the mass of unprivileged breaking against the barriers of power imposed from above, voicing the demand for individual self-expression in religion, politics, etc. These strivings are mirrored in the work and writings of Wycliffe, Huss, Marsiglio, etc. Out of this comes the perennial problem of history, to reconcile liberty and authority. There is the expansion of knowledge along many lines and in many ways. The foundation is laid for education as an instrument of government and there comes the development of schools and universities.

A significant aspect of the new order is the extension of Christian civilization down the years and across the world until it reaches almost universal domination. The mobility of people, ideas and goods oversea is inextricably connected with the compelling currents sweeping over Europe. Am America is discovered in time to meet the needs of Europe. That expansion must be viewed not only from the vantage point of the state in the interest of national strength, but also from the standpoint of the individuals who migrated. Great colonial empires were built only to be shattered many decades later. The exodus of people oversea in this period is the beginning of a primary migration which reached at least fifty million in the 19th century. In brief, for long years history of Europe and America is inextricably interwoven.

The advent of Calvinism as an international force is important, spreading its doctrines of contractual Society and representative government from Geneva to France, Holland, England, Scotland, Ulster and finally to English America. Calvinistic principles spread through the writings of Calvin, Beza, Languet-Mornay as the intellectual precursors of liberalism. Likewise Catholicism spread across the seas and became a great civilizing and disciplinary force through the work of the regular orders in Canada and South America.

### II. The Age of Revolution and Enlightenment

This era would cover the 17-18 centuries. This span of time would bring in a two-fold struggle, the one between nations, the other for individual

self-expression. One of the most enduring problems of the modern era is to reconcile the conflicting interests of competing national states. The doctrines of Machiavelli and Bodin clash with those of Grotius. The device which tempered international anarchy and provided a degree of equipoise was the Balance of Power. It included the effort to reach an equilibrium both in Europe and America. In brief, from that day to this the New World has always been affected by the vicissitudes of the European balance.

In this period would appear the expansion of industry, commerce and sea power; and the play of merchant capitalism with its impact upon society in Europe and America. It is the great age of mercantilism.

And there comes the great clash in the adjustment of internal balances, the striving of the masses to break down the dykes of autocratic power. It is embodied in strong, liberal movements, in the English Revolutions of the 17th century, the Wesleyan movement in England and the Great Awakening in America in the eighteenth, the American and French Revolutions, growing discontent in Ireland and Latin America. Through all these movements runs a universal political philosophy expressed in a wealth of literature which mirrors the gropings of the people for safeguards of liberty. It is expressed in the writings of Coke and Locke, Voltaire and Montesquieu, Vattel and Puffendorf, Adams, Jefferson, Paine. The attack upon the rigidity of mercantilism is presented in the literature of Adam Smith and the Physiocrats. The benevolent despots of Europe undertook in this age to make a degree of education compulsory for all their subjects.

In this period we have also the movement of rationalism in the world of thought, when the miraculous and mystical give way to logic and learning, when nature is deified, when Newtonian principles are applied to the study of human affairs.

It is the age when the great colonial empires cease to be, the French, British and Spanish. The New World grows to maturity and demands the opportunity to be mistress of its own destiny.

### III. The Era of Internal Adjustments (19th century)

In this era, ending about 1870, nations are chiefly pre-occupied with the adjustment of disturbed domestic balances. The American and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic impact loosened upon the western world powerful forces of liberalism and nationalism with the attendant result that nations became so engrossed with the adjustment of internal balances that slight energy was left for a career of oversea expansion.

During this period comes a wave of liberalism and humanitarianism. In England political reforms, factory acts, abolition of slavery; in Germany the democratic outburst of 1848; in France the Republic, and nowhere was the liberal and humanitarian movement more pronounced than in the United States. There ensues a bitter struggle between liberalism and constituted authority. Again we follow a common thread in the upsurging of human rights and values against vested interests.

There comes in this era the significant movement of the integration of

political groups. It is seen in the United States in the form of federalism, worked out in 1787 and sanctioned by time and war. It is seen in the Dominion of Canada, the unification of Germany and Italy, and the coming of the British league of nations.

And over the world goes on the great expansion of people into the vacant spaces, and one must consider the great colonizing movements in the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Latin America, etc.

In this period the public support of schools becomes a major political problem; in nearly every country of northern Europe adjustments are made to meet the growing demands for education.

#### IV. Another Great Transition Era (1870-1940)

The era of relative isolation comes to an end. Colonization comes to a close in the United States and the federal union is saved by the sword. Italy and Germany are unified and the British dominions reach national status. As internal balances are adjusted, national energy is released for world expansion. Industrial expansion long on the way reaches an amazing stage after 1870. A new mercantilism comes into existence terrific in its impact upon interstate relations and domestic society. Colonies, commerce, sea power become dominant factors. New markets are sought as a vent for goods, new sources of food stuffs and raw materials are needed, accumulated capital seeks new fields of investment. Conflicts between aggressive groups are in the making, international anarchy is on the way. The United States, Germany, France, Italy are drawn out of isolation and thrust into the position of world powers. Japan and China are awakened to a new order.

Cutting across national boundaries and national self-interest, strong forces are drawing the world into an integrated system. Science has annihilated time and space. The mobility of people, goods, ideas, capital across boundary lines has united the world. And yet international anarchy persists in spite of the growing world integration. Again there comes the problem of adjusting national with world interests. Again we see the efforts to solve this problem. There is the persistence of the device of the Balance of Power, the idea of totalitarian regime as exemplified in the case of Philip II, Louis XIV, Napoleon, William II and Hitler, and the idea of a League of Nations.

Pari passu with the vertical struggle marches the horizontal strife. It is seen in the growing struggle between capital and labor; in the contest between debtor and creditor groups; it is exemplified in the rise of all sorts of groups with their special theories and practises, progressivism, socialism, communism, new deals, etc. as contrasted with counter movements such as fascism. These movements are not isolated phenomena, but cut across the world. Again it is the perennial struggle to reconcile liberty and authority.

In this age should come the significance in the expansion of science which has amazingly transformed society in peace and war. Attention should be given to the significant enlargements of the public that came with the extension and improvements in the technologies instrumenting the processes of communication. Changes in the character of public discussion and decision in the means of group organization and control have come with these enlargements. This process is not without its effect upon literary and other artistic genre.