

Opinion

Education — or fads?

When poorly educated students move out into professions, they inevitably lower professional standards. Even worse, they become poorly qualified teachers and inoculate incompetence in a whole new generation. Secondary education has a way of perpetuating itself in a vicious cycle.

Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California, brought these thoughts to mind in his recent address to the Association of American Colleges. He described the state of general education in our nation's universities as "an absolute disaster."

Dr. Kerr places much blame on campus presidents, 80 percent of whom spend their time raising funds and increasing enrollments without much thought to improving curricula. It used to be that every college graduate could be counted on to have certain basic knowledge. He or she had to pass through a course of liberal arts. Not any more. During the 1960s, requirements were relaxed and, therefore, more students were given the choice of more and more electives. Today, the emphasis is on more technological and professional training. Universities are becoming trade schools for science-based industry and the professions.

This is not altogether bad. It has made students more responsible and more realistic. Indeed, it is difficult to criticize the latest shift toward higher education precisely because the humanities aren't what they used to be. Where history, literature and philosophy were once the core of education, today they are relegated to the periphery. Contemporary Performing Arts programs. Women's Studies and pop sociology courses.

Speaking at the same conference as Clark Kerr, Dr. Charles Mascante, a professor of English at the University of California at Berkeley, blamed the decline of liberal arts education on the increasing specialization of university disciplines. The ideal of a classical general education has given way to esoteric fads and job-related skills.

Part of the responsibility for this decline must go to professors who devote themselves to research, neglecting their role as teachers, and to administrators who encourage this neglect by promoting professors on the basis of their publishing records rather than their teaching abilities.

Our educational institutions need inventing. Academic standards should be improved. Core curricula renewed, and liberal arts restored to their former place as a crown jewel of education.

More than any other form of government, a democracy requires its citizenry to be equipped for intelligent decisions. And there is no better way of learning about man and society than through the liberal arts. Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire shows what can happen to a society that loses its cultural inheritance.

Shut that loophole

We hope someone high up in the Reagan administration glanced at a page one item of The Wall Street Journal recently. There he would have seen a detailed description of an astonishing loophole in this country's counter-espionage defenses.

For obvious reasons, Soviet citizens are prohibited from visiting military installations and defense plants in this country. Incredibly, no such general prohibition applies to citizens from Eastern European countries. One of them, as to whom the KGB uses to carry out espionage activities in areas of the United States that are closed to Soviet citizens.

The FBI and the CIA have cracked two major espionage cases involving Polish intelligence agents since 1961. In both cases, Polish agents obtained easy access to the U.S. defense industry relatively easy access to highly classified information.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that an U.S. defense secrets debacle at Stalin by Polish intelligence or by the East German

Czech, Hungarian or Bulgarian services — is a real and immediate worry to the Soviets. The testimony of scores of defectors over the years points toward the fact that Soviet counter-intelligence services in this country's counter-espionage defenses.

So why are Eastern European nationals left to roam so freely? The rationale is political. American interests would be served by encouraging a more informed citizenry from Eastern European countries. One of them, as to whom the KGB uses to carry out espionage activities in areas of the United States that are closed to Soviet citizens.

But where is the connection between making things easier for Soviet intelligence and promoting an Eastern Europe line rightly controlled by Moscow? This nonsense should be stopped immediately. East European trading companies that serve as cover for Soviet intelligence should be shut down permanently. And Eastern European nationals doing espionage activities in areas of the United States that are closed to Soviet citizens.

Brunei stands alone

We welcome Brunei as the world's newest nation to become the 180th sovereign nation in the United Nations, with equal rights in the General Assembly.

Where's Brunei? It's way out there in the Pacific, on the island of Borneo. It's nestled in between the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, overlooking the southern reaches of the South China Sea.

On New Year's Day, Brunei received independence, ending a 16-year history as a British protectorate. Its ruler is Sultan Muhtar Hassanal Bolkiah. Appearing on state-owned television, he assigned himself three Cabinet posts — prime minister, home affairs minister and finance minister.

Brunei enters the world of nations with a big plus. Financially, Brunei is in excellent shape. Its income from oil, natural gas, rubber and hardwoods is more than \$4 billion a year, the equivalent of \$20,000 for each of the new nation's 200,000 citizens.

That makes it one of the world's richest nations, as well as one of the world's smallest. A British Army unit, the 6th Gurkha Rifles, will be on hand for a few years to help guard Brunei's borders. That's not good, but there will be many nervous eyes and grasping hands. It's risky for a Third World nation to be rich. In addition to his other duties, perhaps the sultan should make himself defense minister.

Got a bouquet, or a beef? Write a Letter to the Carlisle Mercury.

Letters

from our readers

To the Carlisle Mercury: I thank the people of Nicholas County for the information that Senator Bill (D) Langston has filed a bill that would increase the tax on liquor to \$1.00 per gallon. I am sure that the people of Nicholas County would support this bill.

tax rates set by the taxing districts would not decrease as they have in the past. I am sure that the people of Nicholas County would support this bill. I am sure that the people of Nicholas County would support this bill.

I urge everyone to contact Senator Ford or Representative Adair and let them know that House Bill 44 is working for you and needs no further action. I am sure that the people of Nicholas County would support this bill. I am sure that the people of Nicholas County would support this bill.



But if we pull out, we risk losing face.

Agree or not

The big question is, how do you make taxes attractive?

Franklin — It is in any way to increase income tax rates to the average citizen, especially a tax that is easily visible. Gov. Martin Laine Collins would like to hear it.

Legislators need to be held in line with the governor's proposal of a 25% increase in income tax. The new money would come from broadening the scope of the sales tax to include everyday services and personal income taxes along with an increase in corporate income taxes.

The corporate income tax is only one that could be considered a hidden tax. It is effective date would be retroactive to Jan. 1, 1984 if enacted as the governor proposes.

The broadened scope of the sales tax would become effective Dec. 1, while the increase in income taxes would be retroactive to Jan. 1, 1984. The governor had to retreat from her pledge made in her state of the art message to the legislature.

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Op-Ed page

'Welcome to my nightmare' — 'judge doesn't like bum rap hung on us'

An essay he calls "Nightmare" was written by a Charleston, S. C. judge and printed in Ashby Cooper's column in the News and Courier. It required reading for every concerned citizen in the American South.

"I am living in a nightmare, where I cannot awaken. Welcome to my nightmare."

"This is the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. Welcome to my nightmare. Welcome to my nightmare. Welcome to my nightmare."

"We give cash money, free medical services, food stamps, free housing and utility subsidies to the lowest class of society, as a payment for producing oil and gas. Welcome to my nightmare. Welcome to my nightmare. Welcome to my nightmare."

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Russ Metz

I'm waiting for the day Max Walker asks one probing question: How many and somebody else him square in his big mouth.

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We're proud of our branch offices



... there's probably one on a corner near you.

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