

For Article

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

In the last issue of "Commentator", Mr. Earl Klein decries the attempts of the administration to emulate the European Yeshivoh in the development of Yeshiva University, rather than comparing it with the American universities. He bemoans the fact that while Yeshiva is "a far improvement" over the European Yeshivoh, it "still differs from the American college or university."

It is understood that such notions are directly contradictory to the ideals of this institution as set down by its founder and by its present President. And when such remarks are printed in the official organ of the student body, they warrant immediate refutation. The public must know that Mr. Klein's views are not necessarily shared by the student body of Yeshiva.

Mr. Klein's proposed system of extra-curricular activities, including varsity shows, would necessitate the elimination of that little but sorely needed "extra time" put into the Talmud studies at night and other free time. Mr. Klein evidently disregards "lamdanus" as a prerequisite to ordination as a rabbi.

I vigorously oppose Mr. Klein's ideas because I sense the imminent danger in his attempts to reduce the status of Yeshiva to that of an advanced "Talmud Torah," with the Yeshiva Department becoming a neglected second to the College. This plea for the extirpation of the Yeshiva spirit and the institution, in its stead, of the spirit of the typical American college, is both harmful and contrary to the basic precepts of Torah-True Judaism in general, and the guiding spirit of this institution in particular. It attacks the foundation of Yeshiva University because it upsets the equilibrium necessary to effect the synthesis upon which is built the spiritual structure of Yeshiva.

One in the position of Mr. Klein should know that the leaders of a religion and nation cannot be built by a heterogeneous mixture of Latin, basketball and Varsity shows, with a dash, here and there, of the teachings of the basic doctrines and spirit of that religion. He should know that our greatest religious leaders in this and in the past generations have been and are products of European Yeshivoh. Without personal insult to Mr. Klein, I must say that in his well-intended but erroneous article he betrays an overwhelming ignorance of the intrinsic values of Orthodox Judaism.

This writer would be the last to deprive the students of all recreational activities; but when one harps upon this topic to the extent that he strikes out against the heart of Orthodoxy—the Yeshiva—in order to better gain support for his proposals, he has lost all sense of proportion. Mr. Klein does not really represent all of the students when he desecrates the European Yeshivoh in the name of "we students."

Sincerely,

Norman Lamm