1968

Mount Vernon Student Association

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Boston University
Christ, I love you
not because you came down from a star
but because you taught us that man has blood, tears,
anguish, keys, tools to unlock doors closed to the light.
Yes, you taught us that man is God,
a poor God crucified like you
and that he who hangs at your left on Golgotha,
the wicked thief,
he also is God.
— Ernesto Che Guevara

CULTURAL REVOLUTION AT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

The recent sanctuary at Marsh Chapel and the current struggle of seminarians to abolish grades, revolutionize curricula, and take possession of their own lives, work and study have exposed the racist and imperialist nature of the School of Theology and Boston University. Some seminarians supported the sanctuary from the start. Others were confused and joined after coming to the chapel and seeing for themselves. Still others, who were initially opposed to sanctuary, eventually changed their minds and elected to participate in the religious community. While at the chapel, many students began to change their fundamental views of religion and politics, of conscience and consciousness, of power and authority.

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During this period of intensive religious inquiry and educational experience, the faculty, with several exceptions, was notable in its absence from the sanctuary.

Some faculty, who expressed agreement with the goals of the project, explained that they had not been consulted, and that therefore they could not participate. Others felt that the chapel belonged to the University Administration, Deans Hamm or Neuler, or the School of Theology "cowenanted community" and therefore the entire proceedings were out of order. Still others felt that the assembly was unchristian, the leadership manipulative, and that young people who smoked cigarettes, ate food, and slept together in the chapel were desecrating the building.

Despite unofficial academic boycott by students during the sanctuary, the faculty continued to convene classes and follow the curricular lines established many months before. After the arrest of Army AWOL Ray Kroll on Oct. 6, many seminarians began returning to classes, although a number had not gone to lectures and discussion groups prior to the sanctuary because of their alienation from B.U.S.T. previously.

In classes, theologues who opposed the sanctuary, as well as those who supported it, began asking the core faculties to relate their disciplines to the events of the past week. When the faculties generally proved either unwilling or unable to cope with the issues or change classroom procedures in order to meet student needs, seminarians began to question the competence of the faculty, the nature of their education, the lines of authority at the school, and the oppressive functions of religion and the ministry in society which B.U.S.T. mirrored and prepared them for.

In this revelatory setting, many students stopped coming to classes altogether. In Core III, for instance, attendance averaged less than 50% and once dropped to 15 out of 65 present.

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