

## DISCUSSION 11

**MR. SEGUNDO ROMERO:** Educators in any discipline usually identify their task as that of teaching, research and service.

In teaching and research, the educator should demonstrate both confidence and scholarship. But educators are also viewed as agents of change. They have therefore to demonstrate the relevance of that which they teach.

In a classroom discussion, students usually ask the political science teacher the relevance of the discussion; students inquire which course of action should be taken in their analysis of political problems.

A committed political science teacher must suggest ways to solve such political problems as the students may present. He must be able to suggest alternatives.

**MS. CARMENCITA AGUILAR:** First of all, it has to be understood that the role of a teacher in the classroom is a guide, and therefore he must not lose his objectivity. In other words, even if he is committed, he should only guide the students, that is, open their minds to perspectives they have not seen before. Beyond this—if you are referring to social action in the sense of telling the students to overthrow this or that—it's another thing.

**MR. ROMERO:** What I am saying is that, for example, if after a thorough analysis you find out that socialism is a better alternative, could you not perhaps show a sort of commitment or course of action to take towards such state? Because, as I see it, teachers should not only enlighten—they should also lead the way!

**MS. AGUILAR:** The point is to open the minds of the students—to make them perceptive and analytical—to enable them to know the truth. And truth is safely defined as not fault-finding only.

Now after knowing all aspects of the subject matter, it depends on the student what kind of commitment shall he choose. The teacher has no right to impose his social or political commitment on the student.

MR. TONY PANGAN: I think an important role in making political science relevant is that of academic freedom.

I have observed that many students want to raise some points in their classroom discussion of political problems. But they seem to be afraid to be open up about these points. They refuse to raise them in class.

MS. AGUILAR: Yes, we can always say that the fifty demand should be to institute academic freedom in the classroom. Unfortunately, we have to recognize certain functions of the Martial Law regime.

When we say academic freedom, we have it to a limited degree in the classroom. Everybody is allowed to bring out his point. But he has to be a bit careful—he has to consider, as I have said, certain functions outside the classroom.

MR. LITO TILO: I think there is no such thing as academic freedom in the classroom—as long as the teacher has the power to give grades to the students.

And there is no such thing as objectivity on the part of the teacher. Teachers are influenced by what the students say for or against their arguments.

Also, I think that the most ideal number of students per class is 2 or 3 students because when there are several of them, the teacher has no way of finding out what the mental capacity of the student is—that's why final examinations are given.

MS. AGUILAR: Your suggestion is well-taken. However, the method of grading, I think, is not the topic we are concerned with but, rather, the discipline of political science in the classroom.

MR. TILO: Grading is always a part of political science. You cannot pass political science if you will not use grades.

I think it is only when there is no grading can you really speak what you want—can academic freedom really flourish—because then you no longer have any fear.

MR. SOLI: I cannot resist this opportunity to answer—or not exactly answer but make a few comments for —Lito.

I just want to tell Lito that although teachers are, in fact, *teachers*, they're also human—and you have to allow for this fact! They are not immature and petty individuals who think of nothing else but use the grades against their students!

In my long experience in teaching, I have discovered that there are many students who are sincerely open and brave in voicing out their opinions. And although it might be true that some people take it against you if you voice out your opinion, it is rather unfair that you use it as a general premise to describe any and all teachers in the classroom.

Grades are possibly a weapon but, let us grant, it is not automatically used.