

He does not, however, drop the other shoe and suggest that we might spend less on schools, or reduce the amount of time people are obliged to spend in them, or even close some of them altogether. Instead he urges a more existential treatment: begin to view schooling "as an end in itself rather than a means to some other end." He would have us reform schools into pleasurable places of intellectual stimulation, personal growth, and social awareness instead of learning factories.

On the face of it, this recommendation will please most schoolteachers and reformers, for it meshes with their liberated view of the learning process and frees them from the need to justify their work with those damnable achievement tests. Educators with a somewhat longer view, however, realize full well that this is building a classy new schoolhouse on a bed of quicksand, for Jencks' *analysis* could as easily lead us in quite different directions. His fundamental point, that schools aren't very important — *and never can be* — in terms of the things he considers fundamental, is at heart an argument for assigning schools a lesser role than they have grown accustomed to.

Illich is more direct. His title indicates a certain skepticism about the role of schools in society, and his text sustains the tone. As befits a work by the director of something called the "Center for Intercultural Documentation" in Cuernavaca, Mexico, this is a bold little volume, unconfined by the borders of any one nation, in which "schooling" serves as metaphor for all the "bureaucratic agencies of the corporate state."

Those "false public utilities," the schools, are made out to be monopolistic, elitist, coercive, inherently unequal, pedagogically ineffective, largely trivial, and destructive of the creativity lurking in every man. At bottom, Illich sees schools as ill-disguised agencies of social control which perpetuate inequalities, give formal sanction to exclusivity (as in degrees, teacher licences, and the like), and foster cultural homogeneity.

Polemic indeed. Illich appears to share the radical egalitarianism of the counter-culture, in which everyone has something to teach and — with becoming modesty — much to learn. The society should facilitate, certainly should not impede, the creation of linkages that bring incipient Aristotles together with aspiring Platos.

These linkages — Illich calls them "learning webs" or "opportunity networks" — amount to a kind of Whole Earth Catalog of learning resources combined with a switchboard and arrangement for bringing one who wants to learn something together with someone who already knows it. No licenses are involved, and nothing is obligatory.

The occasional "free school," open high school, Montessori classroom, rural commune, or experimental college already proceeds on principles not too different from these. But Illich would not confine his notions to the elite — or far out — fringes of society. For a central theme with him is that the poor and downtrodden are the chief victims of contemporary schooling. It offers a false promise of equality, a redistribution that benefits only

the already-favored, a set of barriers masquerading as opportunities.

It is here that the common strands in Illich and Jencks begin to appear. Neither can abide the deception of an equalizing institution that not only fails to lift the poor out of poverty, but also bestows its rewards (and its payroll) in sectarian fashion on its own anointed, while diverting huge chunks of the nation's tax revenues from other, less cramped purposes. Jencks simply says we should recognize the limitations of school, make the best of it, and work toward equality through other means. Illich puts the school to a similar test — how much good or bad does it do the poor? — and elects to punish its failure by abolishing it altogether.

Neither writes off education, but each despairs of making it correlate with other, larger purposes such as equality of income, status, or personal happiness. It is in this quest for correlation that the new critics differ from their predecessors. The one sequence that schools are least experienced with and least able to withstand is the hypothesizing of a large instrumental purpose for the schools followed by *careful measurement* to see whether the results justify the hopes. Heretofore the relationship was taken for granted, indeed schooling was assumed to correlate with practically every honorable goal the society could devise. That is the basis for its steadily expanding share of the GNP: it has had a steadily expanding set of missions.

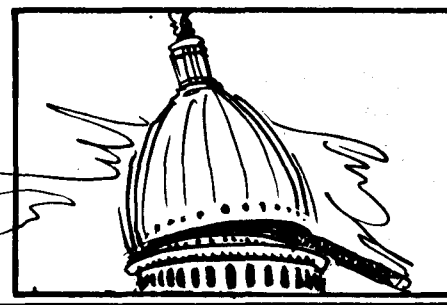
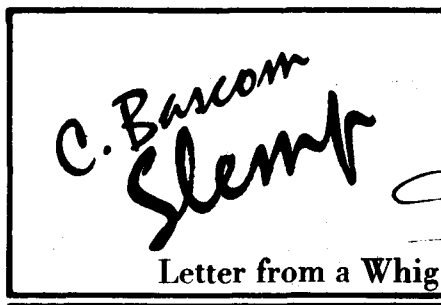
Illich and Jencks partake of the growing tendency to judge society's processes in terms of their results, rather than simply

setting goals, providing resources, and taking outputs for granted. Illich's wry observation that "Schools create jobs for schoolteachers, no matter what their pupils learn from them," is so obvious that one is astonished not that he says it but that it wasn't until the monumental "Coleman Report" of 1966 that people began questioning whether education is adequately gauged by the conventional criteria of schooling — money per pupil, student per teacher, books per library. And if school inputs cannot even be certain to produce such a direct outcome as "learning," what of such ambitious goals as social mobility?

It is their acceptance of an output standard that brings both authors — and a handful of other contemporary critics — to the judgement that schools are not very effective. Once at the lip of that precipice, one either edges along, looking for changes within the schools that may somehow, someday make them more "effective," or one jumps over in search of different instrumentalities.

Jencks and Illich both jump, the one not quite admitting it, the other shouting it all the way. It isn't necessary to agree with their choice of landing spots to share their unease with the old school verities. At minimum, one leaves them with a growing suspicion that the teacher is not always right, that the teacher's union has reason to be worried, and that questions about the effectiveness of schools are not silly in the least.

Chester Finn



MORE FIGHTING OVER LESS SPENDING

(WASHINGTON) — Most everyone in town expects the always tenuous relations between the White House and Congress to completely break down by the end of the month. Even before Congress convenes, House Democrats have voted by an overwhelming margin to oppose the President on Vietnam and seventeen senators have filed suit to prevent him from impounding funds appropriated by the Congress.

Thus, in spite of the President's overwhelming victory over George McGovern in November, his operatives are being reminded that liberal Democrats dominate the Senate, are gaining more and more influence in the House, and simply do not intend to let the President get away with very much this time around.

The liberal cause will inadvertently

receive support from non-liberal and conservative congressmen and senators who are either upset with the President or concerned about what many see as the diminished role of the Congress in our government. Many incumbent Republican congressmen and senators complained during the course of the campaign that their efforts were being undermined by Nixon operatives working through the Committee to Re-Elect the President. They felt that committee fund-raisers were drying up funds they desperately needed and were put off by what they saw as the highhanded manner of the second-echelon people they were forced to deal with. The embarrassment of Watergate and the failure of the President to campaign for some of them added to the bad feeling.

The President's people, for their part,

argue that they did help by channeling some money into crucial campaigns and dismissed as a copout the charges made against the President himself. The merits of the case, however, are less important than the feelings of those on the Hill who blame the President and appear intent on getting even with him.

The second factor that will lead some normally conservative congressmen and senators to support liberal attacks on the President's programs is more serious. There is a widespread feeling that the Congress has allowed the executive branch to get away with too much in recent years and many senior congressmen and senators have become increasingly alarmed by this trend. Thus, the attack on the President's power to impound funds has the support of men like Sam Irvin and James Eastland as well as Vance Hartke and Ralph Nader. If they win, they will be reasserting their power all right, but they will also make it very difficult for the President either to hold the line on federal spending or gain much real control over the various federal agencies.

Last Fall many of those who supported the President's proposed spending ceiling did so because they felt the Congress was simply refusing to confront the problem of matching income to spending. The spending ceiling never was adopted, although it did get through the House, and the President began impounding funds to stave off the huge deficit that seemed inevitable a year or so ago. During the campaign and since the election, he has continually stressed the need for restraint, and his ability to impound appropriated funds looms as a major weapon in his fight against runaway spending. If the Congress or the Courts take that weapon from him many believe that there will be little anyone can do about either the size of the government or the burgeoning deficits that threaten the value of the American dollar.

There can be little doubt that the President has decided to go after waste in all areas and after substance in several. He is aware of the fact that unless he does so, we will be faced with a deficit that could trigger a new inflationary spiral in spite of the economic controls now being used to keep the lid on. His economic advisors have told him that he must either cut spending or raise taxes in order to reduce this swelling deficit, and his political advisors have informed him that the American people aren't in any mood for new taxes.

Thus, he rejected the advice of those who said he would have to raise taxes or "reform" the tax system in a way designed to increase revenues, and he has apparently scrapped the idea of a value-added tax which might have allowed Washington to extract more money from the average American with less pain. He has embarked on what appears to be a serious campaign against the wasteful federal bureaucracy.

This is a course that must of necessity result in confrontation after confrontation with the Congress. Every agency and program has some sort of a con-

stituency on the Hill and one can safely assume that dozens of bureaucrats are at this very moment burning up the phone lines to mobilize their friends and defenders. And if preliminary indications mean anything, conservatives as well as liberals will feel the heat as their favorite programs get the knife because it now appears that cuts will be made on something like an across the board basis. This is not to say that defense spending and social welfare programs will ultimately be cut to exactly the same degree, but it does mean that a concerted effort is going to be made to cut back in all areas — including defense.

Given this fact, the appointment of Elliott Richardson as Secretary of Defense makes as much sense as sending Cap Weinberger over to HEW. Each man is viewed as essentially hostile to the self-defined goals the agency is to manage. Therefore, each can be expected to look rather skeptically at budget requests emanating from bureaucratic subordinates. The appointments when viewed from this perspective are certainly logical enough, and one can hardly question the President's intent. He has

said he wants to get at the waste and he is appointing people he thinks will do the job for him.

But still there is something wrong with what's going on. The course he is charting may prove politically dangerous for the reasons outlined above and because he is apparently going to take on everyone at once, and it begs the important substantive questions that should be asked about the goals and values of various government programs. In other words, a simple across the board attack on spending, while admirable in that it could save everyone some money, does not in itself constitute much of a policy. There is undoubtedly a good bit of waste in the best of programs, but some of them are necessary and others are not. An across the board attack on everything will perhaps reduce the size of things, but is not likely to improve the quality of government very significantly. To do this one must separate the good programs from the bad so as to save the one and eliminate the others. Washington observers are waiting to see whether the President's people are willing or able to make the necessary distinctions to accomplish this. □

Book Review

The Rosa Luxemburg Contraceptives Cooperative:

A Primer on Communist Civilization.

by Leopold Tyrmand

Macmillan Company, \$5.95

From time to time whenever he gets a bit impish or high, a friend of mine is given to shouting at the top of his voice, in his very worst Werner Klemperer accent, "Into the compound!" I laugh every time — but why? Do I laugh at the performance? Do I laugh at the whole notion of anyone ever actually having been sent into a compound? Do I laugh because I'm drunk?

Leopold Tyrmand has been living in the United States since 1966 and now has elected to write a witty book about life under communism in the USSR. His book is not well written; it is, in fact, quite naive and corny in parts. Whole chapters (to borrow a phrase from the late Canadian humorist, Stephen Leacock) seem to have been translated out of the original Russian by machinery. But there is something very worthwhile here, particularly in the chapters "How to be a child" and "How to be a Jew." If you can cope with Tyrmand's godawful style, or if you're the sort of person who thinks "Hogan's Heroes" is an amusing TV series, there are plenty of raisins in this thin cookie.

Tyrmand (a Polish emigre, by the way, not a Russian) has learned to "hate communism for the evil it contain(s). And also to fear it for its metaphysical power to hold more and more and more evil." (The quotation is featured prominently in a number of advertisements for the book.)

Quite frankly, I don't much care for the bitterness underlying the quotation and the book: unrelieved cynicism really turns me off, and *The Rosa Luxemburg Contraceptives Cooperative* is the work of a man beside himself with hatred. It is a book written for a special readership.

Yet, Tyrmand has done something very worth noticing, for all his bitterness. He has somehow managed to write a witty tract about life under communism — a tract that asks us to laugh at the indignities and insanities of life in a Marxist society while forgetting about the horrors. There are wry smiles on almost every page. In the chapter on "How to use the mails," for example, Tyrmand explains that when a letter is deposited in a mailbox in the Soviet Union, there is no guarantee that the mailbox will ever be emptied. The letter may stay in the mailbox for days, then be removed and opened and re-sealed and stamped "Damaged En Route." Or it may simply disappear altogether.

In the chapter on children, we are up against a man who perfectly understands young people. Children in Russia, we are told, learn very early how to protect themselves; they learn very early to observe their parents, to watch for phoniness, cynicism, dishonesty. When Santa Claus is presented as a figure symbolizing western imperialism, and