

# Letters from the Alumni

The September issue of *Sooner Magazine* carried an adaptation of an address by Dr. Robert K. Carr, President of Oberlin College, which was purported to be a discussion of Liberal Arts or the Liberal Arts Graduate. I am a Liberal Arts graduate, and by his definition, I am wise and therefore qualified to speak on these matters.

Dr. Carr seems in vain to be waving two flags, that of a Liberal and that of a Conservative with a conscience. He speaks of a thorough study of history and the need for social reforms. How can this man study history and fail to see that centralization of power has in history inevitably resulted in disaster. The type of social reform he apparently advocates are those that continue this trend. He speaks of the *folly* of returning political power to the state governments from the national government and the need for continued and expanded programs of federal assistance to *strengthen* us physically and improve our morale. I wish this gentleman would explain to me his theory of what happens to our representative form of government when our elected representatives feel as he does. I do not vote for a man to go to Washington and do what he thinks is best for the country on domestic matters; I vote for a man to represent me and our local views and because the policy he advocates sounds good to me. I do not want him to alter this policy on his sole judgment unless he comes back to me for this additional mandate. That *is* our representative form of government. I do not want him telling and giving me what is good for me; I will tell him. If this is returning authority to the states, I say it is about time. These federal assistance programs he advocates are fast approaching the point of developing a country of dumb but happy "whittlers and spitters" who:

1. Have to be reminded on the radio and television by the Social Security Gang to get on the roles; come in and see us, they prod, there might be something you have overlooked that will qualify you for a handout.
2. Must be needled on radio and television by the Veterans Gang to be sure and see your dentist and doctor so we can increase our needs to get more funds to build more hospitals to fill up with *non-service* connected cases. (Do not take this out of context; a veteran with service connected problems, physical or mental, should be cared for in the best facilities possible.)
3. Are more concerned about whether

they have ten or fifteen minutes in the morning and afternoon to go to the bathroom than they are about working at all.

4. Have come to the point of not providing for their own future but are *told* by their representatives that they need federal funds to have good schools, retire in Florida and take care of their medical needs in their "Golden Years." (What happens to our strength when there is no more pride or sense of responsibility toward ourselves, our parents or our children?)

I join with Dr. Carr in that these states were bound together for the purpose of mutual defense and such is the proper function of the federal government including foreign aid and the Peace Corps, and of course we cannot abolish the federal income tax as a source of revenue. But, we can demand that national defense not be a political matter where, when running for office, our country is weak and after the election our country is strong. We can, as taxpayers, call for an end to federal spending beyond the purpose of the federal government. We can say that our system of civil service is good and proper and don't you, our elected representatives, supplant it with a larger pork barrel that provides new agencies and new jobs (under the guise of social progress) with each change of administration to pay off political debts.

It is ironic that Dr. Carr is so disturbed by the amount of reactionary mail he receives, as he says all college presidents do.

The *Sooner Magazine* adaptation of Dr. Robert K. Carr's address to O.U.'s 1961 Phi Beta Kappas was most timely and, in view of the present tendency of some Americans to emphasize the pure sciences and minimize the liberal arts, refreshing. On the other hand, his naiveté so starkly revealed in such categorical statements as "The result is that the intellectual appeal of Communism to the educated American, particularly to the college student, is nonexistent," makes one wonder if he is truly objective in the effort to make Oberlin College a "free market place of thought and expression." Dr. Carr should be the first to acknowledge that both Communists and Socialists have in the past and are continuing to exploit the plastic minds of university students in this country and elsewhere in the world. Further, it taxes credulity to believe Dr. Carr is encouraging

Maybe he should read some of it. Not the nuts on the right hand, (conservative ranks do have some) but there *is* sound thinking by conservative people. He would rather pass off all Conservatives as "John Birchers" which is almost as ridiculous as passing off all Liberals as "Eleanor Rooseveltters." We should, as he says, present all views to our college students, but I think "we the people" get concerned when we feel that these views are being taught rather than presented. He must be very careful in that minds in the formative and receptive years are not over stimulated by ideals contained in a Philosophy contrary to our own. I do not mean communism. (I have never felt our colleges were advocating this.) I mean socialism as a foundation of economical, social and political philosophy. This is what we fear from some colleges, Dr. Carr. We fear it as a sap on the strength of our people. Europe today is drawing away from socialism after many years of headlong flight in that direction; so should we.

I trust Dr. Carr will realize what a narrow ledge he travels and will be aware of the abyss that awaits him should he fall further to the left. I do agree that the Liberal Arts graduate should be well prepared to think for himself, (if he is allowed to) and in so doing will adapt and utilize *old* ideas as well as new ideas for use in our democratic, representative, capitalistic and thereby unlimited future. It might interest Dr. Carr to know that one of my daughters starting first grade is learning math on the abacus, rather reactionary (1,000 years) he would claim but now gaining new fame in a very progressive school.

Edward N. Litman, '50ba  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

students at Oberlin "to be highly contemporary or analytical" in attacking social problems when he criticizes some segments of our citizenry—a healthy minority I would opine—who scheme "to transfer the center of political power and responsibility from the national government to the state governments."

I sincerely believe (perhaps I am deluding myself) that Sooners—Alumni—who have been privileged to temper academic knowledge with the wisdom gained from attacking "society's eternal issues and problems" will agree that Dr. Carr, himself, has yet truly to "come to grips with more than a little of paradox" when in an article intended to defend the values of the liberal arts he takes license to espouse the liberal line of many of our campus economists.

Charles C. Loveless, Jr., '41eng  
Roswell, New Mexico