

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

Telephone-609-924-4400

THE DIRECTOR

October 25, 1973

MEMORANDUM

To the Trustee Members of the Committee on Governance

Attached is a memorandum of a conversation I had with Professor Selberg which I think may be useful to you in preparation for the meeting next Saturday. As you will remember, he is the Mathematics member on the Committee. He is one of the two senior members of the School in point of service (Deane Montgomery being the other), and has generally taken a more cautious and less aggressive attitude both toward me and toward the non-Mathematics parts of the Institute than some of his colleagues.

You will remember Professor Adler's ideas on appointment procedures referred to in the memorandum which we discussed last time we met. I have not yet had a chance to learn what if anything Professors Gilliam and Geertz have in their mind in respect to the first meeting.

The Faculty meeting yesterday went off very quietly with no real fireworks. Professor Montgomery was absent, which no doubt helped. Most of it was sheer routine. The one noteworthy element was a motion which clearly had been concerted among six or seven people--but no more--to provide that the Faculty Secretary could call a meeting on application of five members, at which meeting the Faculty could elect a Chairman who might be someone other than the Director. At present the Director calls meetings, and it is agreed that if five or more Faculty members request one the Director will call one. There has been no such request during my tenure. I and my predecessors have always presided over Faculty meetings, except on occasional cases of their absence. There was some discussion of whether the Director would be invited to such meetings as a matter of course, because he is also a professor, or not because of the

/...

- 2 -

Trustees' decision of last spring contraining the Director from sitting and voting as a member of the Faculty while he is Director. This discussion was resolved by an amendment offered by Milnor (one of the members of the moving group) to make explicit that the Director be invited to any such meeting. After further discussion, including the expression of objection to the fact that the motion had not been circulated before the meeting, there was an overwhelming vote to postpone action on it to a later meeting. The course of discussion revealed that for instance neither Langlands nor Setton was part of the initial moving group. The full intention behind the motion was not revealed. One aspect of it is, of course, obvious in that it is a move in the direction of creating an elected Dean of the Faculty. In the course of the discussion the question arose whether this matter should be referred to the Governance Committee; varying views were expressed, and the issue was left unresolved.


Carl Kaysen

Enclosure

Mr. H. C. Petersen
Mrs. H. H. Gray
Professor R. M. Solow
Mr. D. B. Straus

cc. Mr. Dilworth

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

Telephone-609-924-4400

THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM TO THE FILE

Subject: Meeting with Professor Selberg, Monday, October 22, 2:30 p.m.

I opened the conversation by remarking that we had not talked since the unfortunate events of last spring, and that I appreciated Selberg's willingness to talk about his view of the present situation.

Selberg responded by remarking that he had been elected to be the delegate on the Governance Committee, but was somewhat skeptical of its ability to accomplish anything. He didn't know Peterson; he was skeptical of the other members. For this reason he had insisted that the School select an alternate as he wanted to be free to withdraw from the Committee if he saw that it was not functioning usefully.

There were two serious problems which the Committee had to discuss that lie at the base of the whole situation. The first was the method of appointment to the Faculty. In Selberg's view only the consent of the Faculty could legitimate an academic appointment. How that consent was registered was a matter for the Faculty to decide. It could delegate its power to the individual Schools, it could exercise it directly, through a vote, it could delegate it to a Committee. In his view, the method in effect in the recent period had worked effectively, leaving aside the Social Sciences, i.e., substantial delegation to the Schools, with a reserved right in the whole Faculty to vote if it wished.

The second fundamental problem was what the role of the Director should be. Part of the trouble of last year arose because there was not a clear shared understanding on these two points.

We then had quite a long discussion on the first point with some historical digressions including a discussion of Mrs. Stern's History. (Selberg takes an unfavorable view of it. He considers the documentary materials interesting, but the interpretations dubious, in particular its view of Veblen as the devil in a Machiavelean drama was absurd). In the course of this discussion I commented that the Schools had a much greater diversity of background and experience among their Faculty members today as compared with the early period of the Institute, which seemed to me to make impossible the kind of consensus among the whole faculty that ~~once~~ existed. Selberg appeared to agree.

/...

- 2 -


In the course of the discussion Selberg mentioned the asymmetry between Mathematics and other schools for the purposes of commenting on appointments outside one's own School, and recognized that this had created difficulties in the past.

I outlined briefly Adler's ideas on appointment procedures, and Selberg seemed to react to them positively.

We then talked about the role of the Director. He agreed with me that our past discussions on this matter, as on the appointment process, had been deliberately ambiguous. However, given the history of the past year, that degree of ambiguity was no longer tolerable. The discussion ranged over innovation, budgetary powers, fund-raising, but no clear picture emerged of what Selberg's ideas on these subjects were.

There was some further comment about the forthcoming initial meeting of the Governance Committee, during the course of which I indicated I would not be present at that meeting.

We concluded with a few words about Wednesday's Faculty meeting in the course of which Selberg indicated Montgomery would probably be absent. The tone of the discussion was pleasant, but a little reserved. Toward the end Selberg remarked that he believed we should always talk no matter how great our differences were, that it would not hurt and it might help.


Carl Kaysen
October 23, 1973

October 25, 1973

MEMORANDUM

To the Trustee Members of the Committee on Governance

Attached is a memorandum of a conversation I had with Professor Selberg which I think may be useful to you in preparation for the meeting next Saturday. As you will remember, he is the Mathematics member on the Committee. He is one of the two senior members of the School in point of service (Deane Montgomery being the other), and has generally taken a more cautious and less aggressive attitude both toward me and toward the non-Mathematics parts of the Institute than some of his colleagues.

You will remember Professor Adler's ideas on appointment procedures referred to in the memorandum which we discussed last time we met. I have not yet had a chance to learn what if anything Professors Gilliam and Geertz have in their mind in respect to the first meeting.

The Faculty meeting yesterday went off very quietly with no real fireworks. Professor Montgomery was absent, which no doubt helped. Most of it was sheer routine. The one noteworthy element was a motion which clearly had been concerted among six or seven people--but no more--to provide that the Faculty Secretary could call a meeting on application of five members, at which meeting the Faculty could elect a Chairman who might be someone other than the Director. At present the Director calls meetings, and it is agreed that if five or more Faculty members request one the Director will call one. There has been no such request during my tenure. I and my predecessors have always presided over Faculty meetings, except on occasional cases of their absence. There was some discussion of whether the Director would be invited to such meetings as a matter of course, because he is also a professor, or not because of the

/...

- 2 -

Trustees' decision of last spring contraining the Director from sitting and voting as a member of the Faculty while he is Director. This discussion was resolved by an amendment offered by Milnor (one of the members of the moving group) to make explicit that the Director be invited to any such meeting. After further discussion, including the expression of objection to the fact that the motion had not been circulated before the meeting, there was an overwhelming vote to postpone action on it to a later meeting. The course of discussion revealed that for instance neither Langlands nor Setton was part of the initial moving group. The full intention behind the motion was not revealed. One aspect of it is, of course, obvious in that it is a move in the direction of creating an elected Dean of the Faculty. In the course of the discussion the question arose whether this matter should be referred to the Governance Committee; varying views were expressed, and the issue was left unresolved.

Carl Kaysen

Enclosure

For attachment see Selberg file