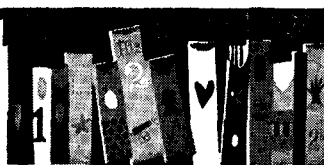


the Editor's Bookshelf



IS IT TRUE THAT "something went wrong" in American education during the first half of this century? The large and receptive audience for books and articles critical of the schools suggests a widespread conviction that it did. We offer more schooling than ever before, and more diplomas and degrees are granted, but no one seems to be entirely satisfied with the results.

Efforts to identify the culprit have not been entirely successful—was it a man, an ideology, an institution, or some defect lying deep within our culture—perhaps an extreme permissiveness that lead to a reluctance on the part of both parents and teachers to hold to standards?

Progressive education has been a prime target, but educators have been quick to point out that most of our public schools have never been very progressive while the best examples of progressivism are found in some of the private schools that have been strangely immune from attack. When the blame is attached to John Dewey the many disciples of that eminent philosopher find it easy to advance evidence that those most critical of Dewey seem not to have read his works and that Dewey's views on education were closer to those of some of the present-day critics than to the practices most widely criticized.

When teachers colleges are blamed for poor teaching in the schools, those familiar with the facts point out that fewer than 20 per cent of our teachers

come from teachers colleges while 80 per cent come from liberal arts colleges or universities. Even in a teachers college the professional courses in education account for only a small percentage of the total curriculum and if our teachers do not know history, mathematics, literature, and science it must be because the college professors of those subjects failed to teach them effectively.

Now a new culprit has been identified. In **"Education and the Cult of Efficiency"** (University of Chicago Press. 273 pp. \$5.50), Raymond E. Callahan marshals evidence that the greatest force undermining intellectual standards in our schools has been the cult of efficiency and the willingness of school administrators to allow themselves to be guided by "sound business practices" rather than by educational goals based upon a scholarly tradition.

The trend became observable early in the century. Callahan quotes numerous statements made by leading school administrators as early as 1913 in which they emphasized their managerial responsibilities, called themselves "school executives," and stressed the importance of saving the tax dollars, while giving little thought to their role as intellectual leaders.

When they went to graduate school they ignored the higher learning and chose courses in school finance, public relations, school housing, and personnel administration. It soon became appar-

ent to younger educators that those who took advanced degrees in school management got the good jobs while those who became scholars remained classroom teachers on a much lower pay scale. Callahan cites evidence that even as recently as 1960 school superintendents from all over the country, when asked which fields of study they considered most important for school administrators, placed school finance at the top of the list and public relations, human relations, and school business management within the first five.

He suggests two remedies. Graduate schools offering doctorates in education for future school administrators should require serious disciplined study of such academic fields as history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. And we should "take a hard and realistic look at our patterns of local support and control—much of the vulnerability of administrators is due to our traditional means of financing the schools largely through local property taxes. . . . So long as schoolmen have a knife poised at their financial jugular vein each year, professional autonomy is impossible."

Callahan is a professor of education at Washington University in St. Louis and a student of George Counts of Columbia's Teachers College, to whom the book is dedicated. For a long time educators with such a background were on the defensive and reluctant to admit that anything had gone wrong with our great experiment of universal education. The fact that some of them now are willing to join in the critical reassessment may herald a new day in educational thought.

—P.W.

A NEW SERIES of twelve monographs published by the Syracuse University Press is entitled **"The Economics and Politics of Public Education."** Results of a three-year research project in educational finance, the volumes analyze the economic, social, and political factors which influence the support of elementary and secondary education. The series is notable in that it is the work not of a school of education, but of the prestigious Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Four volumes in the series have been published to date: "Schoolmen and Politics," by Stephen K. Bailey, Richard T. Frost, Paul E. Marsh, and Robert C. Wood; "Government and the Suburban School," by Roscoe C. Martin; "National Politics in Federal Aid to Education," by Frank J. Munger and Richard Fenno; and "Issues in Federal Aid to Education," by Sidney C. Sufrin. The remaining volumes in the series will appear during 1963. They are priced at \$1.75 each.

—J.C.

What Surprised Callahan

"I was not really surprised to find business ideas and practices being used in education.

"What was unexpected was the extent, not only of the power of the business-industrial groups, but of the strength of the business ideology in the American culture on the one hand and the extreme weakness and vulnerability of schoolmen, especially school administrators, on the other. I had expected more professional autonomy and I was completely unprepared for the extent and degree of capitulation by administrators to whatever demands were made upon them. I was surprised and then dismayed to learn how many decisions they made or were forced to make, not on educational grounds, but as a means of appeasing their critics in order to maintain their positions in the school."

—From the author's preface to *"Education and the Cult of Efficiency."*

Administration as the Villain

"The Community of Scholars," by **Paul Goodman** (Random House, 175 pp. \$3.95), details one man's acerbic view of what is wrong with contemporary American higher education and what should be done about it. William K. Selden is executive secretary of the National Commission on Accrediting and former president of Illinois College.

By WILLIAM K. SELDEN

LIFE is filled with paradoxes, one of which is the relative political liberalism of university professors and their corresponding conservatism as far as education is concerned. Our society is in the midst of a social and scientific revolution, partially caused by the discoveries and new learning of the professors themselves, who see the need for political and economic changes but who tend to be myopic as far as their own educational organizations and practices are concerned.

In "The Community of Scholars" Paul Goodman endeavors to dramatize the need for university change, but in his attempt he will not make friends and not likely influence many people, especially in the direction in which he believes higher education should be oriented. As a former professor and peripatetic lecturer, as a psychologist and group therapist, and as a would-be historian and sociologist, Goodman seems to revel in flailing at present educational habits and attitudes and in aspiring to be the vocal conscience of recent generations of scholars who have been mesmerized by "the spread of administrative mentality."

In contrast to the accepted present day definition of a university, the author conceives that an institution by this name should be where humanism prevails, where teaching and learning is more committed, and where professors are freed from "external control, administration, bureaucratic machinery, and other excrescences that have swamped our communities of scholars." This ideal institution would comprise ten teachers and from 120 to 150 students, and "if we think of the simple university, strong in its poverty, there is no such [condition as] financial necessity." Goodman's ideal is the medieval *studium generale* which "is

anarchically self-regulating or at least self-governed; animally and civilly unrestrained; yet itself an intramural city with a universal culture; walled from the world; yet active in the world; living in a characteristically planned neighborhood according to the principles of mutual aid; and with its members in oath-bound fealty to one another as teachers and students."

In a manner similar to the contemporary abstract artist who is searching for and trying to express life in its basic and simplest forms (and sometimes without success), Goodman is endeavoring to find a means of reinstating the relationship of student to master, of nurturing a humanistic approach to knowledge, unsegmented by specialized and departmentalized learning, and of encouraging individuality in a highly complex and organized society with its bulging population. His solution is as unrealistic as would be the proposal to resume manufacture of the model T Ford in order to provide a slower transportation and more opportunity to observe the countryside, only incidentally with a reduction in the number of highway fatalities.

Goodman's unfettered analysis and reasoning have encouraged him to present a bold characterization of our contemporary university scene and its most uncomplimentary features. In a somewhat rambling series of related but unevenly written essays the author argues from a sound premise that "naturally the schools are tightly involved with the performance and even more with the style, of the dominant system of society." But then he describes "the organization of American society [as] an interlocking system of semi-monopolies notoriously unenlightened, misled by mass media notoriously phony, and a baroque State waging war against another baroque State." As a consequence of this social setting "the community of scholars is replaced by a community of administrators and scholars with administrative mentalities, company men and time servers among the teachers, grade-seekers and time-servers among the students. And this new community mans a machine that, incidentally, turns out educational products."

His peevish pen concentrates its attack on the presidents and other administrators who, he claims, are remarkably free to determine university

policies and are more independent than tip-top corporation executives. Although he implies that these office holders are the individuals primarily responsible for the sad plight of the universities, he castigates in an engaging but vituperative manner other groups including the American Association of University Professors which he claims "is a national craft union, largely of entrenched seniors, that copes with distant crises by dilatory committee work."

There is much that Goodman has written which will irritate, if not infuriate, those educators who are convinced that our present pattern of university education is sound and in need of only modest changes. Before such individuals with contented minds read this book—and because of irritation some of them who start will not finish it—they should be cautioned not to let their emotional reactions prevent them from digesting and comprehending the validity of various observations. It is not singly the author but many others as well who "are unhappy about the swollen institutions, the business and government financing, the divisiveness of administrative rules, the lack of personal contact, the irrelevant methods of accountancy, the specialist pride of faculties, the closed minds and conformity of students."

THE opinions of dissatisfied individuals and groups should be heard and given reflective study. It is from the extreme opinions of the biased, the iconoclasts, and those who delight in half-truths that stimulation is derived and social improvement is often instigated. And it is this same type of individual who not only makes life harder for university administrators and department chairmen, but who brings verve to faculty discussions and makes campuses delightful and stimulating places in which to work and live.

It is paradoxical that individuals who tend to be most anarchistic, a position which Goodman claims for himself, are the very ones who most criticize the administrators who are subject to denunciation when they support academic freedom and insist upon providing protection for faculty members to express their individual opinions.

This book has been enjoyable to read and for this we can be grateful to the author and to the publisher. However, the publisher must be criticized for not having insisted upon the inclusion of a bibliography and an index, or at least an adequate identification of the sources of quotations and references. And the jacket says "Mr. Goodman boldly and excitingly offers a stunning practical alternative to the situation that now prevails." Would that this were so!