



Off-Campus Commentary

The writer, Steve Wasby, is a fifth year government major at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio. He will enter Harvard Law school next fall.

A NEWSPAPER REPORTER, a recent graduate of Antioch, when asked to describe his *alma mater* in one word, answered "Progressive." Although it is difficult to catch the attitude of an educational institution in a word, this sets the tone well.

Antioch has from the early 1920's been a pioneer in the field of higher education. It was then that Arthur Morgan (later first chairman of TVA) established the present program and revived the school from the financial and academic doldrums into which it had fallen. Antioch had originally been established in the 1850's, and its first president was Horace Mann. His command, "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity," still characterizes the school's social and cultural concern.

Antioch operates under a five-year program of alternating periods of work and study. The philosophy behind the program is that work as such is educational, not merely vocational training. Students are encouraged to hold jobs in many fields, but the principal use of the program is to find a field for later endeavor or to test careers already decided upon.

Although not all students graduate knowing where they are headed, they at least know certain fields they do *not* want, and this is half the battle won. Most of the jobs are urban; most are white-collar; all fields are well represented. Placement is handled through the Personnel Department or by the individual student.

Students at Antioch are given the opportunity of study outside the United States, principally at two centers. They may study at the University of Guanajuato, Mexico, for one quarter as an alternative to a quarter at Antioch. Upper class students may spend from six months to an entire year at the University of Besancon in France. This academic program is usually coupled with foreign work experience.

What about the regular academic program? Antioch as a liberal arts college believes strongly in general education, requiring courses in physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities. There are two levels within each area, and a student can waive the first level courses by examination. The senior year includes an inter-disciplinary seminar and examinations integrating knowledge from all areas. Most departments establish only a small number of core de-

mands and give credit for courses taken in many other fields, even though their relationship may be only indirect.

In each academic department at least one student leads discussion groups or laboratories in elementary courses. He holds office hours, grades papers, and in some cases delivers lectures and has full responsibility for final grades. This not only gives the assistants a taste of the world of teaching, but also eliminates faculty concern with "administrative detail," freeing time for further study and research.

The other major area of the college is its self-government, underlying which is the concept of "community." This includes faculty, administrative personnel, and all the students. There are two controlling bodies, Administrative Council and Community Council. The former, composed of six faculty and three students, is concerned with the academic program, faculty tenure and salary, and general details of administration. Students sit and vote on all committees responsible to this body, including Faculty Selection and Admissions Committees.

Community Council, six students and three faculty elected by the community, is concerned with the "social living area," including extra-curricular activities, the social program, concerts and lectures and lounge hours. It is responsible for allocating an activity fee totaling \$45,000 annually.

This is most definitely not *student* government. The theory is that education must be preparatory for later life, and that freedom and responsibility for self government can do this far better than the prescription of rules and regulations by the administration. There is, it is true, an inefficiency involved in the democratic process, but a decision reached by representatives of the community is valued much more than the speed and "efficiency" of strictly defined commands from above.

Where does Antioch's program leave us? Hopefully, it provides (1) a valuable combination of theoretical and practical experience which will allow us to be better participants in the communities in which we later settle and (2) an ability to understand the world in which we live so we may more effectively achieve that "victory for humanity."