

Freedom School

RESPONSE TO CHARLES KOCH

JAN 10 1966

MEMO TO TRUSTEES

January 6, 1966

FROM THE DEAN

Trustee Charles Koch had raised a number of important points for consideration by trustees in a letter directed to Dean LeFevre last November. Copies were mailed to each trustee, and a detailed response by the dean was scheduled for the January 2 meeting. Although a number of points were discussed in general, the meeting was adjourned without taking up each specific point, with the suggestion that the detailed response be mailed to each trustee. It is attached.

Robert LeFevre



RESPONSE TO CHARLES KOCH

Since Charles came on the board, he has studied various methods now being used to promote true liberalism. He means "classical liberalism" as we all mean it. Charles is to be commended for taking the time and effort to check with others as to the problems we face. It is important, however, to keep these things in mind:

- a. Other people are entirely capable of raising objections and visualizing problems. Few if any of them are capable of seeing solutions. That is why ours is the only major effort which stands the slightest chance of establishing an operating Graduate School.
- b. We don't know all the answers. But we face up to the problems we can solve, and we solve them as we proceed. I am personally unimpressed with a cataloguing of the obstacles and problems that face us. We don't have to solve all the problems at once. Example: I was told at the outset that we couldn't get the Freedom School running. People making these predictions were really saying that THEY couldn't get such a school into operation. We did. I was told that we could not get tax exemption. We did. I was told we could not get exemption on our land. We did. I was told we could not teach courses that would be meaningful to others. We did. I was told we could not get people to come here to take courses. We did. If we look all the way down the line to ultimate problems to be overcome, they appear overwhelming. If we take our problems day by day and meet them as they arise, it is amazing what we can accomplish. Another example: I was told that because I lack academic qualifications as dean, I could not attract men with the necessary credentials to serve under me as dean. We now have two of the finest available anywhere: Martin and Hutt. We can and will get more as we can manage it.

Point 2: What is desired is advanced research and education in classical liberalism.

Comment: Advanced research is a part of our Rampart program



implicitly. This must be done by competent personnel. However, at the moment, only Rampart is within striking distance of BOTH research and advanced education. Programs that are geared for research only must rely entirely upon subsidization. Programs geared only to instruction would not have the advantage of the research facilities necessary for truly advanced work. By beginning with a graduate school we are emphasizing the research facilities and thus, so far as I am aware, provide the only institution at the present time capable of moving in the direction of liberty both in the field of research and student participation. This means that we can generate income from tuition and attendance, and it is hoped ultimately to generate enough of this so that the program is self-supporting on an operating basis.

Point 3: Is a degree-granting institution operating within the formal educational system a key part of the overall program?

Comment: Yes, and without qualification. Many professors, including Hans Sennholz, have seen this problem and commented on it. The greatest need in educational circles today is a graduate school, one that can offer advanced degrees leading to teaching careers for those who hold to libertarian (autarchic) views, but who today can barely squeak through their courses in the politically dominated institutions which point their product in the direction of state control, state management, state indoctrination. The program of launching Rampart College Graduate School is of primary urgency. There is nothing more important going on in this country right now.

Point 4: If it is granted that Rampart College Graduate School is of high priority, are we proceeding in an optimum manner and in the best location?

Comment: a. The question relates to what is meant by "optimum." I would like to answer by stating that optimum efforts are being made in the tradition of voluntarism. That is to say, so far



as I know, each trustee has voluntarily done all he feels that he wishes to do in support of our efforts. No trustee is limited except by himself in this respect. Naturally, when it comes to faculty and staff, we make a constant effort to improve these operations, which in some measure are limited by the financial resources we have to commit to any particular project. If, by optimum, is meant the total capacity of each trustee, staff member, and faculty member, the answer is negative. All of which should indicate that we can do a better and better job as we proceed. Again, we should have in mind that our task is one of BECOMING, not one of BEING. We grow and learn, and learn and grow. We will solve our problems as we face them. We will do all we can with available resources. I believe our past behavior and achievements over the years speak convincingly in this area. area

b. So far as location of the school is concerned, it is my firm conviction that we are in the best possible site.

1. A college which proposes to offer a center for classical liberalism should be centrally located in the country. There is no part of the country unaffected by the socialist fallout. It is doubtful if any community in the country could marshal sufficient support in itself to warrant the establishment of a local college under ordinary rules. Our college must have universal appeal and be relatively available to anyone and everyone.
2. Because of our remote location we have escaped, and will continue to escape, a great deal of the active opposition that we would surely encounter were we in a metropolitan area with its tendency toward educational restraints and intrusions into every area of private operation. This has been true in the past and should continue to be true. We seek to attract attention only in those areas where it is meaningful to us.
3. The laws of Colorado are rather favorable for this endeavor. Of course, the only certainty we have in respect to any law is the certainty of uncertainty. But in this



respect we have a favorable head start which we have obtained laboriously over the years. We are tax exempt. The land is tax exempt. We are legally empowered to confer degrees. We have built up a momentum which helps us as we expand.

4. The remote character of our campus is challenging to the student. The average college is in a metropolitan area. It is filled with distractions. Ours is a setting conducive to reflection, study, deep understanding. Our setting is as desirable as any that can be found. Further, we have substantial assets already accumulated. With all due respect to the idea that some other location might also serve as well in time, time is of the essence. We are well along in our program here. We can succeed here as well as anywhere else and in view of our momentum, there is nothing to be gained by shifting sites at the present time.

Point 5: We have been unable to operate the Freedom School on a self-sustaining basis. We operate without full classes except those filled by Deering Milliken. If we can't even fill the Freedom School classes, how can we expect to fill classes for Rampart College?

Comment: a. There is a misapprehension here. The classes we have been unable to fill are the current "executive sessions." This program was introduced in 1958 following a suggestion by Chet Anderson of Milwaukee. Grant Corby suggested that we reduce the amount of time in these courses, making them one instead of two-week sessions. Two years ago, we did this. The results were the same. We have had no better luck in filling these Executive Sessions with one-week periods than with two-week periods. As for our Comprehensive Courses, they are usually pretty fully enrolled. Sometimes students who are expected do not show up and in consequence the actual numbers of persons taking the course can be less than capacity. But for several years now we have regularly enrolled anywhere from 15 to 20 students in each Comprehensive Session and had in attendance any-



where from 12 to 20. I have, on occasion, even accepted enrollments above the 20 top limit, on the expectation that some would drop out at the last moment. Thus far, I've gotten away with it. But it is very risky to enroll students above capacity, since they might all come.

b. We should do what we can to encourage executive participation. But executive participation is only a minor part of our operation. The backbone of the school has been its Comprehensive Courses. These are usually about as full as we want them to be, with the exceptions noted above in paragraph (a).

c. Freedom School is an educational novelty. It can and must (and does) create its own market as it goes. Thus, it will always be more difficult to enroll students in the Freedom School courses than in Rampart College. There is an existing market for graduate study leading to an advanced degree. There is also an existing and expanding market for undergraduate study. We cannot compare enrollment potential of the two institutions. In the one case, Freedom School, no degrees are offered, no accrued benefits derive from taking the course except that of personal satisfaction on the part of the enrollee. In the other case, we propose offering college work and college degrees for which there is an enlarging market all over the country.

d. Another matter to be kept in mind is this. We must operate in terms of the quality student, not in terms of quantity of students. Thus, we must emphasize quality and seek to attract only the better students to Rampart as well as Freedom School. We could, without question, fill our halls with eager numbskulls. But this is not our aim or purpose.

e. Doubtless, we will have to compete with other institutions in seeking to attract the better students. The question is not essentially relevant. If we can set up an attractive scholarship program and make offers to the better students, we should be able to get a full contingent. Further, there will be a number of capable people who are unhappy and disgruntled with the kind of instruction they are getting in our various brainwashing institu-



tions. They will have greater motivation toward us than anywhere else. We can and we must meet that motivation.

point 6: Will we be able to attract the caliber of students required for advanced educational work? (a. We might have to give scholarships.) (b. Some would not recommend Rampart because of the burden it would place on their students thus recommended.) (c. We could get good students only if we were fully accredited.)

Comment: This is the truly relevant question. a. We most assuredly would have to offer scholarships. We should prepare such a program. We should encourage donors to make funds available for this program. There are a number of funds already available which can be tapped in this area, once we are in full operation. Additionally, there are a number of free market lending programs available to any reputable college.

b. True. Some would not recommend Rampart. Others would. This fall, Mrs. LeFevre and I attended the convention of admissions officers held in Denver. I wanted to get the "feel" of these people. Quite frankly, I anticipate very little problem here. Once we are established and in working condition, there are a number of admissions personnel in various colleges as well as counselors and others who will be glad to recommend Rampart, especially to those students they have with "conservative" (libertarian-autarchic) bent. We won't get them all. We couldn't handle them all. We are hoping ultimately for around 200 in the Graduate School. There should be a national demand annually of approximately 2,000 competent people.

c. We expect to become fully accredited. To be fully accredited requires endowment, a fine library, a competent faculty. This is largely a matter of time and money. Accreditation is not an insurmountable problem.

There is, of course, no guarantee that we can accomplish these goals. There is, equally, no indication that we cannot. I see no reason why, if we conduct ourselves reasonably well, we cannot move forward to meaningful accomplishment.



Admittedly we will have to enroll some students who will not measure up but who, at the moment of enrollment, give sufficient promise to warrant enrollment. The longer we go without Rampart, the poorer will be the general level of those we hope to attract. I have been told many times that we should have started Rampart 20 years or more ago. Had this occurred we would have solved many of these problems by now. We didn't. Neither did anyone else. The way we are going will not be a path lined with roses and filled with bright scenery. There will be many dark days. The task, being worthy, must be undertaken. We have assumed the responsibility. Let's give it "the old college try."

Point 7: Will we be able to place our qualified grads in teaching positions? Students could learn through existing institutions and study liberalism on the side. Rampart would have the reputation of being a propaganda house rather than a reputable agency of academic instruction. Rampart grads would be accepted only if they were superior to other qualified persons from other institutions.

Comment: Certainly we will help to place qualified grads. Nothing like a 100 per cent record is expected. However, in this connection, we couldn't pick a better time to get started. Evidence abounds that there really is a teacher shortage. If we can turn out qualified men, they will not have to compete too strenuously at the moment. Northwood Institute has already hired a grad of our Phrontistery on whom we conferred a master's degree. Many competent students will NOT study liberalism on the side, for they have little motivation to do so. Many competent students drop out of school today because they are disgusted and disheartened by what they find. They wish to instruct and teach capitalism and free market ideas in a climate of academic excellence and freedom. But they find their alma maters practicing what amounts to indoctrination and thought control. If they switch to Rampart, they will find new hope and new courage to carry on in the atmosphere we can and will create here.

Currently, many students find that for them to become true liber-



als would probably result in financial impairment and career limitation. Why buck the trend? Although capable of going into liberalism they find it financially rewarding and career stimulating to go along with the herd. Rampart can make a beginning in setting this trend in reverse.

Once more, let me stress the fact that we hope to provide some really fine, highly qualified people. Quality is to be stressed, not quantity. The best will get ahead and certainly will be well placed.

The graduate of any new institution would face the same problems a graduate of Rampart might have. But new institutions do get started. If they establish a reputation for high scholarship, within a few years there are no problems of this sort.

Point 8: Will we be wasting funds to put up more buildings where in certain places there are excess buildings, where schools have failed? Why not buy up an existing school which is broke and available?

Comment: I have already answered a part of the question as it relates to location. Let me add that going in where failure has occurred gives one an additional problem. We would be outsiders. We would have no worthwhile local contacts. Almost all college failures have failed because of a lack of local support. We would probably not only have to face up to this problem, but in addition because of our academic stance, face new and overt hostility.

Point 9: Is it desirable to place ourselves voluntarily under the control of the state? Will we not have difficulty in becoming fully accredited?

Comment: When we organized originally, we complied with Colorado law. We are already under some control of the state because of this. Also, because of it, we are already qualified to confer degrees. Real accreditation (some states also do this chore) occurs through accrediting associations made up of members of the academe.



not the state. I am already in touch with the accrediting group which accredits in this territory. I have their list of requirements. If we have the facilities, the endowment, the library, the qualified faculty, a reasonably intelligent method of procedure, we can get accreditation. Getting accreditation will be automatic when we have done the job the way we'd like to have it done anyhow.

One of the reasons for beginning at graduate school level is that the matter of accreditation is of secondary importance to us. The undergrad seeks a school with accreditation so that he can ultimately move on to an advanced degree. The grad of a graduate school seeks employment. Having a degree is more important to a graduate school grad than accreditation. Accreditation is of far greater importance when we get into the undergraduate area.

To do the job that must be done, we must be able to offer both degrees and accreditation. We should be able to do both in due course. At the moment, we can certainly do the one, which is already fait accompli in three cases.

Point 10: Again the matter of location. Comment: Same as before.

Point 11: Wouldn't it be better to ignore the accreditation and the formal degree-granting procedure and simply operate a non-accredited school where we could do pioneer work in advanced libertarian research and seminars?

Comment: The Phrontistery served to answer this question to some degree. We sponsored all the students in that six-month session. During the first three months we told them that there would be no credits and no possibility of degrees. The students did not work very well. They goofed, got into difficulties of various kinds. Then, when we were about half way through the course, we announced we could offer credits and degrees. The change was electric. The students buckled down and went to work. Some of them have already made use of the credits we offered in various schools where they were enrolled. Some of these credits were accepted, even



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though the school is not formally recognized, simply because of the caliber of the instructors we had. Our degrees were accepted. If we can do that in six months, we certainly can do a better job in a full-time operation.

The part-time grad and undergrad students simply will not come to us and do their best work if they are not to get credits or degrees. Further, until we can offer these things we will tend to get the worst rather than the best students, even under subsidy. Once we offer credits and degrees, there will be no reason for the better students to stay away except admitted difficulties they may encounter later. But they will encounter fewer if we credit and confer than if we do not. By beginning as we are with the graduate school, we can and will overcome this the best possible way.

I suspect that the concern expressed in this area is merely the concern advanced by various professors who are (1) fearful that we will become a diploma mill, or (2) are engaged in some type of endeavor which is essentially competitive and while they would hope that we could succeed, in one sense they almost hope that we will not. After all, what happens to their reputations if they have not really backed our efforts and it turns out that an ignorant man, like LeFevre, lacking academic qualifications, puts it over where those with the highest qualifications haven't been able to do so?

I believe in what we are doing. I know that we are on the right track. We can succeed with your help. We'll do all we can here at the school. If our trustees do all they can in an "optimum" manner, there is simply no question that we will succeed in time.