

Freedom from Confusion

Joe Brandt's Educational Philosophy Is Summed Up In This Address Made On A National Radio Hookup

By JOSEPH A. BRANDT

When people want freedom and do not have it, they fight to get it. When they have freedom and prize other things more highly, they give up freedom. For freedom is a state of mind. Give me the schools and I won't worry about the kind of government, observed Bismarck, the creator of modern Germany. Hitler, like Napoleon, was first concerned with conditioning the mind of his people to want something other than freedom. Now, if the dictators are concerned about the kind of schools, it is an obvious fact that a free people ought to be doubly concerned about the kind of schools they have. And that is why all of us should be grateful to the founders of Education for Freedom, Incorporated, and to the Mutual Network, for the first comprehensive exploration through radio of the place of education in the fight to keep freedom.

The tragedy is, that most of us Americans no longer think of our schools as having anything to do with keeping the torch of liberty burning. We send our boys and our girls to school so that they can learn a trade or a vocation. We want them to be self-supporting when they finish school. And that is as it should be. If a majority of our citizens should be supported by the state, we would lose our freedom very quickly. We are in danger, however, of losing our freedom just as quickly if in looking out for ourselves economically, we fail to look out for our interests politically. And that is what is happening everywhere in our Republic. Don't forget for a single moment, when you are talking about democracy, that we live in a republic—in which the state is everyone's concern.

Our school system was established as it is, supported by local communities, because the Founding Fathers wanted to keep the Republic alive, continuously alive. And the schools were doing a rather good job until we began making all kinds of machines which require all kinds of mechanics and until industry stopped training apprentices. When this happened, about the only place where one could learn a trade seemed to be in a school. So we forced the schools, from the first grade through college, to retool their operations. We elected school boards which understood what we wanted and which in turn told the superintendents and the teachers what to do. The teachers very soon found out that they were not free; they had to do what they were told. And before we knew it, school teaching in the United States ceased to be a profession and became a trade. That is where it stands in many areas of our country today.

And so, today, we have the extraordinary spectacle of a nation trying to keep freedom alive through its schools which are filled, in the main, with teachers who themselves have no freedom or professional dignity and who, perhaps, have begun to be numbed into wondering whether freedom is worth the fight.

We have changed our school system, on the whole, from one training young people how to think into a system designed to train them how to do things. This change was not a deliberate plan, not a plot on the part of anyone against the security of the Republic, although the eventu-

al result may be the same. In football, the winning team is usually the one that can spot the ball carrier on the opposing eleven. In education, especially during the past quarter century, no one knew who was carrying the ball, or, for that matter, just what the ball looked like. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were thrown out of many of the secondary schools, and in their stead were introduced manual training, domestic science, typewriting, public speaking, accounting, and a host of similar subjects which we wanted our children to have and which we insisted our school boards give us.

We carried our demands to our colleges and our universities. These institutions in turn had been observing what was going on in the feeder system. They began to shift emphasis from liberal and professional education to vocational. The secondary schools, seeing this shift, thought they were on the right road and so began accelerating the process, so that today, there are some 250 subjects taught in our high schools, while the average university catalogue will list a thousand or more courses, which taken on the prescription that the only aim of higher education is to train one to make a living, can only result in highly trained specialists and confused young thinkers.

If freedom is a state of mind, then you and I must do something, and do it right away, to see that we put back into our school system those things that we, in mistaken zeal, caused to be taken away, things that contributed to the making of the minds of free men and women. We must begin talking again to the members of our boards of education and to the trustees of our colleges, this time to confess our error, this time to urge that we stop the drift to pure vocationalism before it is too late. No time could be more opportune than now, for thousands of young men, matured beyond their years, will soon be returning from the battlefields, wearied of the intensified technical training which is so necessary now for the aims of the war, eager to let their minds browse in the liberal arts which perforce have had to be denied them during the war period. Yes, we must talk with these board members, we must ask them to restore teaching to a professional dignity so that the confusion on every hand as to what the aim of education should be, can be resolved.

We educators have been confused because we thought we ought to give the customer what

This is the text of a radio address given by former President Joseph A. Brandt which was broadcast over stations of the Mutual Network December 27 as one of a series of broadcasts sponsored by Education for Freedom, Inc. Mr. Brandt spoke from the studios of radio station KOCY in Oklahoma City. Other educators who have or will participate in the series include Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago; Walter Lippmann, editor and columnist, and John Erskine, professor emeritus at Columbia University.

he wanted; and the patrons of our schools are confused, because they thought, in telling us what they wanted, we in turn would tell them what their children needed. We were all afraid; and neither education nor freedom can long flourish in an atmosphere of fear.

I have found in my own experience when I talk frankly and sincerely with parents about education, that not only are they grateful but

they are relieved as well, because they did not want to trust their own judgment alone in a decision of such paramount importance to them as that of the education of their children. Perhaps just one instance of many will suffice.

A high school classmate of mine recently brought his son to my office. My friend had been quite successful in business, although he had dropped out of the University in his freshman year. He had now come to me, wanting me to advise his son about his university career. I found out readily that father and son knew what they wanted. The boy had chosen a professional course which he could complete in four years at the University. I asked him whether he had ever thought what he would like to be doing twenty years from now. The young man thought for some time, then replied. He wanted, of course, to be successful in the profession he had chosen; but he wanted something more—he didn't want to be dependent on that profession alone, he wanted to be able to think through, as he phrased it, the problems of life.

We examined the professional program the young man would be required to take. The freshman year was the normal liberal arts program of English, college algebra, government or history, chemistry or physics. These were subjects that caused one to think, to reason, to harden the mind through rigid discipline. But, in the sophomore year, the curriculum changed sharply. More than half of it was technical.

The father stopped my reading. "That's enough," he exclaimed. "You know, were something to happen to my business tomorrow, I don't know what else I could do. It's the only thing I know. I don't want my boy to face the kind of uncertainties we'll face after this war, tied down to a profession which may prove to be a mistake. I'd like for him to have more groundwork like that in the freshman year, before he starts on his profession."

The boy agreed heartily, so we began planning more "groundwork." We agreed that it would be preferable to have a four-year program in liberal arts, after which the young man could spend a year or two in a graduate school, doing his professional work. This is the kind of program which this business man and his son elected, one entirely different from the original: *The English Language*. This was to be the tool for expressing ideas, the means of making them clear. *Literature*. This was the portrait of ourselves as individuals and in the mass, the way sensitive, observant artists see us, a means of understanding the sins and the strength of mankind, the fire of human dignity which preserves freedom. *The Classics*. This young man chose to read the classics in translation. He wanted to learn what the wise people of the past had thought, so that he might himself gain in stature through their suffering, experience, and happiness. *Physics*. Here he would come to grips with the laws governing the mysterious phenomena of nature, light, sound, and so on. *Mathematics*. The science of quantity, the mastery of which leads to an ability to be logical, just as would a course in formal *Logic* which the young man also chose. *History*. A study of the mistakes as well as the achievements of mankind in the past, so that the young man could so live in the present that he could transmit a better future to his own son.

In terms of college credits, he was eliminating some eighty hours of technical subjects and substituting for them liberal arts. In terms of years, he was lengthening his education by a year or possibly two years. He would have obtained, however, the education of a free man as well as the foundation to enrich his chosen profession

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later. Twenty years from now, he would be a free man, because he would not be a slave of a specialty. He would be truly independent; and he would truly be a good citizen, because he had learned to reason. He would have a minimum of textbook education and a maximum of exploration of original works. He would have learned to go to the source before forming his opinions.

Well, you say, this young man could afford such a program because he had enough money to pay for his education. I insist that if he had come to the University with but a single suit of clothing and a single dollar to his name, he could have afforded the same program, and would have been, at the end of twenty years, as financially successful. He would have learned how to be his own master, and as his own master, he would have been a real custodian of the welfare of our Republic. Cardinal Newman years ago made crystal clear the difference between the two types of education, both of which are perfectly acceptable if one precedes the other. When speaking of education, the cardinal said, liberal must be considered as the opposite of servile. Liberal education, thus, is not useful in itself, for it is concerned with the development of the mind, whereas servile education, which is useful, has an immediate end in itself.

The Romans knew that centuries ago; they as citizens of the Roman Republic practiced the liberal arts, that is, the arts of self-government, while their slaves practiced the servile arts, the techniques. It was only when the Romans no longer had a mind for freedom, wanting luxury more, that they surrendered the government of the Republic to the slaves, and so made the rule of Caesar, the rule of one man, inevitable. And that is the same danger we are courting in our own country today, because we are substituting for the liberal arts the servile, and we prize in our education the practical above reason.

We will escape from our educational confusion if the lay citizen and the professional educator begin working together intelligently and understandingly to reverse the process of recent years. We expect an infant to learn to walk before it learns to run. We must expect the youth of our country to have a foundation in the subjects which teach them the reason before we can expect them to handle the tools of society.

And many of the victims of our system of confused education are beginning to understand this, although frequently too late to correct the error. Perhaps one example in my own experience may epitomize the unrealized, grouping dreams of all of these frustrated youths of America. A young undergraduate friend of ours had pursued her entire University career in a strictly professional college, in which the liberal arts were almost entirely excluded. She enrolled in her final semester in a subject which some of her undergraduate friends had warmly recommended to her, despite discouragements by her advisers, she began to discover a new, undreamed of horizon. Then one day she came to our house, tears in her eyes, to confess that she planned to drop the course.

"But why?" I demanded. "You seemed to be enjoying it so. What's the trouble?"

"My professor is trying to teach us how to think. I haven't learned and now it's too late. I can't fail this course, for I have to graduate."

"Nonsense," I replied. "You must not end your university career on a note of failure. You're just beginning to discover what an education is. Write your essay. Forget about Emerson. Write instead of how the modern American scholar has failed to educate you."

She did. She passed the subject with flying colors. She received a degree with 117 hours of education for slavery and three precious hours of education for freedom. It is for boys and girls like her that I speak.

Sooner Sports

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game's star. Paine hit eight field goals and held J. D. "Sniper" Norton to one field goal the first half and Putnam scoreless the last half. The box score:

OKLAHOMA			
	FG	FT	PF
Vaughan, f	0	0	0
Landon, f	2	1	2
Don Ladusau, f	4	1	4
Buelow, f	0	3	2
Johnson, f	1	0	0
Lindenberg, f	0	0	0
Dean Ladusau, f	0	0	1
Grossman, c	0	0	1
Ramsey, c	3	3	2
Paine, g (c)	8	1	0
Pryor, g	2	5	1
Berry, g	0	0	0
Totals	20	14	13
CHILDRESS			
	FG	FT	PF
Purdin, f	0	0	1
Tutwiler, f	4	5	4
Norton, f	2	5	3
Bentley, c (c)	2	0	3
Day, g	0	0	0
Putnam, g	5	1	4
Elslager, g	5	0	3
Staples, g	2	0	2
Totals	20	11	20

Officials—Heilman (Illinois North Central) McBride (Oklahoma).

Sooner Rally Barely Fails at Dallas

Although Paine again scored eight field baskets, Southern Methodist University's rangy basketballing Preachers successfully immersed the Sooners at Dallas December 11 although the fledgling Oklahomans rallied in the last half and nearly escaped from the baptismal tank. The score was 41-37.

Coach Drake's Sooners again played a sloppy first half once permitting a Methodist lead of 27-14 before roaring down the slippery rink of the new S. M. U. Fieldhouse with an exciting last half drive that once cut the Preacher lead to 36-34. The box score:

OKLAHOMA			
	FG	FT	PF
Pryor, f	1	1	2
Don Ladusau, f	1	0	3
Buelow, f	0	0	0
Vaughan, f	0	0	1
Lindenberg, f	0	0	0
Ramsey, c	4	0	2
Paine, g (c)	8	3	3
Landon, g	1	3	1
Totals	15	7	12
S. M. U.			
	FG	FT	PF
Hayden, f	3	0	4
Brown, f	2	1	0
Osborn, f	1	1	3
Keller, f	0	0	0
Pearson, f	0	0	0
Teal, c	5	1	3
Graner, c	1	1	0
Cannady, g (c)	6	0	2
Scott, g	0	1	1
Totals	18	5	13

Officials—Jack Cisco (Baylor) and Doc Hayes (North Texas).

Lose Twice to Strong Norman Service Teams

Lt. Floyd McBride's all-victorious Naval Skyjackets from Norman's South Base, an aggregation of former college stars, defeated the Sooners 42 to 30 at Oak Hall, the new South Base auditorium, December 15. The box score:

OKLAHOMA			
	FG	FT	PF
Pryor, f	2	3	0
Ladusau, f	2	0	2
Johnson, f	1	0	0
Corley, f	0	0	0
Potts, f	0	0	0
Lindenberg, g	0	0	0
Berry, f	0	0	0
Arnold, f	0	0	0
Ramsey, c	2	0	2
Vaughan, c	2	1	2
Paine, g (c)	2	2	4
Landon, g	0	1	3
Buelow, g	0	1	1
Totals	11	8	12
NATTC SKYJACKETS			
	FG	FT	PF
Mitchell, f	4	0	4
Meyer, f	2	4	3
Fowler, f	0	0	1
Day, c	3	5	1
Costas, g (c)	1	0	0
Lance, g	3	2	2
Bryan, g	2	1	1
Totals	15	12	12

Officials—Herb Heilman (Illinois North Central) and Clarence Briethaupt (Washburn).

On December 18 the Sooners lost 29-51 to the all-victorious Norman Zoomers, the powerful North Base team at the Fieldhouse.

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Writing Students Scattered

Students taking University professional writing courses under Walter S. Campbell and Foster Harris live in 33 states, three foreign countries, Hawaii, and several other South Pacific islands.

Last year free-lance correspondence students sold 700,000 words, setting a record, Mr. Campbell said. Others work on the staffs of newspapers and magazines, at radio stations, and as public relations officers with the armed forces.

Pioneer Sooner Dies

D. L. Larsh, pioneer Norman businessman and former member of the University Board of Regents, died at his home in October after an illness of several months. He was 80 years old.

Mr. Larsh was one of a group of Norman men who raised \$10,000 to buy a 40-acre tract of land which they offered to the state as a site when the Legislature voted to establish a state University. He later served on the second Board of Regents.

Mr. Larsh settled in Oklahoma two years before the run in 1889, working as a Santa Fe telegrapher at Purcell. When the territory was opened, he moved north, building the first house in Norman.