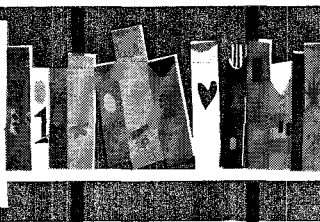


the Editor's Bookshelf



Secondary education in the United States has gone through three fairly distinct phases, each dominated by a different institution: the Latin grammar school of the colonial period, the private academy which reached its greatest development during the period between the Revolution and the Civil War, and the public high school, which got its start early in the nineteenth century but did not become the dominant secondary institution until late in the century.

By 1890, public high schools had been established in most of the larger cities and towns across the nation but among the schools there was great diversity in both curricula and standards. Speaking before the National Education Association that year, President Charles Eliot of Harvard spoke of the wide gap existing between the elementary schools and the colleges, a gap "very imperfectly bridged by a few public high schools, endowed academies, college preparatory departments, and private schools, which conform to no common standards and are under no unifying control."

This chaotic condition led, in 1892, to the appointment by the NEA of the "Committee of Ten," chaired by Dr. Eliot, to look into the situation and make recommendations. The Committee first met in November of that year in the home of a young Columbia University philosopher named Nicholas Murray Butler, who was himself to play a major role in American Education. A year later it issued its report which was to stabilize the pattern of secondary education for two decades and to influence it for a much longer time.

Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century, by Theodore R.Sizer (Yale University Press, 304 pp. \$6), is a scholarly, documented study of the work of the Committee of Ten, the problems that gave rise to it, and its influence on secondary education. Sizer reports that, in 1890, only 6.7 per cent of all American boys and girls of high school age were in school, but the number was growing so rapidly that, though high schools were being built in many cities, it was impossible to keep up with the flood of students desiring secondary education. Many high schools did not even have their own buildings but held classes in rooms provided in grammar schools. Teacher salaries, though they had risen steadily since the end of the Civil War, averaged only \$16.41 per

week. About half the high school teachers of that day were graduates of liberal arts colleges but few of them had any professional preparation for teaching and many taught subjects for which they were ill prepared—in the smaller schools a single teacher was sometimes expected to teach a half dozen unrelated subjects. Inevitably they relied heavily on textbooks.

The Committee faced two basic issues: How much freedom should each school have to develop its own curriculum? and: To what extent should the curriculum be based upon college entrance requirements? "The formation of the Committee of Ten," says Mr. Sizer, "was largely due to a movement within the NEA to make college entrance requirements uniform." Though the Committee was aware that only about one fourth of the students in high school would go on to college, some members were convinced that college entrance requirements offered the best approach to a stabilization of the high school curriculum and—because they were committed to the doctrine of mental discipline—they believed that the kind of courses that prepared for college were equally sound for other students.

The subjects most strongly recommended by the Committee of Ten included Latin, Greek, English, other modern languages, mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, natural history, history, civil government, political economy, and geography. Sizer observes that in many ways the Report of the Committee of Ten now sounds like a Bible for the Council for Basic Education. It is an interesting commentary on the nature of social change that recommendations considered middle-of-the road in 1893 should be acceptable

only to extreme conservatives seventy years later.

Theodore Sizer, who is the youthful dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, writes with a style that other scholars might well emulate and his subject is of potential interest to anyone who wishes to understand the problems of secondary education. His book deserves an audience that extends far beyond the professional group.

Pedaguese is "a derisive label for the jargon of the educationist, especially those among us who write textbooks and professional monographs." This definition is one of several hundred found in **Guide to Pedaguese: A Handbook for Parents Puzzled by Educational Jargon**, by James S. LeSurre (Harper & Row, 172 pp. \$3.95). LeSurre, who is said to speak pedaguese like a native, is teacher certification officer for the state of Connecticut.

LeSurre's selection of words and phrases includes many technical terms (I.Q., median, mode, percentile) as well as true jargon, i.e. language intended to obscure rather than to clarify. His definitions of the technical terms are carefully stated and informative. He deals lightly but effectively with jargon. Of "in a very real sense" he says, "This expression is not peculiar to education but seems to be a favorite with pedagoguesians, especially when speaking in public. You need not be concerned with its meaning because, in a very real sense, it means nothing at all." LeSurre defines "consultant" as "a person who is away from home with his briefcase but without his wife . . . consultants function most effectively and expensively in states other than their own."

Though this is an excellent and much needed book, there are some curious omissions. In his next edition we suggest that LeSurre include "constructive criticism" (which he might define as criticism with which we agree) and "resource person" (a person who is allowed to be present but who must not take part in decision making).

—PAUL WOODRING.



They Speak for Themselves

Soviet Educators on Soviet Education, edited and translated by Helen B. Redl, with a foreword by Fritz Redl (The Free Press of Glencoe, 252 pp., \$6.95), presents for the first time to the general American public a collection of Soviet educators' own writings on their nation's system of education. The reviewer is Associate Professor of Education at Brooklyn College, New York.

By MAXINE GREENE

EVER SINCE the post-Sputnik trauma and the American public's discovery of the Soviet Union's schools, American travelers have been making pilgrimages to see whether they are really better than ours. The reports to the lay public have been journalistic most of the time, sometimes verging on Cassandra cries, sometimes on exposé. There have been, it is true, many field studies carried out by educators; and original source materials have been increasingly available. But these have been translated for the benefit of the educational profession and been published mainly in academic journals, too specialized or too small in circulation to reach the public at large.

Helen Redl has established a precedent, then, in permitting selected Soviet educators to speak for themselves to interested Americans in and out of the profession, particularly those who feel the need to allay what Fritz Redl calls "the pangs of our communicational consciences." Moreover—and this is one of the distinctive strengths of the book—the Redls have been able to confront and articulate "those blocks to communication which stem from the enormous complexity of the task of linguistic and conceptual translation. . . ." To identify such blocks is, in any field, to move a considerable distance toward removing them. In this case, the reader is engaged in the effort to understand and to exercise judgment even with respect to the translator's own choice of terms.

One reason for the Redls' peculiar sensitivity to what is involved in understanding is that both are transplanted Europeans who have themselves undergone the strains of acculturation and of comprehending an unfamiliar world. Another is that they are both educators, equipped with appropriate categories

through which to observe the schools themselves and to make sense of Soviet educational talk. They visited the Soviet Union in 1962 on a Ford Foundation grant and observed a number of its school systems; and Fritz Redl writes that it was partially because of the barriers to communication they themselves experienced that they decided to put their unusual skills to work.

Helen Redl is an educator and a linguist, who grew up in Poland and did her doctoral work at Teachers College in New York. Fritz Redl is the celebrated psychiatrist and educator, long known for his work with disturbed and delinquent children. He grew up in Austria and was at one time a teacher in a Viennese *gymnasium*. This, for example, made it possible for him to perceive such phenomena as a Russian version of the "European Ritual of Child Meets Adult in Authority Role," which the "innocent" American is all too likely to interpret as impressive evidence of children's respect for their elders. Precisely this sort of perceptual sensitivity pervades the translations presented by Helen Redl. She knows, as Fritz Redl indicates, that a word like "pedagogical," repeatedly used by Russian educators, is frequently used to refer to situations Americans would call "psychological." But she also knows that if she translated the term as "psychological" each time it appeared, a false impression would be given: American readers would begin to believe that Russian educators have a concern for the psychology of children equivalent to that in American educational thinking, and this is obviously not so. The same is true about the word "conscious," whose referents are "sociopolitical or characterological" rather than specifically psychological.

Mrs. Redl includes a helpful set of definitions in her introduction to obviate as many of such confusions as possible. She then proceeds to present her translations without comment or additional explanation. Again, the reader is challenged to make his own sense of the way in which a selected group of Soviet educators develop their theories of schooling and discuss their implementation. There is nothing esoteric or particularly difficult in the selections chosen. The topics discussed include adolescent self-discipline, sex education, rewards and punishments, family relationships, and boarding schools, among others—all of

unquestionable relevance for anyone interested in schooling. The names of the writers may be unfamiliar; but all have played significant roles in Soviet educational theory-making, curriculum development, determination of methods of teaching, or preparation of materials.

Most interesting, perhaps, is the selection by A. S. Makarenko, one of the pioneers of Marxist-Leninist education and still a potent influence on Soviet schools. A champion of intellectual challenge and self-discipline, he has written often about respect for the individuality of the child and about joy which "has to be organized, brought to life, and converted into a possibility." Mrs. Redl has translated one of his discussions of educational methods with special reference to work colonies for delinquent children; and many of the crucial themes in other selections in the book are summed up here—especially those dealing with the educational aspects of "upbringing," distinct from but related "organically" to formal education, and equally geared to "a clearly defined political end."

Makarenko, like Petchernikova and others, has much to say about the "socially moral demands" of the collective, the necessity for rules and limits, and the connection between trust, encouragement, and individual well-being—and the orderliness or the productivity of whatever collective is involved. Fundamentally, this is not new; but the opportunity to read first-hand sources makes it possible to reconceive what often seems to be a perplexing interplay of values like regard for the person, freedom, independence, conscientiousness, benevolence, creativity, and "the principles of socialistic life". One section is headed "How to Help the Child Become Idealistic, Highly Motivated, and Industrious"; another (in "Fathers and Children"), "Don't Lose Those Smiles"; and still another, "Be True to Yourself".

THE internal logic of this alien but wholly human Soviet invention begins to come clear for the general reader, whose understanding may well be greater because of the lack of appended conclusions by the translator. Near the end, there is a delightful section on children's literature, which includes Mrs. Redl's own translation of K. I. Chukovsky's poem, "The Magic Tree," which Chukovsky himself approved. But the section also includes a book review of the tale called "The Magic Tree" written by N. K. Krupskaya, the wife of Lenin and, with Makarenko, the most influential force in the early days of the Soviet schools. "Children do not need this nonsense," she wrote. "I find all these very silly fairy tales disturbing and irritating." There follows (in the third person) Chukovsky's defense of fairy tales as a mode of literature that "enriches, improves,