

Points of View ²⁴

Examining the present tendencies of thought on this subject, we find that they fall into three categories. At one extreme we find those people who think that society should furnish higher education. By this is meant that when there are not sufficient funds available from philanthropic sources, the state or community should become responsible. At the other extreme we find those who believe that the direct recipient, that is, the student attending the university or college, should pay the full cost of education, and who hope that means can be found to maintain the present type of enrollment under such a regime.

Between these two extremes we find the large majority who believe that society as a whole and the direct recipient should bear jointly the financial support of higher education. This group, of course, is further divided as to what per cent. of the total cost each should bear. Let us examine each of these views in turn.

Society Should Bear the Cost

Those who advocate that society should bear the cost take their stand on the ground that education is not only beneficial but necessary for the well-being and progress of society. This is a socialistic or institutionalistic point of view toward education—a commodity to be distributed to the public and paid for by it. This doctrine had its roots in lower education and not in higher education. The essence of it is that by giving all individuals an opportunity to be educated, society is benefited proportionately. This was true at one time and may still be claimed of lower and secondary education, but higher education has assumed new purposes. Those who are of this opinion have not progressed beyond the trend of thought that was prevalent when universities and colleges were first established. The early institutions of higher learning were privately endowed universities and colleges. They trained ministers and other professional men to meet a social need. These people went out and worked for very small fees and their efforts were in large measure missionary, whether they were in the ministry, in teaching, law, or medicine. Education did not have the same economic value then as it has today.

²⁴ Based on interviews and correspondence with:

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