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LONG, Adelbert Hugh, 1935-
A STUDY OF THREE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL
CRITICS.

The University of Oklahoma, Ed.D., 1967
Education, theory and practice

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

A STUDY OF THREE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CRITICS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY
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Norman, Oklahoma

1967

A STUDY OF THREE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CRITICS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the members of his doctoral committee and Dr. Norbert Krieg for perusing this dissertation and for making helpful suggestions for its improvement.

A very special debt of gratitude is extended to Professor Lloyd P. Williams for his patience, understanding, encouragement, and able guidance in directing this work from its beginning to its conclusion.

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A STUDY OF THREE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CRITICS

INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War America was beset with staggering international responsibilities and domestic upheavals. Traditional concepts were no longer adequate to cope with a contracting world in a state of turmoil. Americans seemed to lose their sense of identity, their sense of purpose. A number of far-right extremists sought and found a scapegoat responsible for all the ills of society -- the American public school system.¹ Professing that modern education, as influenced by John Dewey and his followers, had departed too radically from the rigid academic, moral, and religious standards presumably inherent in traditional education, these extremists virulently attacked the schools as being responsible for the spread of juvenile delinquency, socialism, atheism, and communism. Not a few irate voices demanded the public schools be abolished.

Believing the foundations of public school education

¹Mary Anne Raywid, The Ax-Grinders (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962).

were being threatened, educators were stunned and even frightened by these vicious attacks on the schools. To withstand the irresponsible onslaught, educators closed ranks and defensively retaliated by labeling these far-right critics of education "enemies" of the public school. Under the circumstances such a reaction, although not praiseworthy, was perhaps understandable. A problem soon arose however. With the demise of McCarthyism, the influence of the extremist critics of education began to subside, but a number of educators continued indiscriminately to brand all conservative critics of public education as the enemy. Although more apparent today, it was not evident in the early 1950's that public school education, as society in general, was undergoing a process of national re-evaluation.¹ There were a growing number of conservative critics of education who, although disagreeing sharply with progressive educational philosophy and methods, were, nevertheless, not enemies of the public schools. They simply were opposed to the basic direction education had taken the past few decades.²

There were many such critics, but three typical representatives of this group who received considerable

¹Hollis L. Caswell, "The Great Reappraisal of Public Education," Teachers College Record, LIV (1952-1953), 12-22.

²Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1956-1957 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 341-343.

nationwide attention during the 1950's were the three men who are the subject of this dissertation: Arthur Bestor, a prominent historian; Albert Lynd, a business man, school board member, and a former university history instructor; and H. G. Rickover, a career naval officer generally acclaimed to be the "father" of the atomic submarine. Unlike prominent conservative critics of education such as Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler, Bestor, Lynd, and Rickover do not base their educational criticisms upon any predetermined metaphysical premises. Nor is their approach religiously oriented, as was that of Bernard Iddings Bell. Their approach is more utilitarian. They judge the schools by the end product -- the high school graduate. The typical high school graduate is not as well-educated as his counterpart thirty years ago, they claim. If students are not as well-educated as they once were, they reason those in control of public schools, the progressive educators, must be to blame. Proceeding on this assumption, Lynd, Bestor, and Rickover launched a virulent attack not only upon the goals and methods of progressive education but also upon the intelligence and motives of many progressive educators.

These critics helped arouse a lethargic public to re-examine the public school system. They helped make education a topic of national concern. For these reasons their educational ideas merit comprehensive critical examination. Rebuttals by educators have been deficient in three respects:

the rebuttals were limited in scope and tended, with a few notable exceptions, to focus only on the more insignificant issues raised by the critics; summations of the critics' educational ideas lacked comprehensiveness; and the differences among the critics were often blurred if not entirely obliterated.

The objective of this study, therefore, is threefold: to summarize in detail the basic educational ideas of Bestor, Lynd, and Rickover; to indicate the major areas of agreement and disagreement among the three critics; and to assess critically the validity of their more pertinent criticisms and the adequacy of their major proposals for educational reform.

CHAPTER I

ARTHUR BESTOR'S BASIC EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The educational needs of society, according to Bestor, should determine the purpose of education. The word educational has been underlined because he makes a careful distinction between the needs of society in general, and its educational needs.¹ The needs of society in general are manifold and diverse, and various institutions have been organized to meet many of these needs. Whatever particular major need a society has, an appropriate organization or profession has been established to fulfill the need. Thus, since people need, for example, physical health, the medical profession has arisen to take care of this specific need. Just as every organization or profession is primarily concerned with meeting one particular need of society, the

¹Arthur Bestor, The Restoration of Learning: A Program for Redeeming the Unfulfilled Promise of American Education (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 120-121. Bestor's analysis of the contemporary educational scene may be found in his first book on public school education, Educational Wastelands (Urbana, Illinois: The University of Illinois Press, 1953), as well as in numerous articles. His most comprehensive statement on education, however, is to be found in The Restoration of Learning. For this reason the following summary draws heavily upon this book.

formal school system has been charged by society to meet one of its most important, if not the most important need: to raise the intellectual level of the nation.¹ "This is its great task in a democracy," according to Bestor.²

Bestor recognizes that intellectual training is not the only important thing in life, but he argues that it is indispensable in our modern society. Effective living in the modern world requires that each person develops his intellectual powers to the maximum. If a democracy is to safeguard its cultural values, all of its citizens must be able to think critically. To lack faith in the common man's intellectual ability, is to lack faith in the very foundation upon which a democracy rests -- an intelligent, enlightened population. People who lack this faith not only deny "the only real argument for universal education," but are also opponents of democracy.³

According to Bestor, if other agencies could provide intellectual training for the future citizens of America, there would be no reason for the existence of a formal educational system. But since intellectual training requires years of systematic study in a structured situation, the

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Ibid., pp. 95-96.

³Ibid., pp. 84-85, 88. See also: "The Education Really Needed for a Changing World," Harvard Educational Review, XXVII, No. 3 (Winter, 1957), 1-8.

school system must provide such training. If it does not, no other agency will. Society, then, must accept the dire consequences of having few of its citizens who can think and act intelligently upon vital problems and issues.¹

This emphasis upon intellectual training, however, does not preclude the school from engaging in "ancillary tasks" which are of importance to the child and society. Health and welfare services, social activities, and "certain kinds of counseling" are all legitimate functions of the school so long as such activities do not interfere with the essential programs of study. Nor does emphasis upon intellectual training mean that the school is indifferent to the physical, moral, emotional, and aesthetic needs of youth. These are all important functions of education. The great danger, Bestor emphasizes, is that there are so many demands upon the school that if there is no strict adherence to the superiority of intellectual training over all other activities, the educational system will neglect, if not abandon the basic purpose of the school.²

Simply stated, Bestor equates intellectual training with a liberal education, which is nothing more nor less than the "deliberate cultivation of the ability to think." Such a definition does not separate the mind from the

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 56.

²Ibid., pp. 29-30.

emotions, nor the intellectual from the moral realm. Man can and has thought rationally about emotional and aesthetic problems. And morality is nothing more than intellectual honesty. Nor does Bestor desire the intellectual and the practical to be sharply contrasted. The most practical knowledge is abstract knowledge, the fruit of intellectual training. Simple knowledge may enable a person to build a waterwheel, but only abstract knowledge can enable him to build a jet-propelled plane.¹

How can the school best develop in its students the ability to think? According to Bestor, by first recognizing there are some disciplines which are fundamental in modern life:

Reading, writing, and arithmetic are indispensable studies in the elementary school because no intellectual life worthy of the name is possible or conceivable without these particular skills. Science, mathematics, history, English, and foreign languages are essentials of the secondary-school curriculum because contemporary intellectual life has been built upon a foundation of these particular disciplines.²

As the problems of civilization change, the course of study must also change. He adds, however, that this does not mean change of the curriculum in itself must be "exalted into a

¹Ibid., p. 28.

²Ibid., p. 40. According to Bestor, "it is not tradition -- as sometimes falsely alleged -- but a realistic appraisal of the modern world, which points out the studies that are fundamental." See: Harvard Educational Review, XXVII, No. 3 (Winter, 1957), 7.

supreme virtue."¹ The intellectual needs of a society change very slowly. These needs are the same today as they were in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century curriculum was devised "not for the year or the decade, but for the century that was about to commence."² The principal task of the modern school, then, is to "devise the means of bringing to full realization the potentialities" of the curriculum inherited from the nineteenth century.³

Continuing the argument, Bestor reasons if "liberal education means deliberate cultivation of the power to think," and if "clear thinking is systematic thinking," liberal education therefore must involve the logical organization of knowledge.⁴ The logical organization of knowledge is best exemplified in the basic disciplines as developed in the nineteenth century school system.⁵ Furthermore, if the study of these disciplines can best teach a student how to think critically, if the ability to think critically is synonymous with a liberal education, and if a liberal education is essential for all students, it follows that all students must have the opportunity of advancing as far in these disciplines as their capabilities will permit them to go.⁶

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 40.

²Ibid., p. 47.

³Ibid., p. 52.

⁴Ibid., p. 36.

⁵Ibid., p. 48.

⁶Ibid., p. 284.

Just because the disciplines are systematically organized does not mean that instruction must "always follow a strictly logical or chronological order." But a student must pursue a subject long enough to grasp the order inherent in it and to gain the intellectual powers it can confer. To leave a subject before this objective is obtained is "to leave it without seizing hold of the most significant and the most useful of its characteristics."¹ When a student grasps the structure of a discipline, he will eventually develop the way of thinking peculiar to the discipline. If a person can gain the power to think as an historian or scientist thinks, he has gained the intellectual powers which the particular discipline is capable of giving him.²

Furthermore, by possessing the abstract intellectual powers of several disciplines rather than only one, a person can gain the freedom which will permit him to become a citizen of the world. Such knowledge will allow him to transcend "the intellectual chains" that "bind him to his parish," to "his narrow work-a-day" world, and to those in authority over him in "temporal and spiritual matters." If he can think for himself and can reach conclusions about problems "that are crucial to the determination of even larger issues," then, "his is a disciplined mind. And because his mind is disciplined, he himself is free."³

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 38-39.

A man, then, can become free through extensive study of the fundamental disciplines, but Bestor makes a few important qualifications. Intellectual training in the disciplines should not be confused with the mere communication of factual knowledge. Nor should it be confused with subject matter fields which some educationists consider "chunks of frozen fact." The liberal disciplines are not facts at all. They are methods of discovering and handling facts. They are "the most effective methods men have been able to devise . . . for liberating and then organizing the powers of the human mind." A discipline may of course become nothing more than a subject matter field if an historian, for instance, emphasizes "memorizing facts rather than weighing evidence and investigating relationships." That some disciplines can become mere subject matter fields is no reason, however, to eliminate the scholarly and scientific disciplines. It is, he concludes, all the more reason "to hold them rigorously to their task."¹

Bestor states that there are two principles or

¹Ibid., pp. 33-35. Bestor seems to be saying that it is the method of teaching a course that determines whether it is liberal or illiberal. But this is only part of his answer. There are certain subjects which can never be disciplines because they do not possess distinctive ways of thinking. And of those which do "there is a recognizable hierarchy of importance among them." The implication is clear. Those courses which do not meet his criteria for an intellectual discipline are not capable of teaching a person how to think critically. They are, therefore, not absolutely essential or vital to the educational process. Ibid., p. 396.

purposes embodied in the American educational system which must not be ignored. The first is the principle of universal education. The purpose of universal education is to insure that all future citizens have "a minimum of disciplined intellectual training." The second principle is that of universal educational opportunity. To Bestor this means that each student who has the ability and the will to profit from advanced intellectual training should have the opportunity to do so. The expenditure for both of these purposes, however, should be carefully balanced. If the financial resources for universal education are inadequate, the foundations of intellectual life will be weakened. And if provision is not made for the advanced education of the talented and industrious, the nation will be doomed to "mediocrity and intellectual stagnation." If both purposes are to be achieved, it is imperative that it be decided "just what parts of our effort and our expenditure are to be devoted to one purpose and what parts to the other." If the purposes are confused, the door will be opened to "appalling and almost illimitable waste."¹

Money spent for universal education Bestor considers an expenditure for national security. He says it is unfortunate that the unfit cannot be eliminated, but the advantages of universal education to society are so great that,

¹Ibid., p. 360.

up to a certain level, society must put up with this "necessary evil." But it is an evil which, legitimate to a certain point, should not be extended beyond the end of universal education. Once a student has passed the compulsory school age, a selective process must be initiated to eliminate the unsuited.¹

At this stage, after the expenditure for security has been made, the nation's primary concern should henceforth be with education as an investment; that is, advanced education should be treated as a privilege that must be earned. Bestor wants to encourage the healthy concept of intellectual competition and to re-establish the principle that only merit and effort should be rewarded.²

¹Ibid., p. 361.

²Ibid., pp. 361-363.

CHAPTER II

BESTOR'S APPRAISAL OF MODERN EDUCATION

Preliminary Statement

According to Bestor, our world is so complex every occupation must become intellectualized.¹ How we acquit ourselves in these troublesome times, he insists, is directly dependent upon one factor -- the quality of the formal educational enterprise. Too long have the American people been concerned only with the quantity of education.

At the beginning of the twentieth century when America was still the melting pot of the world, Bestor admits it was necessary and desirable that the American people devote their attention to making good citizens of all of its diversified population. Immigrants had to be Americanized; and the school, according to Bestor, could do this job better than any other agency. In addition, he concedes that the educationist of earlier days was beset with staggering problems: Poorly trained teachers, scarcity of school materials, inadequate school buildings, lack of finances, a heterogeneous

¹Bestor, Harvard Educational Review, XXVII, No. 1 (Spring, 1957), 7.

student body with widely differing academic abilities and aspirations.¹ As long as the educationist attacked these problems of universal education courageously without forgetting the ultimate purpose of formal education, he was on the right track. A few gave up under the staggering task of providing a quality education for all students. Out of necessity the pioneer educationists had to "condone a considerable watering down of the curriculum" to carry out successfully the quantitative expansion. As the century progressed, however, some educationists advocated eliminating the academic curriculum for all students, regardless of their academic ability.²

In Bestor's view, these educationists are so removed from the real world of knowledge that they are incapable of recognizing what true education is.³ "The question of direction" is the crucial question. And then he continues:

This question, simply put, is whether the tendency of our public schools is toward greater emphasis upon the fundamental disciplines organized as they are in the mature world of science and learning, or whether the tendency is toward a lessened emphasis on these disciplines in the school program as a whole and a diminished belief in the importance⁴ of presenting them in systematic form to all students.

Many years of experience as a teacher have convinced Bestor

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 12.

²Ibid., pp. 20-21, 55.

³Ibid., p. 105.

⁴Ibid., p. 7.

the school system is moving in the latter direction.

The Role of Pedagogy

The aimlessness of the school system today Bestor attributes primarily to the faulty thinking of professional "educationists" or "pedagogues."¹ By considering themselves as the only ones responsible for the education of teachers, as witness their self-imposed title of professor of education rather than professor of pedagogy, Bestor claims they have usurped the function of determining the content of the curriculum from the group most qualified to offer sound advice on the content of the curriculum -- the scholars, scientists, and professional men. The pedagogue does not seem to realize that his field of pedagogy consists of only a small part of education. Nor does he realize that the study of pedagogy may answer meaningful practical educational questions about the methods of instruction but can never answer ultimate, philosophical ones about deciding what should be taught. But instead of realizing the

¹Bestor is not always consistent in his use of these, and other terms. "Educationists" include college of education professors, public school administrators, and state education officials. A "pedagogue" is a college of education professor. A "pedagogue" therefore might also be an "educationist," but not all "educationists" can be "pedagogues." When Bestor uses such terms as "life adjuster," "hybrids," "anti-intellectualist," he seems to be referring the majority of the time to college of education professors. (Whenever the writer uses the term "educator," the term generally used by the lay public, he is referring to the same people Bestor does when he uses the term "educationist.")

limitations of pedagogy, the pedagogue believes his role is not only to determine the methods of teaching but also the content of the curriculum.¹

As a result of permitting educators of "narrow experience and limited intellectual outlook" to solve all educational problems, there has been "a series of wrong choices," so anti-intellectual in effect "as to be destructive of the very purposes of the school."² Pedagogy has become an end in itself. No longer is inculcating sound and systematic learning an objective of the pedagogues.

The shortcomings of an educational system influenced by pedagogues has to do primarily with their confused conception of the role of interest in educating a student. Bestor recognizes that it is highly desirable to study how to arouse and hold the interest of a student, but only if this interest is directed toward the achievement of a worthwhile purpose. Too often, however, the educationist's obsessive preoccupation with arousing interest has led him to introduce "trivia" into the curriculum on the justification that it will interest the student. Furthermore, the pedagogue, Bestor readily admits, knows much about the learning process of primary children. That is, he knows the processes by which "a child passes from the stage of

¹Ibid., pp. 102-104.

²Ibid., pp. 105-106.

counting his toes to the stage of doing arithmetical sums in a notebook." But unaware of his ignorance, the pedagogue extrapolates. He assumes that a student who has developed a certain degree of abstract reasoning power can be brought to higher intellectual levels by using the same teaching procedures used with the primary student. This advanced stage of learning the professional mathematician knows vastly more about than the professional educationists.¹

Bestor agrees with the pedagogue's assumption that a young child first learns to think in terms of concrete objects and situations, rather than abstractions. But the objective should be to move the student forward as quickly as possible to more complex, abstract operations. Not, as often happens, to continue to teach the student arithmetic by waiting on customers in a model grocery store or to teach him government by making a visit to the local "choo choo" department.² To do so "is nothing short of an educational crime."³

Curriculum Change

The educationist's incessant tampering with the curriculum to make it more responsive to changes in the

¹Ibid., pp. 106-107.

²Ibid., p. 108.

³Ibid., p. 109.

needs of American life is particularly annoying to Bestor. Although "intellectual life does not go through a continuous process of evolution . . . its fundamental changes . . . are measured not in months or years but in centuries."¹ Educationists want to change the curriculum for no sounder reason than that since the curriculum of the nineteenth century was drastically altered, the twentieth century curriculum should be likewise drastically altered. There is no basis for this assumption, Bestor insists. The school leaders of the nineteenth century did not change the curriculum just for the sake of novelty. The intellectual needs of society had changed, and the nineteenth century educators reacted vigorously and with foresight.

To make the curriculum responsive to these changes in intellectual life, the nineteenth century educationists added to the curriculum courses in modern languages, literatures, history, and the sciences. To Bestor "these changes were more profound and far-reaching than any that have occurred in any comparable period in the history of education." Since the intellectual needs of society today are still the same as they were a century ago, the curriculum established by the pioneers of the public school system is the one needed for today's schools. One point Bestor particularly emphasizes. In changing the curriculum, unlike

¹Ibid., p. 44.

present day educationists, the educational pioneers never lost sight of one "inviolable" principle: that education consisted of training in the organized intellectual disciplines developed by man to advance knowledge.¹

Instead of providing the means of bringing to full realization the potentialities of the curriculum inherited from the nineteenth century, Bestor asserts that many educationists today "have taken the easy, anti-intellectual way out." They simply deny that the fundamental disciplines are important in the education of all men. Far too many are even advocating that all of the scholarly disciplines be eliminated. Such people cannot be trusted with directing the educational enterprise.²

Contemporaneity

Bestor agrees with the assumption that education should prepare a student to handle the problems of his generation and to be aware of current public issues. Moreover, he says the student should know the relationship of his studies to practical and civic affairs. The teacher should point out how each topic is related to the problems a student can expect to encounter in "later life." But this is no justification for the excessive emphasis upon

¹Ibid., pp. 44-48.

²Ibid., pp. 53, 55.

the contemporary world that characterizes American education today. The primary purpose of the school is intellectual discipline, not discussion of current political, economic, and social problems. A student may broaden his intellectual powers by "bringing the contemporary world within the purview of his studies," but he cannot "broaden his intellectual horizon by narrowing his attention to the topics of the day." Educationists have done the latter by trying to integrate all the social disciplines into a course called social studies.¹

The very term social studies has contributed to confused educational purpose, watered-down courses, and deterioration of the teacher education program. The use of this term has acted "as a standing invitation to educational faddists" to substitute "trivia" for "sound learning."² As a matter of fact, Bestor believes that initiation of the course in social studies in the middle 1920's "marked the turning point from progressive to regressive education." Educationists at this time started "feeling their oats." They disregarded, or flatly rejected, the educational views of the learned world. They, in effect, undermined the tradition of liberal education. For the traditional aims of liberal education they substituted "lesser aims, confused

¹Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²Ibid., p. 129.

aims, or no aims at all." Intellectual training became a periphery part of the public school program. Into the void rushed the "curriculum doctors, the integrators, the life adjusters -- the specialists in know-how rather than knowledge."¹

Regarding history as the only one of the social sciences which is always concerned with the perspective of time, Bestor argues that history cannot act as a check and balance to the "excessive contemporaneity of the social sciences" if it loses its identity by being submerged in the social sciences. If history is taught as history, it would be impossible to "neglect the perspective of time or dodge the problems of change and development." But a course in social studies can and often does narrow its perspective to only contemporary questions.²

An excellent example of what can happen if history is merged into the social studies program is illustrated by one particularly blatant recommendation of a "grandiose

¹Ibid., p. 143.

²Ibid., p. 128. Rather than preparing students to cope adequately with a changing world, as educators claim, Bestor states that "vocational training, 'life-adjustment' education, the study of contemporary problems" and a concern with everyday experience constitute "an ideal scheme of education for a static world." In order to educate for a changing world, the school "must change in the right direction. That is, changes in education must be of the same character as the changes in intellectual life as a whole. Otherwise education becomes not a preparation for, but a retreat from, the actual world." See: Harvard Educational Review, XXVII, No. 1 (Spring, 1957), 3-4.

report" prepared by the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program. The recommendation is that the social studies teacher reduce frustrations and meet the needs of children and adolescents.¹ The authors of the report purport to accomplish this objective, among other things, by having the teacher require his students to study the effect of the Second World War on the dating pattern in American culture. Bestor states that "here, in a nutshell, is what happens to so ambiguous a concept as the 'social studies' when it falls into the hands of professional educationists who are obsessed with contemporaneity and befuddled by a philosophy that views education simply as 'life adjustment.'"²

That a child's personal problems, a broken home for instance, do create tensions is recognized by Bestor. To make these problems the primary subject of classroom instruction is unwise, however, because many of a child's personal problems "are beyond the power of the school to

¹See: Charles W. Sanford, Harold C. Hand, and William B. Spalding (eds.), The Schools and National Security: Recommendations for Elementary and Secondary Schools (Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Bulletin No. 16, May, 1951), p. 221.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 131-132. Although in The Restoration of Learning Bestor does not clearly indicate what he means by "life adjustment education," in Educational Wastelands, pp. 82-83, he defines the term as "the philosophy which asserts that the public schools must 'adjust' a majority of our children . . . to the bitter fact that they are good for nothing but undesirable, unskilled occupations, and that intellectual effort is far beyond their feeble grasp."

solve."¹ If the school "fritters" away its attention upon the immediate "felt needs" of the student, it is in danger of not providing the student the intellectual foundation he will need later in life when he has to grapple with "real 'real-life'" problems.²

All needs of youth are not intellectual, Bestor admits, but, reiterating his most persistent point, the primary purpose of the school is to train the intellect. Therefore, the school "has no business diverting its attention" to the non-intellectual needs of youth other than in an incidental way.³ Emphasizing this point, Bestor says:

. . . The idea that the school must undertake to meet every need that some other agency is failing to meet, regardless of the suitability of the schoolroom to the task, is a preposterous delusion that in the end can wreck the educational system without in any way contributing to the salvation of society.⁴

Bestor rejects the educationist's assumption that history can be integrated with other social disciplines. Courses at advanced levels may be "co-ordinated" but never completely "integrated" or "fused." An integrated (co-ordinated) course is an extremely advanced one. Such a course should be built upon a real foundation of intellectual discipline.⁵ The great mistake is that the school

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 136.

²Ibid., p. 121.

³Ibid., p. 120.

⁴Ibid., p. 119.

⁵Ibid., p. 63.

integrated programs try to "produce a synthesis of knowledge to integrate." Analysis of a complicated problem may take the immature student months or years of systematic study. Synthesis should come only after a student possesses the required intellectual powers. When these powers are brought to bear on the original problem, then integration has begun. This point is vital. The student must do the integrating, not a particular course of study such as the social studies program.¹

For Bestor, integration or coordination is not defensible at all educational levels. Integrated courses should be limited strictly to certain chronological levels of instruction, preferably no earlier than the first year of college but permissible in the twelfth grade for non-college-bound students.² An integrated course below the twelfth grade will result in "complete intellectual chaos" for most students. Not having been exposed to extended study of the intellectual disciplines, such students will lack the intellectual maturity to cope with the complexities of an integrated course.³

One reason why educationists rely so heavily on integrated courses, Bestor implies, is because they do not

¹Ibid., pp. 59-60, 65.

²Ibid., p. 59.

³Ibid., p. 62.

really understand what is involved in learning to use the mind effectively. It "is a complex process, no part of which can be disregarded." To think clearly a student must first have (1) a thorough command of the basic intellectual tools of reading, writing, and mathematics, (2) a background of reliable information, and (3) extensive practice in the systematic ways of thinking developed within the various disciplines. And finally, if these prerequisites are met, the student should be capable of applying the aggregate of his intellectual powers to the solution of a particular problem.¹

Educationists have contemptuously ignored all these steps except the last, Bestor maintains. A student cannot think in a sophisticated manner until he has mastered the foregoing skills. Junior high and high school students have not done so. Therefore, it is ridiculous to put such students in an integrated social studies class when the purpose is solving the world's most pressing problems. To do so is a waste of time. It is not only a waste of time, but also harmful as future citizens will have a "delusion of competence that is more dangerous than ignorance itself."²

For the foregoing reasons, Bestor urges that the term social studies be discarded immediately, and the label

¹Ibid., p. 61.

²Ibid., p. 134.

history be restored before it is too late.¹

Democracy and Aristocracy

Perhaps the most serious charge Bestor makes against educationists today is that they lowered the intellectual purpose of the school in order to accomodate the "somewhat" lower intellectual caliber of the student today as compared to the student of the nineteenth century. They have perpetuated a "betrayal both of democracy and of education." They are advocating a policy which is nothing short of "abject intellectual cowardice."²

Bestor's basic point is that a democratic school system rests on the belief that the common man not only has the right to participate in the political, economic, and cultural life of society, but also has the intellectual ability to do so in a critical way. This was the belief of the founders of the American public school system, and it is the belief that should be, but is not, prevalent in education today.³

The goal of Americans today is to give to every one of its citizens the quality education which was once

¹Ibid., pp. 126, 129. It is interesting to note that Bestor believes most social studies courses are still basically courses in history.

²Ibid., p. 21.

³Ibid., pp. 84-86.

reserved for an aristocracy. To accept this goal is not to undermine but to build a democratic society. The test of how well this is being done is "whether we have given to the many the things that none but the few could once possess." Bestor asks, "Why should intellectual values be the exception to this rule?" What the few once needed, the many now need. What do they need? They need the same thing the student in the nineteenth century needed. The only way to achieve a real democratic education is to have science, mathematics, history, literature, and language come "at last into the possession of every citizen." This is "the historic mission of the public school"¹

There are, of course, problems involved in educating all children. The social status, cultural background, and intellectual capacity of children do differ, Bestor recognizes. He is also aware that the school children today constitute a less selective group than the school once had, but the implication of this fact can be misinterpreted.² The first misinterpretation consists in "confusing lack of intellectual and cultural background with absence of innate mental ability." The second is the contention by more than a few educationists "that the average of intellectual capacity decreases in direct proportion as the school brings

¹Ibid., pp. 85, 87.

²Ibid., pp. 112-113.

in children from lower economic levels of the population." One who argues this way, and many educationists do, "is denying point blank, the basic tenets of democratic equalitarianism."¹ There is no substantial evidence to indicate poor children are any less bright than wealthy children. The point is that students from the low economic strata of society bring to the school "narrower cultural background" not "smaller mental capacity." The school's job is to remedy this "cultural poverty" which, in a non-selective school, is nothing more than an indifference to intellectual values. This indifference can be eliminated by enthroning "intellectual effort as its central, inspiring ideal."²

That the school has a greater number of children of lesser intellectual ability than ever before, Bestor acknowledges. The school cannot ignore this problem, but it is an old one and need not provoke an excessive reaction. There have always been slow and fast learners, bright and dull students in the schools. The only difference between the past and now is that, through more accurate measuring instruments, it is now known how very great these differences really are. It is this fact, rather than any great decline in the intellectual ability of the average school

¹Ibid., pp. 113-115.

²Ibid., pp. 103, 114.

child that has induced "terror-stricken policy-makers" to argue that their programs be initiated because of the inferior intellectual caliber of the student body of today as compared with that of the student body of the past. "This is an outrageous -- and factually unsupported -- slander upon the intellectual ability of children from lower-income groups."¹

As just noted, Bestor admits that "the median of ability is necessarily somewhat lower today than before" and that problems of retardation will be greater than in a selective school, but "the difference . . . is grossly exaggerated" by the professional educationists. To revamp the curriculum to accomodate this somewhat lower median of intellectual ability is sheer panic. The solution calls for "thoughtful action, not hysteria."² The honest solution is not to drain courses of intellectual content, but to so improve pedagogical techniques that all students, or "virtually" all, will profit from fundamental intellectual training.³

¹Ibid., pp. 114-115. In Bestor's opinion, the differences among students of varying intellectual abilities are not of kind but of degree. He proposes closing the gap between the gifted and the average students by giving the average student, as long as he can profit from it, the same education that the gifted receives. See: "Educating the Gifted Child," New Republic, CXXXVI (March 4, 1957), 16.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 115-116.

³Arthur Bestor, "Progressive Education: the Case Against It," Education Digest, XXIII (January, 1958), 8.

Teacher Education

Bestor makes several distinctions between the types of educational programs now existing in the colleges and universities. To better understand his criticisms of teacher education, it is necessary to indicate what these distinctions are.

The introduction of the elective system at the college and university level, according to Bestor, has led to the idea that all programs are of equal value as a means of liberal education.¹ This idea has resulted in the college offering three distinct types of education: liberal, professional, and vocational. The most important distinction Bestor makes is that liberal education treats the student as a human being first, rather than as a potential doctor, lawyer, or teacher.² In addition to this distinction, there is one other difference between professional and liberal education. Liberal education is based upon the general intellectual disciplines -- that is, those disciplines with a universal applicability and not diluted by a vocational bias. Professional education, however, "rests upon a particular group of disciplines and deals with a particular group of problems, and greater emphasis needs to be given to these than is possible or appropriate

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 73.

²Ibid., p. 75.

in a general program of liberal education."¹ As distinct from liberal and professional education which are based upon intellectual disciplines (the former, the general disciplines; the latter, the specialized disciplines), vocational education, one must infer, does not rest upon extensive training in either the general or specialized disciplines.

Although vocational education may be a legitimate supplement to liberal education (if it adheres to certain principles Bestor lays down),² it is, nevertheless, unlike liberal and professional education, "narrow" in its outlook. Its concern is only with the practical skills, the "mere know-how," which are needed in an occupation "as contra-distinguished from the theoretical knowledge that underlies it and through which it advances."³ Bestor's strongest indictment against vocational training is that a vocational school, a category in which he puts the study

¹Ibid., p. 68.

²Ibid., pp. 80-81. The principles a vocational program should follow, in Bestor's judgment, are: (1) should be given as late as possible in the student's educational career; (2) should be formulated as a specialized vocational program with the training specified by those who really know what it should be; (3) should not take more of the student's time than is absolutely necessary to insure the technical proficiency required; (4) should have the prerequisites, the basic intellectual disciplines, of the vocational programs explicitly stated; (5) should be thorough and systematic so that the "achievement of each student" can be "rigorously tested."

³Ibid., p. 75.

of pedagogy, rarely requires its students "to think of knowledge as the fruit of original inquiry. Knowledge is simply fact, 'subject matter,' a body of established data, stubborn, inert, and unquestioned."¹ Whereas liberal education can teach a person to be self-reliant by applying his general intelligence to the solution of particular problems, vocational and "life adjustment" (by which Bestor means the present teacher education program) programs "breed servile dependence." Why is this so? Because "originality, reason, and common sense are at a discount" in such programs.²

Although it is sometimes difficult to reconcile with a few of his statements, Bestor says that real vocational training is a most important part of the educational system. But he then adds, "it must not be weakened by being confused with pseudo-vocational programs" that consist of a hodgepodge of courses designed only to look relevant on a job application.³ He seems to be saying that the study of pedagogy could be "genuine" vocational training; but since it is the "most blatantly vocational and anti-intellectual of all programs," it has degenerated into nothing more than pseudo-vocational training.

In Bestor's judgment the greatest degradation in

¹Ibid., p. 75.

²Ibid., p. 79.

³Ibid., p. 81.

the field of American education has resulted from the development of pseudo-vocational programs in the field of pedagogy.¹ These programs have been initiated and perpetuated by an "interlocking directorate." This "interlocking directorate" is composed primarily of college of education professors, with able assistance from most state department education officials, and many public school administrators.² Being powerful politically outside the university, the ringleaders of this "directorate," the college of education professors, have been permitted to educate prospective teachers in their own way. That is, rather than teach their students how to think, they prepare the students only for "purely vocational proficiency."³

How did the interlocking directorate gain such power? And how have they maintained this power to teach their students "mere know-how" rather than how to think? According to Bestor, as the normal schools reorganized into liberal arts colleges, these reorganized institutions inherited "a top-heavy faculty of pedagogy." Fearing that their departments would diminish in importance in the reorganized institutions, the pedagogues became conspirators. They used all the methods of power politics to prevent

¹Ibid., pp. 69-70.

²Ibid., pp. 168-169.

³Ibid., p. 78.

such a development. They invented vapid courses to justify their expansion. In addition, to protect their "vested interests," they lobbied the legislatures to make it mandatory for a teaching certificate that all teachers take courses in pedagogy.¹

Continuing the argument, Bestor says "the state-enforced requirement in pedagogy is the taproot of the great educationist upas tree." In order to maintain their "top heavy faculty of pedagogy," through "propaganda and coercion" they convinced the state department of education officials and many public school administrators, who in turn helped convince legislatures and the general public, that high quality teaching demands that a teacher take many courses in the education department. Unfortunately, certification standards have little to do with the actual welfare of the schools. They merely support the educational bureaucracy.²

Because the professors of pedagogy command a powerful combination of political forces, Bestor says they can and have treated with contempt the educational views of the general public and of professors in other departments. Although pedagogues are hesitant to criticize even the most absurd proposals of their colleagues, when their policies are criticized by laymen or by members of the learned

¹Ibid., pp. 158-159.

²Ibid., pp. 167-169.

world, they react viciously with name-calling and intimidation. Through intimidation they have "virtually silenced" the public school teachers.¹

The heart of the problem, in Bestor's analysis, is the schism between professors of education and all the other liberal and professional faculties. Although part of the blame for this schism rests with the scholars who have turned their backs on the problems of the public school,² this schism is now being actively perpetuated by educationists with vested interests. Even though the school may suffer, these people do not intend to surrender any of their power without a struggle. If they did care about the welfare of the school, he implies, they would not as they are now doing, wage "aggressive warfare" against academic standards and admission requirements. Nor would they fight inter-department cooperation in educational research and in planning the teacher education program. Also they would not permit their own rather than "real" psychologists or philosophers to teach educational psychology or philosophy of education.³

¹Ibid., pp. 161, 169-170, 173, 178-199. Bestor gives examples (on pp. 170-171) of several educational policy committees whose members are predominantly educators rather than scholars. Even when scholars are on these committees, he thinks educators give them no power and little responsibility.

²Ibid., pp. 156-157.

³Ibid., pp. 156-157, 160. What started out as genuine interdisciplinary research in educational problems,

Instead of trying to improve teacher education, they have, according to Bestor, been busy setting up an "iron curtain" behind which "in slave-labor camps, are the classroom teachers, whose only hope of rescue is from without," that is, by the "free world of science and learning" which is "menaced but not yet conquered."¹ Bestor concludes:

American intellectual life is threatened . . . [by] a new breed of educator, who has no real place in -- who does not respect and who is not respected by -- the world of scientists, scholars, and professional men.²

Thus, Bestor carefully differentiates "the learned world" from the "non-learned world" of the "educationists."

Bestor believes, is now "a genteel sort of busywork, imposed upon graduate students to keep them from getting their degrees with indecent haste." Ibid., p. 161.

¹Ibid., p. 178.

²Ibid.

CHAPTER III

BESTOR'S PROPOSALS FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Teacher Education

Bestor's basic assumption with respect to teacher education is that it ought to be a function of the whole university. To implement this idea he advocates establishing a distinct Faculty of Teacher Training. Its members would be drawn from all departments which offer programs leading to the reorganized M.Ed. and Ed.D. The Faculty of Teacher Training would have its own committees and administrative officers, would approve curricula, supervise teacher placement, and initiate school surveys and educational commissions. This faculty would also supervise the curriculum of the university laboratory schools and would determine what courses would merit the label of "Education." Referring to this last point, Bestor thinks that most of the old courses in "Education" should be relabeled "Pedagogy." This is highly desirable, in his opinion, because under the new plan the courses in education required by the state would be under the control of the Faculty of Teacher Training, rather than under the control of the pedagogy department.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 242, 248-249.

In addition to the Faculty of Teacher Training he would establish under the jurisdiction of the graduate school an autonomous Institute of Educational Research. This institute would not confer any degrees, nor have a body of graduate students it could call its own. Rather its facilities would be available for part of the training of Ph.D. candidates, for instance, in psychology or political science, who would like to have a specialty in educational psychology or school administration. This institute, however, would not generally be the place for advanced training for public school teachers and administrators.¹

Having professed the control of the teacher education program by the university as a whole, what specific undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs should the Faculty of Teacher Training establish? The most "self-evident" principle to Bestor is that at the undergraduate level the prospective teacher should have an education in the liberal arts and sciences -- the general intellectual disciplines. The main purpose of a liberal education for the teacher is not to acquire knowledge that can be passed on to others, but to acquire the intellectual discipline that can be used in conducting one's own life. The graduate training of the teacher will be the same as his undergraduate training -- more training in the fundamental intellectual disciplines. There is one difference, however. The graduate

¹Ibid., p. 252.

courses will be structured to the peculiar needs of a teacher, rather than to those of a research specialist.¹

A graduate student who pursues such a program for a full academic year should receive a master's degree, if he can pass a comprehensive written examination in his two chosen disciplines. If, after the completion of three years of study, a graduate student can pass oral and written examinations in five fields, he should be given a doctorate. Bestor would not have a thesis for either degree, but an essay of substantial quality and originality in each of the student's fields would be required. The customary graduate foreign languages requirement would also be retained.²

Once such a program is inaugurated, the university should "let some of the gas out of the over-inflated educational balloon."³ Bestor proposes a process of "devolution" of the importance and power of the present-day departments of education. Most of their present functions would devolve upon already existing departments.⁴ For example:

The end result will be a small undergraduate department of pedagogy, supervising practice teaching, and perhaps offering an enlarged extension program of on-the-job training for inexperienced teachers. The graduate work for teachers will be centered in the new M.Ed. and

¹Ibid., pp. 245-246.

²Ibid., p. 247.

³Ibid., p. 248.

⁴Ibid., p. 251.

Ed. D. program, offered through the regular departments of liberal arts and sciences.¹

Such a reorganized program constitutes a "major surgical operation," and its implementation should be gradual.²

The Duty of Scholars and Scientists

The "yawning gap" between those people who actually use intellectual training and those who are supposed to be providing it in the public schools is, to Bestor, the fundamental weakness of American public education today. To correct this weakness he proposes several agencies be established to insure the schools provide real education in the intellectual disciplines. The first step is to set up an agency composed only of men from the learned world. This agency, A Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education, would be completely independent of political and economic pressure groups, non-professional associations, and also all educational associations. Educationists are excluded because they already have powerful organizations to publicize their positions. The learned world has no such associations to present and defend its position on educational matters.³ Bestor argues that cooperation cannot exist between unequals. Thus, there is a

¹Ibid., pp. 251-252.

²Ibid., p. 253.

³Ibid., p. 228.

real need for members of the learned world to have an organization that will enable them to have as much power and influence on the public as the educationists now have.¹

This commission, Bestor believes, could provide a valuable service in helping to raise the status of teaching from a vocation to that of a profession. For teaching to become a profession, the teacher must disassociate himself from those who now exert crushing authority over him. These people are the school administrators and the college of education professors. In a "true profession" an individual member's professional judgment is not subject to the control of his employer.² Since educationists have, in general, succeeded in dividing the lower schools from higher learning, teachers lack the personal and intellectual independence that should rightfully be theirs. They can gain such independence if they are closely allied with university and college professors in the same discipline as they. Scientists and scholars should accord the teacher the recognition denied him by the educational bureaucracy. With respect to this point, Bestor thinks the Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education could make significant contributions. Among other things, this commission could offer a standard and advanced secondary school teaching diploma in the teacher's field.³

¹Ibid., p. 228.

²Ibid., p. 272.

³Ibid., p. 278.

The rationale for offering these diplomas is developed by Bestor as follows. The most distinguishing characteristic of a professional man is first his possession of a great body of knowledge. Secondly, he must have a thorough command of various intellectual processes which are susceptible of being measured objectively by examinations and similar means. Hence, the possession of a diploma from the commission would give to the teacher a high professional status, not only in the school system but also in the community. In addition, an assured professional status would permit teachers to control their teachers' associations for their own interests, rather than for the interests of administrators and college of education professors.¹

With respect to curriculum matters and the general purposes of education, Bestor believes educationists have one point of view. The learned world has another, and the general public still a third. The first group is best qualified to judge whether a proposed program is feasible pedagogically; the second group, to judge whether the curriculum is sound from a scholarly and scientific standpoint; and the third group, to reconcile the different ideas of the first two groups, and to insist upon a carefully balanced program which will be in the national interest. The third group, the general public, has legal control

¹Ibid., p. 280.

of the educational system. But here is the problem. The school boards, representative of the general public, consist of people who are not professional experts in education. This is as it should be, but the present organization of public education in the various states is "radically defective." It is defective because only one professional education group is generally consulted -- the professional educationists. These people are "too narrow in training and outlook" to determine sound general policy for the public schools.¹

Since little advice from the learned world is reaching the state and local boards of education, Bestor advocates that a Scientific, Scholarly, and Professional Advisory Committee on Education be established in every state. Its members would consist of people in the learned professions and of scholars and scientists who are actively engaged in research and advanced teaching in the fundamental disciplines offered in the public schools. This committee would have the duty of making "clear and forceful public pronouncements concerning the scholarly soundness of all new proposals." Local school boards would not be compelled to accept the committee's advice, but they should not be permitted to recommend any curricular change that the advisory committee had considered unsound.²

¹Ibid., pp. 229-230.

²Ibid.

Scholars, Bestor adds, should also demand a more equal representation on public and private commissions that make recommendations concerning public educational and curricular policy. Such commissions should have an equal representation from the three groups already cited. A commission, for example, of fifteen members appointed to study curricular problems should be composed of five educationists, five representatives of the learned world, and five representatives of the general public. This type of equal representation would insure that the schools are not "victimized by one-sided, interested, misleading advice, as today they frequently are."¹

Bestor also advocates that the scholars re-establish a better relationship with the classroom teachers. Scholars have been most negligent in this area. He proposes that learned societies assist in preparing instructional materials for the teacher, extend special invitations to teachers to attend their professional meetings, and waive registration fees. They should also make some effort to have a few teachers present "regular papers" at these professional meetings. Such papers should not be on "How I Teach Civics to Slow Learners" but "on the kind of subject that grown-up papers deal with." Such cooperation between the teachers and the learned societies will assist considerably in

¹Ibid., p. 231.

curbing the "curricular inroads" of the professional educationists.¹

Teacher Certification

Considering courses in pedagogy, with one or two exceptions, to be next to worthless, Bestor is perturbed with state and regional accrediting association requirements that future teachers have just as much work in pedagogy as in the discipline he is to teach; that requirements in pedagogy should be established by state law but not requirements in a teacher's discipline; and that a teacher should be certified in a general area such as language arts rather than in English or speech.²

Recognizing that a teacher should not only know his subject but have pedagogical skill, Bestor asks who should have the responsibility to judge each of these different qualifications. The present system is the opposite of what it should be. Instead of the state certifying authorities passing judgment upon a teacher's skills as they do now by requiring courses in pedagogy, they should determine the candidate's competence in his subject field. The level of a candidate's competence can be effectively determined by comparing his academic record with others,

¹Ibid., pp. 231-233.

²Ibid., p. 257.

by using standardized examinations, and by consulting specialists for advice and assistance. Rather than the local school authorities trying to assess the competence of a teacher in his subject field, they are best qualified to determine his "personal pedagogical competence"; that is, can he in fact really teach?¹

The faculties of a college or university should assert their voting power to insure that their representative to the regional accrediting associations does, in fact, represent the views of the whole university. If this is done, valid standards for judging schools will be restored. Also Bestor urges citizens of the various states to use their voting power to establish more meaningful standards for determining the qualifications of teachers. The most important reform in this direction would be to eliminate from the statute books any "fixed number of hours in education . . . as a requirement for certification." The next step would be to establish a commission of educationists, scholars, and citizens whose recommendations on the problem of certification should "ultimately be enacted into law." The basic task of this commission would be to insure that a teacher both know his subject and be able to teach it effectively. Bestor recommends that one certificate be given which testifies to the person's teaching

¹Ibid., p. 261.

proficiency, and another two, one limited and one advanced, be given to certify that a teacher really knows the subject he is to teach. The latter certificates would be given on the basis of state-administered comprehensive examinations in the various subjects. This certification would be in specific subjects, not general areas.¹

In addition to the certificates in teaching proficiency and subject areas, Bestor does not overlook the elementary teachers and the administrators. The elementary teacher, in addition to his teaching proficiency certificate, would be a candidate for a certificate in Educational Psychology for Elementary-School Teachers; the administrator could obtain a certificate in Educational Administration by doing work primarily in political science or public administration, economics, and law. Neither the elementary teacher nor the administrator should take any more courses in pedagogy than is absolutely necessary. There might be a need for a few other special certificates; but, if so, these should be organized on "analogous principles."²

Bestor urges state legislatures to correct their mistake of omitting from the school codes any clear statement with respect to the basic content of the public school curriculum. Such a statement might be as follows:

¹Ibid., pp. 263-264.

²Ibid., pp. 265-266.

Every school established under this Act shall provide instruction, at the appropriate levels, in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and English composition; in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and such higher branches of mathematics as shall be feasible; in English and American literature, classical and modern; in at least two foreign languages (with at least two years of work to be offered in each); in the natural sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology; in the history of the United States, of Europe from antiquity to the present, and of the modern world; in the principles of representative, constitutional government; in the fine arts, including music; in physical education; in industrial arts or agriculture; and in such other branches as the school board members may prescribe; provided that such additional subjects shall not be introduced unless the instruction in the branches prescribed in this section shall be deemed adequate; and provided, further, that such additional subjects shall not replace those prescribed in this section.¹

The implications of such a statement could not possibly be misinterpreted by any school system. Bestor concludes that a statement equivalent to his statement above should be a part of the school law in every state.²

The Role of Examinations

Examinations are an integral part of the educational process, according to Bestor. Not all types of examinations are equally valuable, however. The most prevalent examination today, the objective test, is useful as a daily or weekly test over basic information, but an objective test cannot test the quality of a student's thinking.³ The aptitude test can measure what a student is potentially capable

¹Ibid., p. 267.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 336.

of doing, but its great weakness is it cannot measure how much a student knows and what he can do with his knowledge. If academic standards are to be maintained, comprehensive, essay-type examinations should be established at all levels of education. Such examinations should provide the basic means of measuring a student's academic preparation and educational achievement.¹

Bestor wants to raise academic standards at all levels of education. Examinations can make a real contribution in this direction. He therefore proposes that a comprehensive system of essay-type examinations should be administered as follows. The first set of examinations should be given at the end of elementary school. In a "highly tentative way" the results of these examinations would enable the administrator to "begin the delicate process of advising the square pegs not to head for the round holes." The second set of examinations should come at the end of compulsory school attendance. These examinations would dramatize the fact that further educational opportunity is a privilege to be bestowed only upon the able and willing.² This particular set of examinations would

¹Ibid., p. 341. Bestor recognizes that, no matter how sophisticated it is, a comprehensive examination cannot "measure adequately the ultimate values of liberal education in the fundamental disciplines." This is not to say, however, that one should "flee from an inquisition into the things that can be tested." Ibid., p. 339.

²Ibid., p. 354.

also provide a measurement for selecting those students of exceptional ability who must have some type of financial assistance to continue their formal education.

The next step would be to have final examinations at the end of the secondary school.¹ This is absolutely essential. Otherwise, the secondary school diploma would have no real significance. For those not capable or "too lazy" to complete the standard academic program, Bestor suggests that a different diploma be given. This diploma would be designated as a "high-school certificate."²

In addition to these various terminal public school examinations, Bestor believes that all schools should give standardized state-wide examinations in the different school subjects.³ A model for such examinations might be The Regents' Examinations of New York State. One of several advantages of such examinations would be that a teacher, by weighing a student's achievement in terms of his actual mental ability, would have a "real measure of her professional success." This measure, furthermore, would not be

¹The terms high school and secondary are used here as Bestor uses them in the following discussion of his re-organized hypothetical school system.

²Ibid., p. 355.

³Bestor counters the possible objection to this plan as being undemocratic with the argument that once a person has been given an opportunity, "there is nothing undemocratic in judging him by his achievement, and in refusing to hand him on a platter what he has shown himself unable or unwilling to earn." Ibid., p. 353.

dependent upon the evaluation of her administrative superiors.¹

If the unfit are effectively to be weeded out, Bestor insists that the college, as well as the public school, must have comprehensive examinations at various levels. To begin with, the college must have stringent entrance examinations. He recommends that most of these be standardized and made uniform among a great many of the cooperating colleges and universities.² At the beginning of the third year of college, when greater specialization begins, there should be another set of examinations. In addition, there should be examinations for admission to graduate school, both at the master and the doctoral levels.³

With respect to stringent college entrance examinations, Bestor has no doubt professional educationists will violently object to such a plan. They will refer to the eight-year study and insist that it has conclusively proven admission requirements enforced by examinations are

¹Ibid., pp. 353, 356.

²Ibid., p. 351.

³Ibid., pp. 351-352. To prevent "senatorial courtesy" whereby inferior doctoral dissertations are approved only "out of deference to the feelings of the professorial sponsor," Bestor suggests that the student's dissertation be read by one and preferably two professors in the student's field in another university. These professors would not be subject to the debilitating influence of "senatorial courtesy." This plan, he feels, would help maintain high academic standards for the doctoral dissertation. Ibid., p. 353.

not only unnecessary but also quite ineffective. The eight-year study, if correctly interpreted, "proves nothing of the sort." All it proves is "that the first two years of college constituted for most students not higher education but secondary-school work."¹

Reorganization of the Public School System

After the publication of Bestor's first book on education, Educational Wastelands, his critics, among other things, challenged him to outline in detail a program whereby all, or virtually all, children could profit from the intellectual education he so strongly advocates. He accepted this challenge. In The Restoration of Learning he develops meticulously a hypothetical program which he feels would meet the needs of at least ninety per cent of the student body.

Although a few of Bestor's critics assert he is not aware of the great range of intellectual abilities found within any one grade of the typical public school, his recognition of this fact is really the foundation for his reorganized curriculum. He says, for instance, that "the most striking single fact is the wide range of mental age which is to be found in any representative group of children of the same chronological age."² Educators and Bestor

¹Ibid., pp. 342, 346.

²Ibid., p. 284.

agree, then, that something must be done to provide a revised structural program for meeting these individual differences. What to be done, however, is where the educator and he disagree. Educationists, Bestor says, have initiated two programs for coping with individual differences in intellectual ability. He has sincere respect for both of these programs, but both are inadequate.¹

One of the plans educationists have used is homogeneous grouping. In this plan, Bestor explains, on the basis primarily of I.Q., students of high ability are detached from the standard academic curriculum and slow learners are put in remedial classes. Although Bestor advocates homogeneous grouping, he is against the kind based on a relatively static I.Q. measurement. This plan is not only administratively impossible to implement but also undemocratic. It is undemocratic because it is based on the assumption that real communication is hardly possible between people of different intellectual caliber.²

The heart of the matter, Bestor argues, is that an I.Q. measures only the "rate and efficiency of learning" of a student at a particular age. It is a quantitative measurement. It does not "measure quality in any subtle or comprehensive way." Many educationists are quite

¹Ibid., p. 289.

²Ibid., p. 293.

confused on this point. They believe a person with a low I.Q. learns in an entirely different way from one with an average or high I.Q. These educationists do not believe a person with a low I.Q. is capable of handling abstractions in the subjects commonly found in the public schools. Such beliefs constitute a "vicious and irresponsible perversion of psychological findings." The point is that whereas the I.Q. is admittedly relatively stable, mental age (from which the I.Q. is derived by dividing the chronological age into the mental age) increases yearly for the normal child up to the mental age of twelve. Therefore, the student of low I.Q. should not be considered a lost cause. He is merely a slow learner, and it will just take him longer to make intellectual progress.¹ Bestor explains his position in this way:

So long as mental growth continues he [the slow learner] is not debarred from the higher steps of learning that others have taken. When he finally attains a mental age of, say, twelve, he is doing the same kind of thinking that other children were doing when they reached the mental age of twelve.²

The second plan educationists use to account for mental differences, Bestor explains, is the system in which each student in a heterogeneous class is given individualized instruction. This plan he considers impractical, primarily because it is impossible to have what amounts virtually to

¹Ibid., pp. 293-296.

²Ibid., pp. 294-295.

a tutorial system for twenty-five million students. The first plan is infinitely superior to the second because it can be organized; whereas the second cannot.¹ Although both plans have some merit, they are inadequate because they are so psychologically-oriented that the idea of intellectual training as a highly-organized, long-continued process is slighted.²

According to Bestor, ninety per cent of all students can profit from "sound and rigorous training in the basic intellectual disciplines."³ Most have not, however, because relatively few educationists have paid any attention to changing the structure of the school so that all "normal" students can proceed at their own pace in mastering the inner logic and order of the intellectual disciplines.⁴

In his reorganized school Bestor does not advocate that the gifted and the slow go to separate schools. Nor does he propose to discard the graded school. A graded school is "virtually indispensable." And he most certainly does not suggest that the slow be given a "watered-down" program inferior in any way to the program that the average and the above-average are to receive. In his school all

¹Ibid., pp. 289-292.

²Ibid., p. 290.

³Ibid., p. 296.

⁴Ibid., p. 297.

students, except the mentally defective, are to take practically the same academic curriculum.¹ In addition, at least five-sixths of all students can complete the academic program he has in mind. No one is to be deprived from gaining basic knowledge in the arts and sciences. Not all students, he recognizes, will complete the proposed program of intellectual training, but those who must eventually drop out of the academic program once they have reached the limit of their capacities will do so not with a sense of failure but with pride. They will have the inner satisfaction of knowing they have at least completed the same basic fundamental courses as the more capable students.²

The basic solution for meeting the problem of individual differences calls for a dual system of education within the comprehensive school. The basic problem is that an academic grade or level should not be based upon chronological age, as it is today in the school system.³ Proceeding on this basis, Bestor divides the strictly academic part of school from all other activities in which the school

¹In a detailed discussion on the education of the gifted child, Bestor states that the brilliant student should be the pacemaker of the school; that is, the curriculum for the average student should be derived from the curriculum for the brilliant student. "To argue otherwise," he concludes, "is to enshrine mediocrity." See: The New Republic, CXXXVI (March 4, 1957), 13.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 298, 306, 311, 334.

³Ibid., p. 300.

must engage. All activities of a non-academic nature (social activities, self-government, physical education, athletics, and the like) will be based on chronological age throughout a student's public school career.¹ The chronological divisions by age consist of three stages: ages five to twelve, elementary school; ages thirteen to sixteen, high school; age seventeen and up, junior college.² All students, regardless of academic level, move to the next division at the appropriate age. The end of elementary school marks the beginning of puberty, a fact which cannot be ignored. And the end of high school marks the "beginning of the end of universal education." It should be noted that Bestor uses the terms elementary and high school to describe the divisions of the school which are to be determined strictly by chronological age. The terms primary and secondary are used to describe the academic levels or grades in the school system.³

Superimposed upon the three-fold chronological divisions is the dividing line between primary and secondary education. Elementary school would consist of

¹Ibid., p. 301.

²Bestor considers the junior college part of the secondary program. The junior college will provide the standard academic secondary program as well as vocational training. Its doors will also be open to all adults.

³Ibid., pp. 308, 318, 327-328.

kindergarten and primary grades I through IX, the equivalent of the present six grades of elementary school. High school would consist of secondary grades X through XVII. Only those students who had completed grade XVII would be permitted to enter college.¹

In the academic program, Bestor favors grouping students homogeneously but not according to I.Q. Students should not be grouped in their academic work on the basis of predicted or potential ability. They should be grouped according to their readiness for the "intellectual task at hand." To effectively group students in this manner, three conditions must be met. First, their mental age (their intellectual maturity) must be about the same. Second, they must have about the same "command of definite bodies of knowledge." And last, once a homogeneous class has been organized consisting of students equally ready for the "intellectual task at hand," provision must be made for students who, although ready for the work to be done, will nevertheless proceed at different rates of speed. This will require some individualized instruction, Bestor acknowledges, but not the extreme amount which must be given when homogeneous grouping is not based on readiness for the academic work.²

¹Ibid., p. 330.

²Ibid., pp. 302-303.

This type of grouping Bestor refers to as a "system of strictly enforced prerequisites." In his homogeneous classes, there would be students of every conceivable intellectual aptitude, but no one would be permitted in the class until he is definitely prepared to do its work successfully.¹

Bestor does not give much attention to what the academic curriculum should be in the primary grades. He merely states that the primary grades should cover approximately what is covered in grades one through six in the typical school today.² At the secondary levels, however, he indicates precisely what the curriculum must be for all students. The curriculum should consist of "continuous and systematic work" in English, mathematics, science, history, and foreign languages. Every school should offer at least five years of continuous work in each of these fields. This would amount to a total of thirty academic courses as an absolute minimum. To graduate from grade XVII a student would have to pass twenty-four hours of these academic courses, including a minimum of four consecutive courses in each of five

¹Ibid., pp. 303-304. It should be noted that the primary criteria used in determining the student's academic grade in the primary school is his mental age. At the secondary level, however, a student's academic level will be determined primarily by his achievement and by "the pace he can be expected to maintain after he enters" a particular course. At this level prerequisites for entrance to a course would be determined primarily by achievement tests, not mental age. Ibid., p. 323.

²Ibid., p. 317.

fields. Bestor does not eliminate all electives. They would consist of either a second language, the fifth course in science, history, English, or math, or of additional academic courses not in the regular sequence, which might be offered on an optional basis. Vocational courses would receive no academic credit, and generally a student would not be permitted to take a vocational course unless he had graduated from high school. There is an exception, however. A student under seventeen might take one or two non-credit courses such as cooking, sewing, carpentry, typing, or automobile driving.¹

Being consistently dualistic in his approach to educational problems, Bestor makes a novel proposal for the administrative responsibilities of the high school and secondary programs. Assuming as he does that educators who are greatly interested in the non-academic program are not to be trusted with the academic program, he feels it is imperative that there be a principal of the high school and a dean of secondary education. The high school principal would have complete responsibility for everything in the school except the academic curriculum. The academic curriculum would be the sole responsibility of the dean of secondary education. These two officials would act as a "check and balance" to the other. Such a suggestion, however, is not applicable to the elementary level. At this

¹Ibid., p. 326.

level, the elementary principal has responsibility for the entire school program.¹

To Bestor, the advantages of his reorganized school system are numerous. The most important, perhaps, is that all students of varying intellectual ability would embark on the same intellectually sound curriculum and could progress just as fast as their rates of learning would permit. Even the slowest learner would take "precisely the same program that the most brilliant student" would take. Since no student would be failed or given "pauperized education," this plan would permit the slow learner "to build up cumulatively and confidently the necessary knowledge and power to tackle" increasingly more difficult tasks. Thus, even if he fails to complete the standard academic curriculum, his self-respect will not be undermined, for he will have the intellectual skills and knowledge necessary for effective living. Therefore, in Bestor's program, the problem of mental differences would be met without impairing the intellectual quality of education.²

Educational Expenditures

To insure that the nation spends its money wisely on both universal education and universal educational opportunity, Bestor advocates that state money be allocated to

¹Ibid., pp. 328-331.

²Ibid., pp. 304, 306, 309.

the schools according to specific educational priorities.

Emphasizes Bestor:

True economy . . . consists in selection. If we are to make our selections wisely and therefore economically, we need to rank the functions of the school in order of relative importance and choose accordingly.¹

In order of importance the functions of the school are as follows:

1. standard instruction in the basic intellectual disciplines . . .;
2. specialized work in these fields for students of high ability;
3. remedial work in these fields for students of high ability;
4. physical education for all students;
5. vocational training;
6. extracurricular activities;
7. scholarships for impecunious students of high intellectual ability;
8. life adjustment . . .; and
9. interscholastic, competitive athletic programs.²

Practically all activities have some degree of merit, Bestor recognizes. A school might legitimately try to do everything if it has the time and money to do so. But time and money are limited. If the school does one thing, then something else must be left undone. He considers only the first five activities above to be of fundamental concern to the state. The state, therefore, should finance only these activities. Whether a particular community wants a football team or not is not of fundamental importance to the state as a whole. If a

¹Ibid., pp. 364-365, 367.

²Ibid., p. 364.

community wants a football team, or any other activity below Bestor's cut-off point, the community must pay for the activities out of local funds.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 364, 370-371.

CHAPTER IV

H. G. RICKOVER'S BASIC EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Americans are living today, H. G. Rickover says, in a highly complex, technological world; a world so complex people cannot understand it. We have lost our sense of identity. We are in a life and death race with Russia for technological supremacy, and we are losing that race. We are confused as to what should be done to regain our technological supremacy. If Americans are to regain their sense of identity, if we are to compete technologically with Russia, a first-rate liberal education must be provided for all American children.¹

High cultural standards and national security are directly dependent upon the quality and number of an intellectually elite group of professional experts, not upon the average intellectual level of the nation. The successful launching of Sputnik proves that America is behind Russia in the production of technical experts. The problem calls for a dramatic, revolutionary solution. Nothing but a

¹H. G. Rickover, American Education: A National Failure (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1963), p. 7.

reversal of educational purposes resulting in a complete reorganization of American education "can equip us for winning the educational race with the Russians."¹

The only way to assure the future prosperity and freedom of the nation is to upgrade the scholastic standards of the public schools. To do this, Rickover contends the schools must return to the traditional job of formal education in Western society. This task is to transmit the cultural heritage of the nation and to teach the student how to think clearly, logically, and independently. The purpose of the school is not life adjustment, behavioral conditioning, and group conformity.² The purpose of the school is to train the mind to think. Its concern is this and nothing else. To develop the "whole child" is not the primary function of education. The school simply does not have enough time to do all this "conditioning" and expect

¹H. G. Rickover, Education and Freedom (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1959), pp. 80, 188.

²Life adjustment education, according to Rickover, "centers on self, on petty personal problems and how to deal with them, instead of on national issues; on the present instead of the future; on practical matters, not general ideas." Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs are Better (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), p. 19. Life adjustment education does not bring "out the potentialities in children which would change life for the better. Nor does it produce a sufficient number of students who are prepared to become professionals. It is an education which adjusts a person to life as it is rather than what it should be." Also, "life adjustment training minimizes the vexing problems of mental inequalities since we are all equal when we buy groceries. . . ." Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 136, 180.

at the same time to teach a student how to think.¹ This is not to say that one should deprecate the importance of cooperativeness, kindness, high moral standards, and good character. These are, of course, important virtues which should be inculcated in all children, but not primarily by the school. The church, home, and other agencies can and should be primarily responsible for the development of good character. Although the development of good character should never be de-emphasized by our society, the one thing of "greatest importance for the future of our Nation and of the free world, the one indispensable thing, is to bring all our children to markedly higher intellectual levels." This, the school can and must do, Rickover insists.²

Even a person living on the most remote farm cannot escape the pressures exerted on him by a technological society. Whether he lives in Florida or California, in Wisconsin or Connecticut, he must understand the society in which he lives and have the education to control it. It is imperative he has the same intellectual training as any student any place in the United States, or for that matter, in Europe or Russia.³

If American democracy is to flourish, every child

¹Ibid., pp. 18, 154, 198.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 307.

³Ibid., p. 315.

in the United States, with the exception of the mentally defective, must be exposed to intellectual training to the limit of his capacity. According to Rickover, "know-how" subjects such as recreation, etiquette, manual and clerical training do not constitute intellectual training. A student can gain a disciplined mind, and hence be a free man, only by absorbing the knowledge found in history, English, science, mathematics, foreign languages, and geography.¹ For effective living each student needs these subjects and little else until it is definitely proved that a student can no longer profit from academic training. "Those who do not have the mentality to master all these subjects need the same kind of intellectual fare, only less of it." The student will, of course, have to work hard, which is difficult in our soft, leisurely society of abundance. But it is a necessity if we are to compete technologically not only with Russia but with Western Europe. Learning, after all, is very hard work. If mental muscles are not constantly flexed, they will become "flabby."²

Students do differ in intellectual endowment, but the curriculum can be tailored to the capacities of the below-average, average, and above-average. "The same basic

¹Rickover states that of all the subjects in the American public school today, "roughly 90 per cent have nothing to do with education in the fundamentals of basic knowledge." Swiss Schools and Ours, . . . , p. 59.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 72-73, 117, 133, 154.

process of storing the mind with knowledge can be adapted for each group of students." This basic process consists of giving all students intellectual training in the basic disciplines to the limit of their capacities. Slow students will, of course, eventually have to drop out. But this is nothing to worry about. God created man equal in everything but intellectual endowment. Not all students are capable of advanced education beyond the compulsory age. Advanced academic education must be based solely on merit and desire, which can best be determined by stringent examinations. To believe this, Rickover says, is not to deny the basic tenets of democracy. With respect to education, democracy implies only that all students should have the opportunity to go as far as their capacities to absorb knowledge will permit.¹

Education in America is inefficient. Students move through school at a "snail's pace." It is top-heavy with "nonproductive personnel." In Rickover's opinion, "Nowhere else does it take so much time and so much money as in the United States to carry a child to a given level of scholarship." The educated people needed today are simply not being produced in the schools. This deplorable condition could be tolerated in the past. America possessed so much wealth in land and resources that educational

¹Ibid., pp. 112-113, 133, 151.

deficiencies did not pose a serious problem. Natural advantages, however, are rapidly disappearing. Within the next generation, Europe and Russia will probably have just as much wealth from natural resources as America now has.¹

If America is to maintain its position as a world power, its educational system must be improved immediately according to Rickover. Should nothing be done, we will fall behind more and more each year. The best hope for the salvation of the American school system (and the country itself) is to incorporate into it many of the practices of European schools. Europeans do not put the social purpose of the school above the school's technical task. Educators in Europe find the appropriate schools for all students, so they can advance as rapidly and as far as their intellectual abilities will permit them to go.² Europeans realize, as we should realize, that students do differ intellectually, and the best way to provide for these differences is to have separate schooling for students of different abilities. "What chiefly holds our children back is our devotion to the one-track system of education -- the comprehensive school."³

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 24, 112-113.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 23, 133-134.

³Ibid., ("Report on Russia"), p. 38. The "Report on Russia" is included as a separate section in Education and Freedom. This section consists of the minutes of Rickover's session with the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Eighty-Sixth Congress, August 18, 1959.

CHAPTER V

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BASIC EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF BESTOR AND RICKOVER

Rickover is essentially in agreement with Bestor on the following points. The school should narrow its activities. It is attempting to do too much. The primary purpose of education is to train the intellect, and whatever else the school does should be subordinate and incidental to this purpose. (Rickover would go a step further and say "the school's concern is with the intellectual alone.")¹ The needs of society, not children, should determine the purpose of education. The great need of society is to have people with disciplined intelligence. This can best be fostered by exposing all students to the basic intellectual disciplines. A selective principle must eventually enter into education, however. Only students of merit and desire should receive advanced academic training.²

¹Rickover is aware there are many types of human competencies needed in a complex society, but the most important is intellectual competency. American Education: A National Failure, p. 105. Nor is he indifferent to the broader human values. He does not advocate that technical education replace the humanities. On the contrary he pleads "for more science and more humanities." Ibid., p. 26.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 99, 133, 137, 154, 198; ("Report on Russia"), pp. 4, 62.

Although the methods of teaching will vary somewhat, the content of subjects should be the same for all students. Students do differ in intellectual abilities, but they learn the same way.¹ A slow student of fourteen with a mental age of ten learns precisely in the same way as a fast student of eight with a mental age of ten. Hence, course content should not be watered-down for a slow learner. Students differ only in the amount they can learn, and the speed with which they can learn it. Although the great majority of students will achieve a minimum intellectual skill for effective living, there will come a time for many students when they can no longer keep up the pace in complex, abstract courses. They must, of course, drop out of the academic curriculum and either get a job or go to vocational school. This is as it should be. Those who fall by the wayside have had, at least, an opportunity to succeed academically.²

Education today is in a deplorable condition primarily because the school system is controlled by an educational bureaucracy which has divorced itself from the wise guidance of the learned world. This bureaucracy has usurped the determination of content of courses from those who best

¹Although Rickover does not state specifically the steps in learning how to think, it is a reasonable assumption that he would probably accept Bestor's analysis on this point.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 133.

know its requirements -- the learned world. They have erected and perpetuated certification laws which require all prospective teachers to take endless, repetitious, vapid courses in education departments. Certification requirements have nothing to do with the welfare of schools. The requirements merely support the educational bureaucracy. Pedagogues, the leaders of the educational bureaucracy, teach future teachers the tricks of the trade rather than how to think. Educationists are so interested in meeting the needs and interests of children, that the importance of organized knowledge is denied and intellectual training is pushed to the periphery of the curriculum. Educationists are perennially tampering with the curriculum, insisting that their research findings indicate the necessity for substituting life adjustment programs, extreme trivia, for sound learning.¹ By trying to give everybody identical education, talented students are often ignored by these educationists.²

¹Rickover believes the intellectual and educational qualifications of most of the educational "experimenters and researchers" are unimpressive. Just because they have majored in sociology or psychology in a teacher's college, they believe, Rickover says, they are qualified to "lecture the American teacher and parent on the 'learning process.'" In the hands of qualified people, sociology and psychology "can be of great benefit." But if indiscriminately applied by educational sociologists and psychologists, much harm can be done. In fact, much of the educational "'research'" and up-to-date teaching produce inferior results, so why continue them. American Education: A National Failure, pp. 189-191.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 190-191, 201-202, 204-205.

Since educationists with vested interests are eager to maintain the status quo, educational reforms cannot be expected to initiate with them. Scholars, scientists, and professional men must take the lead in revamping the educational system. They must establish national standards on a voluntary basis. They, rather than the educationists, must control education. The learned world must reinstill into the school system a respect for intellectual training in systematically organized basic disciplines. All students must have this education. Standards must be raised and maintained, primarily through the use of standardized examinations at all educational levels. Only real education should be supported by the state and federal tax monies. Anything that is not "education pure and simple" should be supported by the local community. To achieve any of these goals will be a difficult task for the learned world. Educators, in general, will resist any criticism of their policies and will fight such criticism with intimidation and other devious means. Being powerful politically, they will not give up any of their power without a fight.¹

The educational ideas of Rickover differ from those of Bestor, however, in several important respects. Whereas Bestor would have all students go to the same school, a comprehensive school, at the secondary level, Rickover

¹Ibid., pp. 191-192, 215-222.

favours separate schooling for students of different intellectual abilities and interests.

Although disclaiming any intention of doing so, Rickover tends to emphasize science education at the expense of the humanities. This Bestor does not do. In this connection Rickover states that while Russia is second-rate in the humanities, this is not an important factor in international relations.¹

Bestor does not say he is uninterested in what a student does with his education once he has finished his formal schooling. Rickover does. He says, "I have stressed many times that I speak only of education and not what people do later on with their education."²

To Rickover, there is no connection between the educational system and the political system of a country. In his opinion,

You have the same system of education in Western Europe as in Russia. You have it among the totalitarian states and you have it among the democratic states. It can produce a Hitler or it can produce a Thomas Mann.³

¹Ibid., pp. 19, 31.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, ("Report on Russia"), p. 76.

³Ibid., p. 30. Rickover is not consistent on this point. In Swiss Schools and Ours (p. 150) he says the fundamental difference between education in a democracy and in a non-democratic nation is the former will try to educate their children for democratic citizenship. Then he adds, "In all other respects citizen and subject may be equally educated."

There is no reason to believe that Bestor would agree with Rickover on this point.

Rickover believes that practically everything is harmful about the educational ideas of John Dewey and his followers, and the "so-called" progressive educators. By contrast, Bestor at no time criticizes Dewey's educational ideas in a derogatory manner. Sometimes he even quotes Dewey to support his own beliefs. Bestor has great respect for progressive educators who try to improve the methods of teaching the basic disciplines, most of whom did until the middle 1920's. Progressive educators blundered, according to Bestor, when they started to de-emphasize the importance of intellectual training for all children. Rickover concedes progressives have improved classroom atmosphere, but in addition have done everything in their power to destroy basic education. There are no shades of gray for Rickover when it comes to progressive education. With the above exception, he thinks everything about progressive education is bad.¹

Although de-emphasized, the importance of non-intellectual factors in the education of a child is not completely ignored by Bestor. Rickover, on the contrary, seems to think a child's emotions and interests are of no

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 138; American Education: A National Failure, p. 30.

importance in the educational process.¹

Although he states the intellectual level of all students must be raised, Rickover nevertheless seems preoccupied with improving education for the intellectually talented child. Bestor is greatly interested in improving the education of the talented, but he does not ignore the problem of providing what he considers a good education for the average and below-average student. The difference between Bestor and Rickover on this point is one of emphasis, not a difference in kind.

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 133.

CHAPTER VI

RICKOVER'S SPECIAL EMPHASES

John Dewey and Progressive Education

For Rickover, American public education is a failure because the real objective of the school system is no longer to offer a good education. He realizes there was mass pressure to "water-down" the academic curriculum since most students could not master it, but educational leaders gave up too easily in defending scholastic standards. This was perhaps inevitable, for it would certainly "have taken courage and infinite patience to 'sell' the value of a true secondary education to the majority of pupils and their parents." The theories of John Dewey offered an easy escape from this difficulty, and the leaders of education "en masse" adopted them as the answer to their problems. Life adjustment education, consequently, became the real objective of the comprehensive school.¹

John Dewey has had a profound influence on both the methods of teaching and the curricula, Rickover maintains. In fact his pernicious influence is "felt in the

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 136.

steady deterioration of secondary-school curricula, the prolongation of elementary schooling, and the denial to teachers of professional status."¹

What are Rickover's specific charges against Dewey? To begin with, he criticizes Dewey's concept that teaching should begin with subjects which the child already knows and in which he expresses an interest. The curriculum, Dewey says, should be child-centered rather than subject-centered. Such an idea has led to the following deleterious practice in the school system. The child's experience is treated as an end in itself, the result being that the "learning process never gets off the ground." "Know-how subjects" are substituted for "solid learning." That is, schools tend to teach such things as "how to set a table correctly . . . how to use cameras, telephones, and consumer credit." Classrooms are "cluttered with cardboard boxes," and children learn arithmetic "by keeping store." Education is "stuck" in the "concrete." It is, therefore, incapable of carrying the student from the concrete to the abstract.²

¹Ibid., pp. 137-138. Rickover's position on Dewey's influence on American education is not clear. At the beginning of one paragraph (p. 137) he states Dewey has had a profound influence on American education. But, in the same paragraph, he then declares Dewey's ideas have not been generally incorporated into the public school systems, "thanks primarily to the heroic resistance and good judgment of our teachers."

²Ibid., pp. 138-139.

Dewey believed students should be taught only what is useful, Rickover says. In a broad sense, Rickover concedes, education should be useful, if this means the student is taught how to use his mind. This would be the most useful education a child could get. But in practice, Rickover maintains, the concept has been interpreted narrowly. In the typical public school, for instance, if a foreign language is not spoken in a community, it is not considered useful and is discarded in favor of something that is. This "something more useful" might consist of learning how to answer the telephone. Making education useful in this narrow sense has displaced the solid liberal-arts subjects in favor of "hundreds of vocational, recreational, personality and etiquette courses, some actually compulsory."¹

In all fairness, Rickover concedes, credit should be given to Dewey for bringing about a more relaxed, friendly atmosphere in the classroom and a less autocratic relationship between student and teacher. But in his "hatred of discipline" Dewey went too far. Dewey's hatred of discipline has not only contributed to juvenile delinquency but to the school's failure to develop self-discipline in students. Developing self-discipline has always been an objective of traditional, formal education; it is

¹Ibid., pp. 139-140. It should be noted that Rickover believes parents, no less than educators, are also responsible for promoting the utilitarian concept of education. Ibid., p. 24.

no longer the objective of the progressive school.¹

Primarily the school should teach children cooperative and mutually helpful living, Dewey believed. Rickover insists this is an "erroneous conception." Why should cooperative and mutually helpful living be taught when we live in an extremely competitive society? This "group-conditioning" simply does not make sense in a society such as ours. By accepting this conception, educators have abandoned excellence for no other reason than just to keep all children in school, even until adulthood.²

Dewey's denial of absolute values, his insistence that learning should be based on the experience of the child, and that the school should modify behavior rather than impart knowledge, give a "transitory flavor" to American education. The child is merely to be fitted into the society in which he finds himself. As a result of such beliefs a "smoke-screen" has been erected which makes it difficult to compare American education with that of other countries.³

In conclusion, Rickover echoes a charge made by Albert Lynd. "The American people have never authorized the schools to replace education with life-adjustment

¹Ibid., p. 137.

²Ibid., p. 153.

³Ibid., p. 229.

training and behavioral conditioning." Educators have never received a clear mandate from the public "to change the objective of formal education from teaching basic subjects to conditioning children for group life." Yet the public has permitted the public schools to experiment for a long time with Dewey's ideas. "In all fairness" it is time to declare the experiment has failed. Dewey's claim that experimentalist education is better than traditional education should forthwith be rejected. To Rickover, Dewey and his followers -- "this group of characters" -- have "betrayed" the American dream of universal education.¹

The Comprehensive School and the Talented Child

Rickover affirms the comprehensive secondary school is an unique American institution. It is an outgrowth of post-Jacksonian democracy. The idea of the comprehensive school, according to Rickover's analysis, is that all students, regardless of social status or nationality, should go to the same school to learn to get along with each other and to absorb democratic habits and "ideals as by osmosis." Then elucidating his objections, he says:

This ideal runs smack into the incontrovertible fact that children are unequally endowed with intelligence and determination and that it is impossible to educate the slow, average, and fast learners together if by educating we mean development of the capacity to think, to understand, and to make wise decisions.²

¹Ibid., pp. 145, 190-191.

²Ibid., p. 134.

The objective of elementary and secondary education should be to provide a "broad terminal" education for the average and below-average and a "solid base for subsequent professional education" for the talented student. These two objectives are not achieved in the majority of American public schools because "we are wedded in this country to the concept of the comprehensive school." The comprehensive school "holds our children back" ¹ And they are too large and cumbersome. In the comprehensive school bright children are not receiving the early training they need to prepare them adequately for professional work. Nor can the comprehensive school prepare "educated brainpower at really advanced levels." ² Moreover, administratively it is extremely difficult to combine simultaneously several different study programs in one institution. The schools which have done so with some success have used the multiple-track system. Even though this system is better than a no-track system, it is inadequate in Rickover's opinion; it simply does not go far enough. ³ Too often the multiple-track system is arranged so a student with a high intelligence quotient is not put into a top track in all of his subjects. Rather, he is

¹Ibid., ("Report on Russia"), p. 38.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 91.

³Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 133-134.

allowed to choose perhaps a top track in English and foreign languages. An immature teenager with little judgment is permitted "to plan his own course of study." Thus, the elective system is allowed to "creep in."¹

The argument for or against separate secondary education cannot be decided either on a philosophical or moral basis, according to Rickover. The only basis on which it can be decided is whether America really has a choice between "efficient" education in separate secondary schools and "democratic" education which insists on the inefficient, time-wasting comprehensive school. In Rickover's opinion, Americans no longer have any choice: "We must opt for efficiency." The only sensible thing to do is to admit that European separate secondary school education is more efficient and "to follow suit."²

Talented children should not be slighted in the schools. The school has for some time now met the needs of the average, below-average, as well as the physically handicapped. It is time to direct attention to the education of the talented. To do justice to the intellectually talented, Rickover says they must be sought out at an early age and educated separately.³ Up to the sixth or seventh

¹Ibid., ("Report on Russia"), p. 38.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 89.

³The intellectually talented comprise about twenty-five per cent of the student body, according to Rickover. This percentage, he believes, can profit from advanced education in college. Education and Freedom, p. 116.

grade this could be done in a college preparatory section of the comprehensive school. But after the sixth or seventh grade separate schooling should commence. The curriculum should be purely academic, and admission and advancement into each higher grade should be determined by examination.¹

Rickover is cognizant that his proposal for separate secondary schooling will meet opposition and be branded as class education. Such objections, however, do not bear critical examination.² Never would a star athlete, an average athlete, and a physically handicapped child be put into the same physical education class or on the same team. Why, then, should students of "correspondingly different mental aptitude" be put in the same class or school? "If one is democratic, why not the other?" One might contend if the talented are separated, the experience of democratic living would be denied. This is not so. It would be true if all the talented children were from the same socio-economic group; but as long as students in the public schools are

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 127-128. Rickover points out in American Education: A National Failure (p. 27) that he does not advocate eliminating music or physical education from the academic curriculum. These two subjects are not included in his references to "trivia."

²In American Education: A National Failure, (p.257) Rickover claims that European separate secondary schooling "has nothing to do with class differences." He says, "Class differences have no significance in genuine education; they are artificial differences that do not touch upon a person's ability to learn."

drawn from the whole population and are given equal opportunity to advance as far as their abilities will permit, "the social values of learning to live among children of varying backgrounds will still be preserved."¹

One great advantage of separate schooling for the serious student is that he would be removed from the "atmosphere of trivialities and easy school life to one where everyone is concerned with matters of the intellect." The simple fact is that talented children are happiest when they are permitted to progress through school with their intellectual peers. As with adults, children prefer to associate with those "who speak their language and who have similar interests."²

"To put it bluntly," American education is not performing its primary purpose. This purpose is "to train the nation's brain power to its highest potential." For Rickover, the schools are failing to identify and to develop talented students. The country's "most precious national asset" is being wasted. Of those students who have the ability to enter college, only one-half do so. Lack of funds is partly responsible, but "nearly all" of these bright students could have gone to college if there had been "proper motivation." This defect cannot be blamed

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 127-128, 130.

²Ibid., pp. 211-212.

entirely on lack of school funds. Talented children have been neglected because of "deep-seated national attitudes and . . . faulty educational theories and practices."¹

In the well-adjusted group "died [sic]-in-the-wool educationists" are determined to create, the student of talent is a "misfit." He is considered by educationists as a "fortunate deviate" or an "exceptional child." Educationists imply the talented child ranks with "the mentally and physically handicapped, persons with impaired sight, hearing, and speech, and those with pronounced problems of adjustment" Such terminology reveals how the educationist looks upon the talented child. He is merely a "vexing administrative problem."²

Rickover admits that educators have tried to do something for talented students. But what educators have done is inadequate for three reasons. First, the programs are only for brilliant children with I.Q.'s of 135 or over. The needs of the "far larger group of talented children" are left untouched. "If anything, such children are discouraged in the United States." Second, the fact that talented children can finish school much quicker than the average child is seldom considered in most programs. "The

¹Ibid., p. 111.

²Ibid., p. 118. Rickover's ideas on the education of the talented child closely correspond to those expressed by Arthur Bestor in The New Republic, CXXXVI (March 4, 1957), 12-16.

whole problem is an artificial one. . . ." The problem is hardly evident in Europe. Europeans realize all children should not go to the same type of school. Third, most programs are not sufficiently bold. Solutions are sought only within the existing comprehensive school.¹

The first step, Rickover says, in reorganizing the education of talented youth is to determine exactly what the top fifteen to twenty per cent of the student body can accomplish in a school specifically designed to meet their particular abilities. He proposes that demonstration schools, similar to the Bronx School of Science, be established throughout the country. These demonstration schools would be "strictly" academic schools. The purpose of such schools would be "to show that a broad liberal-arts education can be obtained, at least by academically inclined students, in about fourteen years." With fine teachers, a real curriculum, and an adequate school year of at least 210 days, these schools would give a good idea of what really could be accomplished. We just might be surprised, Rickover states, "how fast they can learn."²

European and Russian Education

It is time America woke up to the fact that we do not have the best educational system in the world. According

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 121, 123-124.

²Ibid., pp. 125, 128, 208-210.

to Rickover, American education is inferior to European education both from a quantitative and a qualitative standpoint.

Americans have been overly proud of having more students in high school and college than Europeans. This is a meaningless comparison because "the European secondary-school graduate has learned more than many American college graduates." And as for the high school diploma, "the less said about it the better."¹ Our numerical advantages are non-existent when education statistics are corrected by taking into consideration the amount of actual classroom instruction a student receives per school year, the quality of instruction, the amount of effort expended by the student, and the scholastic achievements attained at various educational levels. When such factors are considered, it is evident that the American high school graduate is three years behind his counterpart in Europe; the American bachelor's degree is equivalent to the European baccalaureate or maturity diploma which is given to their students at the age of eighteen or nineteen; American graduate schools and professional schools rank no higher than the typical European undergraduate university. Italicizing his point, Rickover says the evidence is clear that "a school year is worth a third more on the continent and about 20-25 per cent more"

¹Ibid., pp. 125, 128, 208-210.

in England than in the United States." Further:

Compared to Europeans, our children attend school fewer hours per day, week, and year, do less homework, have less well-qualified teachers, and are generally not challenged to exert their best effort. Furthermore, European education accomplished much more because of its smooth articulation from schoolyear to school-year and from one school to another.¹

By attaching the correct label on the high school, college, and university, Rickover believes he has effectively "demolished one prop of the illusion" that American education is quantitatively superior to European education. He then attempts to demolish the second prop of the illusion by indicating how many 1944 first-graders graduated from high school and obtained a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree. He reveals the following figures: only 63 per cent finished the sixth grade; 50 per cent, the tenth grade; 46 per cent, the twelfth grade; only 13-14 per cent obtained a bachelor's degree; 2½-3 per cent, a master's degree; ½-½ of one per cent, a doctoral degree. Rickover admits the situation has improved recently and that these figures represent only a rough calculation. The figures do not make any allowance for death or for those students who transfer to private schools, "but the numbers can hardly be large." What is significant about the figures is "that beyond the bachelor-degree level we have no numerical advantage over Western Europe." And

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 47-51.

even at the bachelor's level, our degrees are less impressive when one remembers that most of our students get their degrees in subjects that Europeans would consider "subprofessional" or "technical."¹

Qualitatively, American education is also inferior to European education. Rickover says a distinction must be made between a school's social task and its technical task. The social task must not have precedence over the technical task, as the educationists would have us believe. What is the technical task of the school? Rickover could be more definite on this point, but the repeated implication is that the primary technical task of the school is to provide separate schools at the secondary level which will best meet the intellectual needs of all students. The school's primary technical task, however, is rejected by educationists because they believe separate schools imply social discrimination. Educationists want to unite people of different occupations into one cultural pattern. They want everybody to get along together and absorb "the proper democratic attitudes." This is asking for the impossible, "but to this end educators cheerfully sacrifice our bright children's best learning years."²

¹Ibid., p. 51.

²Ibid., pp. 163, 165. To help clarify what he means by the technical task of the school, Rickover uses the following illustration. If an American physician can use a new surgical technique or drug therapy developed in England's or

Rickover believes the technical task of the school should be "judged on its merits and without reference to the cultural, economic, or political setting in which schools operate." Our children are not unique. They need to absorb the same "kind of knowledge" as students in other modern industrial nations. If Europeans have separate secondary schools, it does no good to reject such education as "class" or "aristocratic" education because "when education is free and open to all children it is by definition 'democratic'."¹

European educators concentrate on their technical task. This task is to develop children's minds. Procedures for accomplishing the technical task are adopted which take into account that students do differ intellectually. At the elementary level, students are grouped according to intellectual ability. Using the same criteria at the secondary level, students are sent to separate schools which will best provide for their intellectual interests and talents. To do so is wise. Europeans know how to accomplish their technical task. They know that their technical task cannot be accomplished within the narrow confine of a

Sweden's socialized medical service, he does so regardless whether he accepts socialized medicine or not. This, Rickover says, is a technical matter which must be judged on its merits. Artists and musicians have the same professional attitude. Only educators "reject what their counterparts abroad are doing" Ibid., p. 116.

¹Ibid., pp. 119, 163.

comprehensive school. If "genuine educators" had controlled our schools, we would not have committed the "folly" of sending all students, with I.Q.'s ranging from 70 to 170, to the same school. It would have been evident to genuine educators "that equality in education necessarily requires diversity in schooling."¹

Being completely disillusioned with progressive education, Rickover is enamoured of the wisdom embodied in European and Russian education. Whereas practically everything is right with European and Russian education.² English education is "first rate." Graduates of the Polish academic secondary schools do "as well or better than our children after two years of college." There is "solid evidence" that Russia has found the secret for making all of their students put forth their maximum effort intellectually. Swiss schools "succeed far better than ours in

¹Ibid., pp. 63, 167.

²Rickover says that progressive education "aims and objectives" are "in large part absurd and in their entirety totally inadequate to the needs of people living in a modern society." Not only are their aims absurd, but progressive educators have not even accomplished their aims. Rickover judges education by its results, and this can best be determined not by looking in the classrooms but by noting how well-educated people are after they graduate from high school. In his opinion they are not well-educated at all. Furthermore, the progressive educationist's claim that he educates the whole child is an illusion. Rickover substantiates this statement by quoting from the 1938 Regents' Inquiry. This Inquiry indicated that at least a fourth of the high school seniors did not really know what freedom in a democracy meant. American Education: A National Failure, pp. 30, 35.

laying the intellectual foundation of democratic citizenship." American education is simply lagging behind the great advances of other educational systems. America should no longer be isolated educationally. It is time we found out what is being done educationally in other countries. Europe is "old and wise at educating the young" In fact, "formal education itself is a European invention. . . ." Europe knows how to keep their education "in step with changing times." If we are "wise," we will study and profit from foreign educational practices, for many countries educate their children "better than we do for the more difficult life we must expect in the future."¹

We could learn much from the French, but Rickover prefers not to talk about their educational system because the educational establishment would merely give their usual reply: "Look at the political mess they are in." He selects a country more congenial to the American way of life -- England. What might be learned from England? There are four great advantages of English education, according to Rickover: (1) separate secondary schools, scholarships for those with desire and ability; "retention of 'ability to learn'"; (2) highly qualified teachers who have freedom in their work and who have influence on all aspects of education, "notably in setting scholastic

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 11, 27, 29, 154, 166-167, 181.

standards through national examinations"; (3) the use of government grants to encourage acceptance of high standards; (4) national diplomas, based on national examinations, which are 'designed to permit great variety in selection of test subjects, yet clear-cut indication on the diploma of the examination taken and passed;" cooperation of all involved in establishing and evaluating the examinations. By using the above procedures the English are able to maintain high standards while at the same time allowing the management of public education to be decentralized.¹

The great advances in Russian education, however, should not be overlooked, Rickover emphasizes. Just because America is democratic and Russia communistic should not deter us from learning from Russia. To bring up the difference in ideology between communism and democracy is quite irrelevant in defining education. Russia has the same system of education as that found in Western Europe. We assume, he says, that a police state necessarily shrivels the human mind and spirit, "but we have no evidence that it does so in Russia." But then he also says that not many

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 170, 308-309. Rickover is aware that quite a few people in England are unhappy with their education system. A few "huge comprehensive schools" have been established in England. But they were established "for purely political reasons. . . ." His analysis is that the schools were set up "for no other reason than to placate those who confound intellectual excellence with upper class privilege." Ibid., p. 214.

new and original ideas have come out of Russia in fields other than the scientific field. Nevertheless one should not be too disturbed about this fact. Why? Because "second-rate theater, literature, art, etc., are not of great importance in today's international power relationships." Rickover sums up his position in the following way:

A school system which educates children is better than one which amuses them, conditions them to a life of conformity, trains them to pick the correct tie, the appropriate silver-ware, or the right mate. It is a better educational system regardless what use is made of its products.¹

Rickover admits it is true that Russians try to indoctrinate their students with communistic ideology, but it so happens there is not "much room for ideology" when a child is taught French or advanced mathematics. Rickover stresses the point that good education is the same everywhere. That a person might become a narrow communist is of no significance, for, as he emphasizes, he speaks "only of education and not of what people do later on with their education."²

In Russia an hour of mathematics is really an hour of mathematics; courses are developed sequentially; money is not wasted on "frills" or in keeping incompetent students in school beyond the compulsory school age; examinations are used to put students in schools which fit their aptitudes

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 165, 179.

²Ibid., ("Report on Russia"), p. 76.

and abilities; each student exerts himself intellectually to his utmost ability; secondary school students receive twice as many hours in science education as American students; there is no teacher shortage; there are no standard teachers; education is free; and although there is a problem with "unruly so-called young hooligans . . . for the moment they hardly make a dent in the picture of an earnest, well-disciplined, polite, and studious school population."¹

Comprehensive examinations are given in Russia at the end of the fourth and seventh grades. Failures are dropped and "go to vocational schools which prepare them for work." In Russia, Rickover states with evident approval, "schooling is not a right of the . . . child." This may seem cruel to many Americans, but Americans must learn that money alone cannot purchase education. "The only acceptable coin which buys an education is hard intellectual effort."² No one, of course, can force a student to work. He must make a choice. He may choose either to work hard in basic education or "dabble in trivia" and select easy courses. If he chooses the latter course of action, Rickover implies he will get what he deserves: "dismal, poorly paid jobs" or "intermittent or chronic unemployment." Students may

¹Ibid., pp. 150, 162-163, 183-184.

²Ibid., pp. 150, 176. (Rickover's italics.)

not like basic education, "but this is irrelevant; all of us must do many things we do not like. . . ." ¹

The blame for American education being behind European and Russian education should be placed solely on the shoulders of the progressive educators. It was not the American public, but the progressive educationists who decided we should have permissive schools, automatic promotion, life adjustment, and phony diplomas, rather than basic education. According to Rickover, progressive educationists have not, nor will not accept the fact that if students' needs are to be met, they must be separated in the secondary school. Therefore, "it is entirely their fault that the high school has deteriorated scholastically." Referring again to progressive educators, Rickover concludes:

For clearly what is at issue today is their mistakes: the fads they fell for, the unwise experiments they perpetrated on our children, their failure to assess correctly just what kind of education young people need who will live in a modern industrial society and what kind of educated people this society needs in order to remain viable. ²

Teacher-Administrator Relationship

One of the distinguishing characteristics of American education, in Admiral Rickover's judgment, is the

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 73-74. School administrators make school "fun" in order to hold children in school, Rickover says. He believes if the curriculum were tougher, "they might be able to 'hold' them longer." Ibid., p. 75.

²Ibid., pp. 84, 158, 248.

preponderance of school administrators and the relatively low status of the teacher. Being more impressed by the practical rather than the learned man, Americans "elevate the housekeeping, office and personnel work that must be done in educational establishments above the work of the teacher."¹ The administrative staff is expendable. Teachers are not. They are the only ones in the school system who really do productive work; yet they do not control the school system. It is controlled by administrators who frequently are seriously lacking in scholarship and superior intelligence and who may not have had any experience in classroom teaching. Former athletic coaches, for instance, are often principals. Lacking scholarly intelligence, administrators are easily swayed by panaceas such as machine teaching and the substitution of life-adjustment education for basic education. Also, administrators tend indiscriminately to apply industrial production concepts to education. This has led to unwise experiments in our schools. In the name of cost efficiency, teaching loads were increased and teaching salaries cut. "The lowest cost, then became the 'norm' for the schools." Furthermore, administrators do not have the courage to expel trouble-makers from school and have them put in special institutions which are capable

¹Rickover, Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs Are Better, pp. 6-8.

of dealing with them.¹

The excessive power of administrators is deplorable for two reasons, according to Rickover. First, the administrative structure makes it difficult to attract people of superior intelligence and education into teaching. If teaching is to be a real profession, teachers must be as well-trained as lawyers and physicians. Such people will not be recruited as long as administrators "meddle with teaching (choosing textbooks, interfering with grading and promotion)." Nor will superior people submit to certification requirements which require them to take "dreary 'education' courses." Secondly, administrators want to keep their organizations running smoothly. They resist any reforms which might upset the order of things. Teachers, however, "share with professional people a genuine desire to improve their performance." Rickover identifies administrators with the status quo. When key positions in American education are held by defenders of the status quo, "no wonder reform comes at a snail's pace."²

To upgrade the educational system, the superintendent must be a first-rate teacher. Such a superintendent would, in all probability, appoint first-rate teachers as

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 16-19, 61, 63-65.

²Rickover, Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs Are Better, pp. 6-8.

principals. It would soon be discovered that teachers are as capable of administering schools as are teachers in Europe. With teacher-administrators, the classroom teacher would have a better chance of being permitted to do his job of teaching. Eventually, classroom teachers could regain control of the school system.¹

Proposals for Reform of the Educational System

To improve education, Rickover says, there must be a partnership of local, state, and federal authorities. Each will have its own particular service to offer. Local and state governments can do much to improve education by lengthening the school year, eliminating everything from the curriculum that can be learned elsewhere, and by altering teacher-certification requirements, which is the most important step the local and state governments can take, according to Rickover. If teachers are to become truly professional, certification requirements must be as academically high as those for European teachers.² Rickover emphasizes that the "single most important step that must

¹Ibid., p. 12.

²Rickover states that "we cannot raise teacher qualifications significantly until we unseat the powerful men who set certification requirements in each state and their friends in teacher colleges who give the required low-level trade courses." He believes that if such courses were not required, ninety per cent of the education professors would probably lose their "captive audience" and, hence, their jobs. American Education: A National Failure, p. 24.

be taken to improve education" is to raise the intellectual and educational qualities of the teachers. Next in importance is to take away the control of the schools from non-teaching administrators. The local community can exert a real influence here. Local communities can insist that their administrators be experienced teachers and that their teachers be given more freedom in planning their programs. As Rickover puts it, "To obtain and hold a good 'professional' person, you must treat him as a professional; this means giving him maximum freedom in the practice of his profession."¹

If the intellectual level of teachers is to be raised, an immediate course of action is drastically to increase teaching salaries. Local communities must realize that this is the surest way to obtain more competent teachers. When this is done it will be easier to base advancement on actual performance, rather than on mere seniority. In the future teachers who make the most money should be those who have a broad general education in addition to "deep knowledge" of their teaching fields. Those who really know their subject, Rickover says, should be rewarded commensurate with their knowledge, teaching assignment, and experience. He states, "The best is never cheap . . . and the quality of education has been affected by our failure

¹Ibid., pp. 310-311, 318.

to reward excellence in teaching." To pay a teacher "niggardly" is to "commit a fraud on our children." Rickover strongly believes if teaching standards are raised, if teachers are permitted to teach rather than be engulfed in routine chores, and if salaries are comparable with other professions, education will eventually "draw the right kind of people."¹

By establishing a "National Standards Committee," Congress can aid local and state authorities in their effort to achieve the above objectives.² The Committee can provide an opportunity for students and teachers to work toward and a reward if they achieve the goal. "The mere existence of a standard" would greatly counteract the strong forces toward "mediocrity" that are so evident in

¹Rickover, Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs Are Better, pp. 78, 107-110, 199. Elementary teachers, however, would not be paid as much as secondary teachers. Although Rickover believes all teachers should have some instruction in pedagogy, elementary teachers need more, and hence, less knowledge of subject matter, than secondary teachers. "Know-how" is important in the early grades, but "grows progressively less important" as the "pupil's mind matures." We may assume, therefore, that Rickover reasons since secondary teachers need less education in the "tricks of the trade" and more "genuine education," they should be paid more money than the elementary teachers. Education and Freedom, pp. 78, 201.

²This Committee would be "composed of men of national stature and eminence -- trustworthy, intelligent, scholarly, and devoted to the ideal of an American education second to none." American Education: A National Failure, p. 309. In Education and Freedom (p. 222) Rickover states that his proposed Committee would consist entirely of scholars who are outside the public school system or the government. Whether he believes the Committee should still consist entirely of scholars is an open question.

the school systems today. Also a national standard would help to eliminate geographic inequalities.¹

It should be made "crystal clear," Rickover says, that nothing in his proposal to establish a National Standards Committee would "violate the constitutional separation of power between Federal and State governments, nor go counter to our tradition of control of schools by the local community." The Committee would merely render a service, "not regulation in any way, shape, or manner." In no way would his Committee usurp any of the functions of existing institutions.²

The Committee would have two tasks, neither of which is contrary to democratic ideas, according to Rickover. The first task would be "purely informational." Its role would be to keep the American public informed on how well American education compares with the better educational systems of the world. Its second task would consist of formulating a national scholastic standard on the basis of its findings. The national examinations established by the Committee would go "deeply into a candidate's true knowledge and intellectual caliber -- not IBM-graded multiple-choice tests." The examinations might well be modeled after the English national examinations which provide many

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 311.

²Ibid., p. 316.

subject tests at three different levels. Students would choose the number of subjects and the level at which they desire to be examined. The Committee might set up examinations at levels appropriate for high school graduates who plan to enter a first-rate college; for those who plan to work in a semi-professional or technical job that does not require a bachelor's degree but does require a good high school education; and for those who have graduated from various types of colleges, "especially those bound for the teaching profession." No one would have to take these examinations. They would be purely optional, Rickover stresses. Those who do decide to take the examinations and pass them successfully, however, will receive national certification. On their diplomas or degrees would perhaps be stamped the "notation N.S. -- National Scholar." This seal would indicate exactly what the holder had achieved.¹

Everybody "benefits when there is a standard." Misleading educational labels would be done away with. Any laymen would know exactly how well the school is doing. A certified diploma would encourage lackadaisical children to aspire to greater academic goals. Concludes Rickover:

Surely it is not Federal tyranny to ask that a diploma give an honest description of what the holder has accomplished. We expect prime beef to meet Federal standards for prime beef. We demand that medicines and all sorts

¹Ibid., pp. 309, 316-317.

of foods carry labels that indicate their content. We do this to protect the public against being cheated. Well, honest labeling in education is just as important.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 314, 317.

CHAPTER VII

ALBERT LYND'S BASIC EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The American public school system has steadily deteriorated the past few decades in Lynd's opinion. It is an over-simplification, however, to blame specifically progressive education curriculum changes for the decline of the public school. Granted that to some extent the progressivist influence has been felt everywhere. "Its most thorough-going curriculum reforms," however, are not widely applied in the schools. The "real villain" is not progressivism as such, but rather "Educationism itself." Educationism, with a capital E, has developed into an autonomous, "monopolistic enterprise" whose primary interest is to make sure the prospective teacher does not have any "genuine educational interests." The crux of the situation is Educationism's cultural isolation "from the world of reputable letters and science."¹

¹Albert Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1953), pp. 167-168. Lynd says educational quackery is not "directly related to any particular theory or technique of education; it is a product of Educationism itself as a self-aggrandizing enterprise." Ibid., p. 268.

Although Educationism is the real villain, not progressivism, the fact remains, progressive educators are the "chief engineers" of the isolation between the world of "genuine scholarship." Hence, "the progressivist, despite the limited application of his wider curriculum changes, has been the chief agent of deterioration in most schools because of his influence upon teacher education."¹

The person most responsible for the intellectual underpinnings of current progressive theories of education is John Dewey. Although his disciples may be confused, the "master" knows exactly what the implications of his philosophy are. According to Lynd's analysis, Dewey's philosophy excludes God and the soul. The "props of traditional religion" are out. Denied also are fixed natural law, immutable truth, and permanent moral principles. And while Dewey is definitely anti-communist, he is "unmistakably socialist."²

Dewey's educational theories are consistently related to his basic philosophical views. According to Lynd, if one agrees with Dewey's educational theories, he must also agree with Dewey's basic philosophy. The point to be emphasized is that progressivist methods cannot be justified only on the basis of psychological findings. The adequacy of progressive methods must stand or fall on the

¹Ibid., pp. 168-169.

²Ibid., pp. 206-207.

adequacy of its philosophical foundations.¹

When isolated from the basic philosophical assumptions of Dewey, many progressive practices make little, if any, sense, Lynd says. If related to those assumptions, however, they are quite sensible; that is, if one is willing to accept Dewey's concepts of the nature of man and the universe in which he lives.

What are the major educational implications of Dewey's basic philosophical theories? Absolutes in the history of ideas do not exist. In Lynd's opinion, it is therefore "quite sensible to throw out of our schools most of the lore of the past." If all knowledge is relative to the environmental context which is constantly changing, it is logical to discard most of the "ideas of the distant past." It is useless to instruct by exhortation if patterns of habit and impulse determine human behavior. Emphasis upon solution of problems of immediate interest to a student is natural if man is viewed as a "monistic biological organism." If there are no ethical or esthetic absolutes in human experience, it is a waste of time to study the "stately moral exhortations of Cicero and the poetic beauty of Vergil. . . ." A non-religious curriculum can be compatible with a sincere respect for all religions, Lynd says. But if Dewey's philosophy is accepted, it is impossible,

¹Ibid., pp. 184-185, 202.

for his philosophy "is categorically incompatible with such an attitude."¹

It makes little difference to Lynd whether Dewey's philosophy is right or wrong. The question is, ". . . if we must have one dominate philosophical influence upon the reform of our schools, who voted for Dewey?" Why not Royce or Santayana, or a host of other eminent philosophers? Lynd claims educators have foisted upon a lethargic, unsuspecting public a philosophy of education, which if really understood, would be rejected by perhaps ninety-five per cent of the people, at least in his community. The general public has not been told, among other things, that Dewey completely rejects the doctrine of the soul. Dewey considers such a doctrine as a "pernicious intellectual legacy." His concept of the soul goes against the basic intuitions of the vast majority of people. Educators have a duty to inform the public exactly what Dewey stands for. Dewey may be right and the great majority "may be superstitiously wrong. But who gave him jurisdiction to enforce that judgment on the 'vast mass' through its children."²

The "New Education" derived from the theories of

¹Ibid., pp. 203, 205, 211. Although Lynd makes the statement more than once that it makes little difference to him whether Dewey's philosophy is right or wrong, it is, nevertheless, difficult to reconcile with his many negative criticisms of Dewey's philosophy of instrumentalism.

²Ibid., pp. 188, 200-210, 297.

Dewey has one fatal weakness, according to Lynd. His most serious indictment is that everything in the New Education is based upon the "wisdom or lack of wisdom of the teacher," who, to make matters worse, is being encouraged by professional educationists to "throw out most of the accumulated wisdom of the race." To Lynd, "there is more wisdom in the 'subject matter' of mathematics, of literature, of history, than in any teacher or body of teachers, however, wise." Believing that the "human race was working on the wrong mosaic until about 1900," progressive educationists have abdicated what has already been achieved with great difficulty. To dispense with the past is the "hallmark of the New Ignorance." Dewey's educational doctrines have "opened in our schools a door wide enough to admit a legion of pedagogical boondogglers." Emphasizes Lynd:

Precisely because progressive education dispenses so far with tradition and stakes so much upon the educational creativity of the teacher, it is a method which would require someone like¹ a Dewey in every classroom for intelligent execution.

Lynd uses the word ignorance advisedly, for people who control our schools should themselves be educated. Should be, but are not. Many are "half-educated or uneducated." They want to free the children from a traditional formal education with which they themselves are not even acquainted. The tragedy is that it is such people who do

¹Ibid., p. 207.

all the thinking for the local school boards. The control of education is in the hands of professors of education, "a special breed in academe," who being uneducated themselves, do not know what real education should be. The "pedagogical ignorance" of such men "is now sanctioned by a system which accepts Education as a substitute for education."¹

In conclusion, Lynd says his main criticism is "the selection of a single dominant philosophy of education, adopted without consulting the community and used for indoctrinating teachers." This criticism he considers of more basic importance than his other major criticism that the fundamentals are not as well taught today as they were in the past.²

¹Ibid., pp. 16, 18, 29.

²Albert Lynd, "What I Wrote in My Book," National Parent-Teacher, XLIX (November, 1954), 28.

CHAPTER VIII

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BASIC EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF BESTOR, RICKOVER, AND LYND

Lynd is in basic agreement with Bestor and Rickover on the following major points. In a misguided attempt to meet all the felt needs and interests of children, the public school has usurped from the home and church their traditional responsibilities for the education of youth. By trying to do everything for a child, the school does nothing well. The school lacks a unifying purpose. To regain a sense of direction, the school must restrict its activities and do well that which it is capable of doing: to provide all students with a sound education in the basic intellectual disciplines. Whatever else the school does must be subordinate and incidental to this purpose.¹

American public school education has deteriorated because the aims and content of education are determined by a self-aggrandizing educational bureaucracy whose primary interest is the perpetuation of its own power. The

¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 19, 69-70, 245-246, 275; Review of The Restoration of Learning, by Arthur Bestor, Saturday Review, XXXVIII (September 10, 1955), 30.

leaders of this bureaucracy, college of education professors, are not really interested in the welfare of the schools. If they were, they would insist that prospective teachers receive a liberal education in the basic intellectual disciplines. Instead, pedagogues lobby state legislatures to make certification laws requiring teachers to take more courses, not in the liberal arts and sciences, but in the education department. Education courses teach prospective teachers only the tricks of the trade, not how to think not what to teach. The trivial content and the low academic standards of such courses repel intellectually-inclined students from entering the teaching profession.¹

Furthermore, if pedagogues were truly interested in the welfare of the schools, they would demand that public school students receive a genuine education in the traditional academic subjects. But being culturally isolated from the real world of learning comprised of scholars, scientists, and professional men, educationists are so intellectually unsophisticated they have permitted, if not actually sought the disintegration of the intellectual studies.²

Educationists with vested interests are interested

¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 36-38, 105-106, 167-169.

²Lynd, Saturday Review, XXXVIII (September 10, 1955), 30; Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 167-169.

only in maintaining the status quo; educational reform cannot be expected to initiate with them. Scholars, scientists, and professional men must take the lead in revitalizing the educational system.¹

There are several ways in which Lynd differs somewhat from Bestor and Rickover. All three believe the curriculum should consist of the traditional academic subjects. However, whereas Bestor and Rickover would justify the standard curriculum primarily on the basis of its value as mental training, Lynd believes such courses as history, and Latin have intrinsic merit, not as a potential vehicle for mental training, but for the knowledge and wisdom inherent in the subject.²

The primary purpose of education for Bestor and Rickover is to teach a person to think critically. This can be accomplished only if a student pursues intellectual studies over a long period of time. Lynd would probably agree, but his objective seems to be somewhat more limited. He states the most important ends of education are essentially related to the three R's.³

¹Lynd, Saturday Review, XXXVIII (September 10, 1955), 30. In Quackery in the Public Schools (p. 282) Lynd does not specify what kind of people should revitalize the school system. He states only that the "parent and citizen who would work effectively for sanity and literacy in public education must work largely with other laymen."

²Lynd, National Parent-Teacher, XLIX (November, 1954), 48.

³Ibid.

Bestor seldom refers to John Dewey; and when he does, the reference is favorable. He does not consider Dewey a strawman responsible for all educational problems today. Indirectly Lynd does, and Rickover does directly. On this point there is also a basic difference between Lynd and Rickover. Lynd implies that progressive education would be acceptable (provided parents are in agreement) if all the classroom teachers were replicas of John Dewey. The problem is that most teachers fall far short of Dewey's intellectual stature. Implementing progressive education is simply too difficult for the average teacher; hence, the average teacher is confused, and as a result contributes to the confusion of the students. Lynd implies progressive education is too difficult for most teachers; Rickover says it is easy but, nevertheless, innately harmful. It makes little difference to Lynd whether Dewey's educational ideas are right or wrong. What perturbs him is that the educational bureaucracy has foisted Dewey's ideas on a lethargic public without having received a mandate from the public to do so. Rickover would agree with this last point, but he would not agree with Lynd's assumption that it makes no difference whether Dewey's ideas are implemented in the schools provided only the public knows what it is receiving. To Rickover it makes a considerable difference since he believes Dewey's educational ideas are in general bad, and should have no place in the school

system.

Lynd implies -- but does not specifically state -- an adequate philosophy of education must be based on transcendent natural law and immutable moral principles.¹ Bestor only once mentions self-evident principles of education, and it would be far-fetched to say he agrees with Lynd. Rickover does not emphasize the point, but it is possible he would agree with Lynd, in as much as his criticisms of Dewey are approximately the same as Lynd's. Rickover and Lynd, for example, both criticize Dewey's denial of absolute values.

The psychological soundness of many progressive educational practices is not questioned by Bestor. Lynd does. He reasons if the basic philosophy of Dewey is unacceptable, perhaps the soundness of Dewey's educational psychology should be questioned. Rickover might proceed from different premises, but there is no doubt he reaches the same conclusion as Lynd, that Dewey's educational psychology should be questioned. In fact, Rickover would not be as cautious as Lynd. To Rickover, there is no doubt whatsoever that Dewey's educational psychology is unsound. Whereas Lynd seems uncertain, Rickover is certain.²

The local community should have little or no control

¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, p. 209.

²Ibid., pp. 39, 181-182.

over the content of the curriculum, Bestor and Rickover maintain. Their argument is that if the intellectual needs of our society demand all students be exposed to the limit of their abilities to the intellectual disciplines, no community should have the opportunity to deprive any student of this right. Lynd may or may not agree with this. His statement, without any qualifications, that a community should have the kind of education it wants, tends to indicate he could not logically agree with Bestor and Rickover on this point.¹

There are several educational questions discussed by Rickover and Bestor which Lynd either does not consider, or does not develop fully. Since Lynd considers Bestor's The Restoration of Learning the "definitive statement" on education, it is possible he agrees with Bestor on many points on which he has not expressed an opinion publicly.² It is, however, unlikely Lynd would agree with Rickover that there should be separate secondary schools since at no time does he criticize the comprehensive school concept.

¹Ibid., pp. 264-265.

²Lynd, Saturday Review, XXXVIII (September 10, 1955), 30.

CHAPTER IX

LYND'S SPECIAL EMPHASES

The Control of Education

"Nobody in his right mind," says Lynd, would deny traditional education needed more flexibility to meet changing social conditions. That some change was needed "is not seriously disputed by anyone." Educationists, however, assume that their "particular brand of change" is a change in the right direction. "That is a highly defective argument." In the New Education it is believed learning is best accomplished by emphasizing felt needs and present problems; "hence the switch from a direct attack on things like the three R's to such concerns as how-can-I-make-my-room-more-attractive." Although educators might counter this charge by citing studies indicating that students today learn the fundamentals as well or better than students in the old traditional schools, there is "some formidable evidence" that many educationists lack the qualifications "to judge children's performance in the fundamentals."¹

22. ¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 18-19,

The basic point is that the aims and methods of education should be determined by persons who are themselves educated. Lynd attempts to explode the myth that educationists are the best qualified people to do all the educational thinking for the local communities. Although John Dewey at the philosophical "fountain head" of the progressive movement knew what he was doing, his disciples are "many cubits removed from Dewey's stature. . . ." Many of them in fact are "half-educated or uneducated." Lynd concedes there are a few mysteries of education which should be judged only by its professionals, but he concludes "the professionals may certainly be judged on evidences of their personal literacy and general learning."¹

To Lynd, the authority of the educationists stands or falls upon the quality of their occupational prose. ". . . Its pipings about 'joy' and 'growth'" betray "their esthetic poverty." To place "these people as judges of the spiritual experiences of our children is like placing a temperance preacher in charge of a cellar of fine wines." Lynd devotes several chapters to illustrate the "shoddiness" of the language, historical knowledge, and philosophical assumptions of many educationists. (This "shoddiness" is also reflected in educational research and teacher education programs.)²

¹Ibid., pp. 16-17.

²Ibid., pp. 57, 181.

If an educationist cannot write a clear simple sentence, believes the Greeks were educated only with music and physical education, confuses emotive words with philosophy, then, Lynd asks, should we not be inclined to distrust their educational psychology? Summing up his argument, he says:

It is hard to resist the conclusion that the ideas educationists -- upon which they propose to make the most far-reaching decisions about the 'real needs' of our children -- are as fuzzy as their vocabularies.¹

If educationists are not intellectually qualified to control education, who then should control it? According to Lynd the control of education should be in the hands of the local community and the learned world, a world quite distinct from the world of the educationists.²

William Heard Kilpatrick

To understand the "New Education" it is necessary to understand the thinking of William Kilpatrick. His philosophy is described by Lynd as "elementary Deweyism heavily adjectivized." There are no absolutes; the universe is in a constant state of flux; the closed systems of Plato and Aristotle are wrong; ethics are not based on supernaturalism. These are the basic philosophical ideas of Kilpatrick, according to Lynd. The educational

¹Ibid., p. 39.

²Lynd, Saturday Review, XXXVIII (September 10, 1955), 30.

implications of such a relativistic philosophy are nowhere clearer than in Kilpatrick's belief that there is not a definite end to life or education other than growth. Growth for what? Lynd asks. Kilpatrick's answer is that the end of growth is more growth, which as Kilpatrick's biographer puts it, will continuously make life "'richer and richer and richer.'" To Lynd such an idea is "a dialectical merry-go-round." He believes "the assertion that the object of growth is more growth is ethically meaningless until one knows what is supposed to be the good in growth."¹

By adopting such a purpose of education, "an army of Kilpatrickians" is trying to abolish from the school systems the standard academic program. Pedagogues tell classroom teachers and administrators they have a philosophy that justifies "putting the axe to the traditional curriculum." Actually, all the pedagogues have in Lynd's opinion is not a philosophy but a "collection of emotive words."²

What particularly disturbs Lynd about Kilpatrick's pedagogical theories is that "no learning should be required of a child for which there is not a felt need." Lynd relates a personal school experience to illustrate

¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 212, 228-229, 223-224, 232.

²Ibid., p. 231.

the limitations of the "felt needs" theory. As punishment for misbehavior his principal made him stay after school and memorize a passage of poetry. This may not have been good pedagogical practice, but it helped Lynd acquire a taste for poetry which has grown each year. Although such a method of "forced injections of verse" might turn some children into "poetry haters for life," Lynd is personally grateful to the principal. The heart of the matter is that:

Kilpatrick & Company have hit upon a half-truth and have confounded it with the whole of the law and the prophets. By using it as a universal measure of what shall be learned, the progressivists in the name of 'democracy' will impoverish the experience of some children as surely as they may 'enrich' that of others.¹

Lynd concludes:

I believe this influence [of Kilpatrick] has produced teachers who confound emotive words with 'philosophy'. . . . Our schools are filled with teachers who mistake fervor for science, mood for achievement. While Education itself is responsible for the multiplication of courses filled with trivia, Kilpatrick and his admirers have heaped the trivia with verbal meringue.²

Proposals for Reform

The most effective assurance against educational quackery is a great number of intelligent teachers whose education consists of something more than the "mumbo jumbo of Educationism." The objective Lynd says is to make

¹Ibid., pp. 236, 238-239.

²Ibid., p. 245.

public education so attractive that many good minds will enter the teaching profession. If there were more students of high quality in education, "the most absurd offerings of the faculties would die on the vine." Bright students would not put up with "joker courses." Lynd does not advocate, however, that the standards for admission to teaching be as high as those of a good medical school. Nor does he suggest an Einstein would necessarily be a better teacher of algebra than a well-qualified person more modestly endowed intellectually. But surely there is a solution to attracting better minds into the education field. The solution, however, will not come from the top, that is, from professors of education "who have vested interests in the endless inflation of courses." Rather, the "most promising reform" should begin at the bottom.¹

The most promising solution is to increase drastically the salaries for teachers. Schools get what they are willing to pay for. They will "get plenty of good souls for low pay, but goodness in a teacher is not enough." Most of the third-rate minds most infatuated with educational quackery are "very good persons." Lynd is aware that it is an over-simplification to believe better pay will attract better minds. He knows the attraction will not be automatic. But improved salaries is an

¹Ibid., pp. 255-257.

"indispensable condition" if the intellectual level of teachers and college of education professors is ever to be raised.¹

Although Lynd believes raising teaching salaries is the best "long-term cure for educational quackery", he does not discount the value of other remedies suggested by "competent academic critics of Educationism." Dr. Harold Clapp's proposal that a commission, composed of people of "sane views and complete integrity," be established to study the whole educational enterprise, is "an inviting one" to Lynd, but it would be most difficult to implement. Dr. Harry Fuller's recommendation that parents resist any attempt on the part of lawmakers to increase teacher certification requirements by adding more education courses is also one of merit. It is not easy, however, for unorganized laymen "to combat the system at its source in legislation." The education lobby is too well organized. Although these two proposals have considerable merit, it seems more practicable to Lynd for citizens to concentrate their energies on improving the salary scales in their local communities.²

When teachers are paid better, school boards should pay closer attention to the kind of education the community

¹Ibid., p. 258.

²Ibid., pp. 265-267.

wants, Lynd says. This is most important because the "kind of education which a community should have is the kind which most of the citizens want." What a community wants, of course, may not be what professional educational leaders believe it should have, but this should not be a deterrent.¹

Lynd says a parent who believes he likes progressivist theory and practice should make sure he understands all the implications of the philosophy. If a person is informed and still is impressed with progressive education, he should then visit a school where it is established and discover if the teachers really understand the implications of their theory and method and if they can be trusted to guide a child's education.²

A person who is opposed to the New Education should use every means of protest available to him, except one. Lynd would not have any person invoke financial sanctions when the school needs money. As he puts it, "A classroom and a teacher with any educational program is far better than no classroom at all; and new rooms and teachers are badly needed today in many communities." Those, however, who accept the pragmatic view may work as hard as they like to perpetuate their theories in the public schools, as long as "they do it fairly." That is, they should tell the

¹Ibid., pp. 264-265.

²Ibid., p. 276.

community exactly what the implications of their philosophy are.¹

There are not many educationists, Lynd believes, with whom the laymen can expect to work in eliminating quackery from the public schools. From the weight of his evidence, he concludes:

. . . The parent and citizen who would work effectively for sanity and literacy in public education must work largely with other laymen. May their number increase in the land.²

¹Ibid., pp. 277, 280.

²Ibid., p. 282.

CHAPTER X

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CRITICS' EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

Introductory Statement

The reaction of educators to the criticisms of Bestor, Rickover, and Lynd has varied in tone and quality of critical analysis.¹ Having their character, intelligence, and motives questioned, a few educators have reciprocated by questioning the character, intelligence, and motives of the critics.² Disgusted with what they consider the critics' overstatement of their cases, unqualified generalizations, "question-begging," emotive words, "card-stacking," logical discrepancies, dogmatic assertions, misuse of statistics, and other illicit arguments, a number of educators have tended to overlook, or minimize, the sound educational criticisms offered by the critics.³

¹Henceforth, when reference is made to Bestor, Rickover, and Lynd as a group, they shall be referred to as "the critics."

²W. W. Brickman, "Attack and Counterattack in American Education," School and Society, LXXIV (October 27, 1951), 262-269.

³Strong cases have been made in support of such charges. See: Eugene Auerbach, "Liberal Arts Opposition to Professors of Education," School and Society, LXXXVII (November 21, 1959), 473-479; Theodore Brameld, Review of Education

While regretting the above qualities of the critics, most educators, however, have responded in a scholarly fashion and have commended the critics' more penetrating comments on the educational scene.¹

It is true, as the critics point out, that some educators have minimized, or completely discounted, the

and Freedom, by H. G. Rickover, New York Times Book Review, February 1, 1959; W. W. Brickman, "Educational Propaganda in a National Magazine," School and Society, LXXXV (March 16, 1957), p. 91; W. W. Brickman, "Rickover as Comparative Educator," Phi Delta Kappan, XL (November, 1958), 64-67; R. Will Burnet, "Mr. Bestor in the Land of the Philistines," Progressive Education, XXXI (January, 1954), 65-85; William Burton, "The Influence of Educationists upon the Requirements for Teacher's Certificates," Journal of Teacher Education, VI (June, 1955), 100-104; Arthur F. Corey, "Dr. Bestor's Wasteland," National Parent-Teacher, XLIX (November, 1954), 29, 31-32; E. C. Cunningham, "A 'Quack,' Quacks Back!" Journal of Teacher Education, IX (March, 1958), 61-73; Harold C. Hand, "A Scholar's Documentation," Educational Theory, IV (January, 1954), 27-48, 53; Harold C. Hand, "Black Horses Eat More than White Horses," AAUP Bulletin, XLIV (June, 1957), 481-485; (June, 1958), 491-494; Harold C. Hand, "New Flaws in Arthur Bestor's Diatribe," Phi Delta Kappan, XXXVIII (March, 1957), 254-256; Harold C. Hand, "Scholar's Devil Theory," High School Journal, XLI (April, 1958), 270-286; Oscar Handlin, "Rejoinder to Critics of John Dewey," Education Digest, XXIV (November, 1958), 1-4; Sidney Hook, "Modern Education and Its Critics," American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Seventh Yearbook (Chicago: The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1954), pp. 139-160; Fred Hechinger, "The Fate of Pedagogue," Saturday Review, XXXVI (December 12, 1953), 18-20; Myron Lieberman, Review of Education and Freedom, by H. G. Rickover, The Nation, CLXXXVIII (March 14, 1959), 230-231; Lawrence E. Metcalf, "Intellectual Development in Modern Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, XXXVII (April, 1957), 279-280; John Rosseli, "Where the Grass is Greener," NEA Journal, LI, No. 9 (December, 1962), 41-42; William Clark Trow, "Basic Education: Facts and Fallacies," School and Society, LXXXV (March 16, 1957), 86-88; William Clark Trow, "Professional Education and the Disciplines; An Open Letter to Professor Bestor," The Scientific Monthly, III (March, 1953), 149-152.

¹Brickman, School and Society, LXXIV (October 27, 1951), 262-269.

importance of sequentially-developed intellectual studies.¹ Teachers are not as well-trained as they should be.² Students are often not challenged intellectually.³ Some, if not much, educational research does seem to be concerned with rather trivial problems. It is a fact that a few educators have advocated that great intellectual ability in a teacher can be a distinct disadvantage.⁴ Certification requirements do need to be re-examined.⁵ Far too often

¹William Heard Kilpatrick, for example, was a prominent educator who minimized the importance of sequentially-developed intellectual studies. Lawrence Cremin says that "Kilpatrick . . . in his emphasis on future uncertainty and in his unrelenting attack of subject matter 'fixed-in-advance,' ultimately discredits the organized subjects. . . ." Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 219.

²Referring to teacher education programs, Bereday and Lauwerys say that "programs from the most advanced to the least advanced are inadequate." George F. Bereday and Joseph A. Lauwerys (eds.), The Education and Training of Teachers, The Yearbook of Education, 1963 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1963), p. xiii.

³The general feeling of students in most of the schools visited by David Mallery was that they were not being taught to really think. Mallery says "a number of students talked about the heavy work load they were carrying. But their criticisms dealt, not with hours and effort, but with the quality of thinking and motivation, which was lacking and which would be necessary to make the work load worthwhile to them." David Mallery, High School Students Speak Out (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 17-26, 42.

⁴See Myron Lieberman, Education As a Profession (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p. 232.

⁵Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 104.

administrators do lack the training to be real intellectual leaders.¹ Some educators have too complacently assumed that American education is the best in the world and that there is little to learn from foreign educational systems. It is a fact that some educators have tended indiscriminately to brand conservative critics of public education as enemies of the public schools.² Vocational training as it now exists is a poor substitute for a liberal education. The value of mental discipline has too often been de-emphasized.³ Administrators do exert too much control over teachers.⁴ And perhaps lack of state or

¹Howard K. Beale, Are American Teachers Free: An Analysis of Restraints upon the Freedom of Teaching in American Schools (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 619-620.

²I. L. Kandel, American Education in the 20th Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 138-139.

³According to Walter B. Kolesnik, "When experimental research cast doubt on formal discipline, some educators and psychologists hastened to conclude that transfer of training and mental discipline had been, ipso facto, discredited. . . . Twentieth century education is still struggling to recover from this mistake." Mental Discipline in Modern Education (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), p. 5.

⁴What was true in 1928 is perhaps still true today. According to John Dewey, "There is . . . much more autocracy on the part of superintendents and principals in public schools than by presidents and deans in colleges. Our lower schools are riddin by 'administrators.' They are administration mad. An arm's-length efficiency, conducted by typewriters from central offices, reaches into the classrooms where all the educational work is done, and produces there the inefficiency of irresponsibility and routine. Yet these things mostly go without note or comment." "Bankruptcy in Modern Education," School and Society, XXVII (January 7, 1928), 23.

national academic standards for students and teachers has contributed to educational mediocrity. However much the critics may over-state their cases, it is difficult to ignore many of the weaknesses they point out in our school system.

Local Control of Education

Perhaps the most incisive criticism by Rickover and Bestor is that the quality of an educational system can no longer be left only to the whims of the local community.¹ The quality of all educational systems today is a national concern, Bestor and Rickover emphasize. The education a prospective farmer in Gotebo, Oklahoma, receives should be equal in quality to the education of a prospective chemist in Scarsdale, New York. Their education need not be identical, as Bestor seems to advocate, but it must be sufficiently broad to permit a person to be at home culturally and intellectually wherever he may live.²

The critics believe the federal government can help

¹As Lieberman points out, "The position that seems to hold the most promise is that the democratic ideals of the national community should be the ultimate source of moral authority for education. . . . If we accept the notion that the teacher's ultimate responsibility is to the national community, we must honestly face up to the fact that teachers will have to do many things which are unpopular at the local level." Education as a Profession, p. 71.

²Bestor, The New Republic, CXXXVI (March 4, 1957), 15-16; Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 315.

all communities have an educational system of high quality. The argument that federal intervention in education will automatically destroy local and state control of education is weak. Since the land grant acts of the eighteenth century, the federal government has played a continuously greater role in education.¹ The argument, however, that, the federal government will be less responsive to the peculiar curricular needs of the local community is perhaps true. But is this necessarily an evil? Since education is, or should be, a national concern, the federal government should not succumb to the educationally harmful idiosyncrasies of many local communities. A local community no longer has the right -- if it ever had -- to prevent teaching of evolutionary theory or to ban mention of the United Nations. It is probable that a committee sponsored by the federal government, consisting of nationally prominent men from all walks of life, would be more apt to be less parochial and more aware of national educational needs than any one local school board. Just as the President of the United States must extend his perspective to encompass the welfare of all local communities and states, a national educational

¹According to William G. Carr, "Nearly 25% of pupils are enrolled in public schools which come under Federally impacted areas legislation, and yet school officials in the schools uniformly say that government has exerted no control over personnel or program." "Federal Support: A Clinical Survey," National Education Association Journal, L (January, 1961), 19. Various studies also indicate that teachers in government schools have more freedom to teach than they do in the typical public school. Lieberman, Future of Public Education, p. 52.

policies committee should have the same catholic educational perspective.¹

National and State Student Examinations

Bestor proposes that a state, and Rickover a national, educational committee establish academic standards at various levels for all students.² The standards would be established primarily through comprehensive essay-type examinations. Historically, many educators have been opposed to state or national academic examinations, although not necessarily for the reasons attributed to them by Bestor and Rickover. Educators who are opposed to standardized examinations often have rejected them not primarily because they denote a class or aristocratic concept of education (as the critics seem to believe), but because objective tests tend to discourage creative thinking. The remarks of Alfred North Whitehead are perhaps representative of how many educators feel about objective examinations. Whitehead says:

We do not denounce [use of uniform external examinations]

¹Bestor, The New Republic, CXXXVI (March 4, 1957), 15-16; Rickover, Education and Freedom ("Report on Russia"), p. 78; Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, p. 45. It should be noted, however, that Bestor urges federal intervention only if the state is incapable of insuring that all students receive a sound education in the basic disciplines.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 356; Rickover, "A National Standard for Education," Vital Speeches, XXIV, No. 4 (December 1, 1962), 104-109.

because we are cranks, and like denouncing established things. . . . Our reason of dislike is very definite and very practical. It kills the best part of culture. When you analyze in the light of experience the central task of education, you find that its successful accomplishment depends on a delicate adjustment of many variable factors. The reason is that we are dealing with human minds, and not with dead matter.¹

But as Bestor points out, the fault lies in the quality of the tests, not in the concept that what can be measured should be measured. Comprehensive essay-type examinations can, he believes, make a contribution toward teaching a student to organize his ideas logically and to think critically.² According to Bruner:

It is obvious that an examination can be bad in the sense of emphasizing trivial aspects of a subject. Such examinations can encourage teaching in a disconnected fashion and learning by rote. What is often overlooked, however, is that examinations can also be allies in the battle to improve curricula and teaching. Whether an examination is of the 'objective' type involving multiple choices or of the essay type, it can be devised so as to emphasize an understanding of the broad principles of a subject.³

To administer essay examinations on either a state or a national basis would, of course, be quite difficult administratively and extremely expensive. But, the advantages to such a program seem to outnumber the disadvantages, as Bestor and Rickover have pointed out.

¹Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education and Other Essays (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 8.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 333-340.

³Jerome Bruner, Process of Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 78.

Teacher Examinations

Bestor's and Rickover's proposal that teachers should be subjected to objective examinations is also a worthwhile proposal.¹ It is a weak argument to say an examination cannot determine a teacher's character, practical intelligence, or ability to teach. Of course, examinations cannot adequately measure these factors. (Colleges of Education can and should evaluate such factors.) But scholastic examinations can determine whether a teacher has a thorough grasp of a subject he intends to teach.

It is also a weak argument to say that high scholastic standards for teachers will drastically reduce the supply of teachers, just when there is a critical teacher shortage. It is, of course, possible that raising academic standards might cause a temporary shortage of teachers even greater than the situation now. But why should this be of such great concern? As long as many teachers who can hardly write a coherent sentence are permitted in the teaching profession, as long as teaching is regarded by a great number of teachers as a temporary job, as long as driver education teachers and school secretaries are paid as much -- and football coaches more -- money than English and physics teachers, as long as the teaching profession is dominated

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 356; Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 218-222.

by administrators who are trained, for the most part, as athletic coaches, teaching will always be a second-class profession, and the shortage of teachers will probably continue to increase rather than diminish as the school population expands. It could be argued, that as in the law and medical professions, high academic standards will eventually encourage many bright students to enter the teaching profession.

Administrative Domination of Teachers

Rickover has done a great service to education by emphasizing that the most important person in the educational world is the classroom teacher, not the administrator.¹ There is no reason why an administrator should make so much more money, have more prestige, or have more power than a teacher. In fact, as Rickover has pointed out, the control of teachers by administrators has had a distinctly harmful effect on American education. If teachers were to be truly their own masters, as Rickover states they must be, it is possible that many educational abuses would be dissolved.

Reorganization of the Structure of the School System

The structure of the school must be reorganized so

¹Rickover, Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs Are Better, pp. 6-8, 12; American Education: A National Failure, pp. 16-19, 63-65; Education and Freedom, pp. 21-22.

that all students can profit from intellectual training, Bestor says.¹ One educator has described Bestor's hypothetical school system as being "completely impractical, unrealistic, and fantastic."² One may or may not agree with this educator's evaluation, but it is difficult to reject Bestor's basic concept that academic levels should not be based on chronological age. As Bestor has pointed out, there is nothing undemocratic about not basing academic levels on chronological age.

If Americans are serious about meeting the needs of all children, the schools must be reorganized in such a way that all students can go as fast and as far as their abilities -- not just academic abilities -- will permit. This cannot be done in the typical public school today. How the structure of the school should be reorganized is a debatable question. That the school must be reorganized, however, should no longer be debatable.³

¹ Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 282-334.

² Maurice R. Ahrens, Review of the Restoration of Learning, by Arthur Bestor, Saturday Review, XXXVIII (September 10, 1955), 31.

³ Several educators are trying to do something about this problem. See Arthur D. Morse, Schools of Tomorrow--Today (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1960); Frank B. Brown, "The Non-graded High School," Phi Delta Kappan, XLIV (February, 1963), 206-209; J. Lloyd Trump and Dorsey Baynham, Guide to Better Schools: Focus on Change (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., 1961).

Separate Secondary Schooling

Rickover has his own solution to the problem of reorganizing the structure of American education. His solution -- at the age of eleven or twelve simply send students to separate schools.¹ To be sure many administrative problems would be eliminated. The advantages in simplifying educational problems in this manner, however, are not too apparent. Rickover's primary reason for separate schools seems to be that bright students can learn more and learn it faster if they associate with other bright students. This may be true, but cannot bright students associate with other bright students as easily in comprehensive schools as in separate schools? Furthermore, it is hoped that in a comprehensive school the bright, average, and dull child can learn mutual respect for each other's different abilities and interests. Just as a racially segregated school tends to breed a petty provincialism and dislike, if not hatred, for people who are different, schools segregated on the basis of intellect can lead to the same type of undesirable repercussions.

Rickover assumes that because entrance to his proposed separate secondary schools would be based on intellectual achievement that the democratic values of learning to

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 121-130, 133-134; American Education: A National Failure, pp. 89-91, 257.

get along with people of different socio-economic backgrounds would be preserved. He overlooks one important factor. There is little question that most of the students in the schools would come from the wealthier homes.¹ This is a sociological fact, a fact that Rickover is either not aware of or chooses to ignore. Because this is a sociological fact, separate schools in Europe, for instance, have a class character to them.² Separate vocational schools in Europe and vocational departments in comprehensive schools in America are often considered by many as

¹In a detailed study of the relationship of income and educational opportunities, Patricia Sexton concludes that "the weight of evidence seems to be that nowhere in a stratified society are equal opportunities open to all people. In school, as in the world at large, opportunities are usually open to students or closed to them in accordance with their social class position." For example, Big City (an unnamed large midwestern city used by Sexton in her study) set up three special separate schools for 436 of their gifted children. Selections were made on the basis of I.Q. and Iowa Achievement Test scores. According to Sexton, "Not one of the 436 students selected came from an income group below \$5,000. At the same time, 148 students came from the highest income group [\$9,000 and over], even though there were almost 10,000 fewer students in this group than in the below-\$5,000 group." She concludes that the gifted-child program in Big City "is servicing upper-income groups almost exclusively." Education and Income: Inequalities of Opportunity in Our Public Schools (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), pp. 59-60.

²Interestingly enough, while Rickover asks Americans to return to European practices of education, many European educators are advocating that their schools adapt many American educational practices. John Rosseli, deputy London editor of the Guardian, states that Rickover's testimony before the House Appropriations Committee (1958) "surprised some British readers by giving strong and unqualified support to features of British education which now are either being modified or are under fierce attack in Britain by many teachers

inferior to the academic school. As a result, a student either not intellectually superior or not interested in the academic curriculum is branded as a second-class citizen.¹

At a time in American history when there is a block of communication, ranging from slight to severe, between negro and white, business and labor, poor and rich, rural areas and metropolitan centers, there seems to be more reason than ever to provide a school system in which all children -- regardless of social, economic, religious differences -- may enhance their understanding of each other.

and parents." With respect to Rickover's praise of Britain's emphasis on early specialization, Rosseli claims that "nearly all articulate voices in British education today are anxious to get away from it and differ only on the best means of doing so." He also states that in England there is "widespread resentment of the Eleven Plus examination. . . ." "Where the Grass is Greener," NEA Journal, LI (December, 1962), 40. Referring to Russian education, Zeno Katterle states that "as we in this country are attempting to contract and revert toward the so-called basic education, in the Soviet Union they are expanding and liberalizing their programs." "Soviet Schools: Myths and Fallacies," Saturday Review, XLIV (August 19, 1961), 37. Also see: Betty Vernom, "The '11-Plus' Examination: An Educational Anachronism," Municipal Journal, XXV (March, 1955), 802-803; Margaret Miles, "In Defense of the Comprehensive School," Listener, XL (July, 1957), 52-54; Graham Savage, "The Case Against the Eleven-Plus Examination," Listener, X (November, 1955), 789; "Primary Education," World Survey of Education, II (Switzerland: Unesco, 1958), 24.

¹According to an English educator, H. Raymond King, students who fail the eleven plus examination "are rejected and start their secondary education in modern schools with a sense of having failed both scholastically and socially, for the class structure of the English educational system is resistant to change. Whereas in a comprehensive school, children can move on from their primary schools at 11 without this invidious distinction." "The Comprehensive School in England: Broadening the Field of Opportunity and Stimulating

Whatever advantages in simplicity and efficiency separate schooling may have, it seems reasonable to assume the comprehensive school can do more than separate schooling to mitigate social frictions. And mitigating extreme social frictions in our society is not an unimportant goal, for as Montague says, "What is all the instruction in the world worth if it is not accompanied and integrated by an understanding of man's responsibility to man?"¹

The Development of Disciplined Intelligence

The critics have an ivory-tower concept of the school and of learning. They separate the school from society, and they separate the mind from the rest of the body. They do not seem to be aware that learning is not totally a rational process but rather is "a social and emotional as well as an intellectual process."² The simple

Response," The Gifted Child, The Yearbook of Education, ed., George Z. F. Bereday and Joseph A. Lauwerys (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962), pp. 193-194.

In his discussion with vocational students from one high school, David Mallery found the following statement was typical of the feeling of many vocational students: "Around here you're nothing if you're not college prep." Mallery said that the vocational boys in this particular school "were almost obsessed with a feeling of social isolation from the rest of the school." High School Students Speak Out, pp. 111-113.

¹M. F. Ashley Montague, "Freedom of Inquiry and the Shared Experience," Educational Freedom in an Age of Anxiety, ed. H. Gordon Hullfish (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 79.

²Robert H. Schefer, "Anti-intellectualism in the Pursuit of the Intellectual," Teachers College Record, LXV (November, 1963), 137.

fact is that it is impossible to isolate the intellect as an entity and develop it without any consideration of a student's emotional or social problems.¹ Psychologists realize that when a student is thwarted or frustrated, learning is inhibited.² Realizing this, educators are naturally concerned about meeting to some extent the needs and interests of children, not for the purpose of catering to their every petty whim, but for the purpose of making subject-matter meaningful in their lives. Educators know that if subject matter is not relevant to a student's

¹Rickover not only denies the importance of social and emotional factors in learning but also claims it makes little difference whether school takes place in a barn or in a luxury building. (See Education and Freedom ("Report on Russia"), p. 62). His assumption, apparently, is that the physical environment has nothing to do with the learning process. It is unlikely Rickover could find one study to support such an assumption because the type of building can either aid or hinder the intellectual climate, and thus the learning process, as William Bruce Cameron and Raymond H. Wheeler point out in their article "Physical Setting and Intellectual Climate," School and Society, LXXXIX (February 25, 1961), 75-78.

²In an intensive study of Harvard graduate students Henry Murray and others found not one student whose intellectual progress was not being hampered by emotional problems. Explorations in Personality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 740.

According to Arthur Gates and others, "Whereas slowness in learning was formerly explained almost exclusively in terms of physiological and intellectual development, psychologists have also added emotional and personality factors as being of at least equal importance." "Educational Psychology," Review of Educational Research, XXVI (June, 1956), 247.

A comprehensive study by H. M. Robinson indicates that the most common causes of failure in reading appear to be visual, emotional, and social factors. Why Pupils Fail in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

concept of the world, it will have little significant meaning to him, and thus the objective of teaching is being defeated.¹ As Bruner points out:

Research on the intellectual development of the child highlights the fact that at each stage of development the child has a characteristic way of viewing the world and explaining it to himself. The task of teaching a subject to a child at any particular age is one of representing the structure of that subject in terms of the child's way of viewing things.²

It is not to be denied that there have been a few extremists in educational ranks who have carried the needs-interest concept too far. The desirability of a concept, however, should not be judged by its application by a few educators on the fringe of commonly-accepted educational thought and practice. Far too often the extremists in education are judged by the critics to be representative of general educational thought. No institution or organization should be judged by its extremist elements.

The recurrent implication by Rickover and Lynd is that knowledge alone will enable a person to think critically. This is a dubious assumption. Knowledge is undoubtedly a basic ingredient of the thinking process, but "the substance of knowledge does not of itself convey

¹According to Goodwin Watson, "Pupils think when they encounter an obstacle, difficulty, puzzle, or challenge in a course of action which interests them." The implication of this statement is obvious -- no interesting problem, no real thinking. "What Psychology Can We Feel Sure About?" Teachers College Record, LXI (February, 1960), 255.

²Bruner, The Process of Education, p. 33.

intellectual power It is the raw material of thought."¹ Hundreds of studies, David H. Russel says, support the proposition that "knowledge is not sufficient to produce good thinking processes."² Thinking, as Hullfish and Smith point out, "is a distinctive form of behaving, and, as such, it has to be learned."³ Whatever innovations Rickover and Lynd urge, they ignore the basic problem of improving education. That is, how can a teacher teach his students to think reflectively?

The critics assume students can learn to think only if they are exposed to the traditional academic subjects. Educators are not so convinced however, as is indicated by the following statements:

Study of an abstract subject like mathematics or philosophy, in and of itself, does not necessarily enhance rational powers, and it is possible that experiences in areas which appear to have little connection may in fact make a substantial contribution to rational development. As a case in point, the abilities involved in perceiving and recognizing pattern in a mass of abstract data are of considerable importance in learning to analyze, deduce, or infer. These abilities may be developed as well through experiences in aesthetic, humanistic, and practical fields, which

¹Educational Policies Commission, The Central Purpose of Education (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1961), pp. 18-19.

²David H. Russel, "Higher Mental Processes," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Chester W. Harris (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 655.

³H. Gordon Hullfish and Philip G. Smith, Reflective Thinking: The Method of Education (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1961), p. 242.

also involve perception of form and design. Music, for example, challenges the listener to perceive elements of form within the abstract. Similarly vocational¹ subjects may engage the rational powers of pupils.

No particular body of knowledge will of itself develop the ability to think clearly. The development of this ability depends instead on methods that encourage the transfer of learning from one context to another and the reorganization of things learned. The child can transfer learning when he is challenged to give thought to the solution of new problems, problems in which he becomes interested because they are within his range of comprehension, problems that make him strive to use fully his developed and developing abilities.²

If what Goodwin Watson says is true, there is no subject "markedly superior" to any other as a "vehicle for strengthening mental powers."³ The implication of this statement, based on psychological findings, is that more experimentation needs to be done with the curriculum, rather than less, as the critics advocate.

Bestor (Rickover would probably agree also) seems to think one cannot solve a problem until he has had "long-continued practice" in the basic intellectual disciplines.⁴ The logical implication of Bestor's analysis of the steps of thinking is that a student could not really solve a

¹Educational Policies Commission, The Central Purpose of Education, p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 18.

³Watson, Teachers College Record, LXI (February, 1960), 256.

⁴Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 61-63.

problem intelligently until he enters college. A primary student, however, has problems just as do college students. Is the primary student to wait until he has had "long-continued practice" in the basic intellectual disciplines before he attempts to solve problems, problems which may be ridiculous to an adult, but which are real and important to a young child? Yes, he must wait, Bestor implies. This is a rather difficult position to defend. As Whitehead points out:

The mind is never passive; it is a perpetual activity, delicate, receptive, responsive to stimulus. You cannot postpone its life until you have sharpened it. Whatever interest attaches to your subject-matter must be evoked here and now; whatever powers you are strengthening in the pupil, must be exercised here and now; whatever possibilities of mental life your teaching should impart, must be exhibited here and now. That is the golden rule of education, and a very difficult rule to follow.¹

Bestor assumes just because the elements of a genuine education in a democracy are or should be the same for all students, all students should get this genuine education in exactly the same way by taking the same courses, regardless of whatever differences there may be in interests, aptitudes, and past educational experiences.² As Sidney Hook points out:

One would imagine in view of these differences in personality and background, that identical methods and

p. 9. ¹Whitehead, The Aims of Education and Other Essays,

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 310-334.

curriculum are hardly likely to lead to identical results, and that the more uniform we wish the education achievement of students to be, the more varied and flexible our methods and curriculums must be without denying the likelihood that they will exhibit certain constant features.¹

Bestor seems to view all students not as multi-faceted, complex personalities with unique abilities, interests, and aspirations, but rather as robots, all requiring the same kind of gas, oil, and maintenance to function properly.

Rickover says psychologists change their minds every so often; therefore, he implies their findings are to be questioned.² True, psychologists do not know everything, and they do change their conclusions as new knowledge is discovered, but they do know a few things about how a student learns.³ Not everything is known about the universe either, but this does not mean what is known should be discounted. Educators must work on the best knowledge they have available. What Dewey said years ago is true today:

No one has a complete hold scientifically upon the chief psychological facts of any one year of child life. It would be sheer presumption to claim that just the material best fitted to promote this growth

¹Sidney Hook, Education for Modern Man (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), pp. 141-142.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 64.

³For learning principles generally accepted by all psychologists, see Goodwin Watson, "What Psychology Can We Trust," NEA Journal, LII (March, 1963), 20-22; Ernest R. Hilgard, Theories of Learning (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1956), pp. 485-487.

has as yet been discovered. The assumption of an educational laboratory is rather than enough is known of the conditions and modes of growth to make intelligent inquiry possible; and that it is only by acting upon what is already known that more can be found out.¹

Assuming that most educators are naive and that educational research is not to be trusted,² Bestor and Rickover ask their readers to accept their own learning theories. But on what are these based? Not scientific evidence, but their own personal opinions of how students learn, or at least how they should learn. Perhaps Bestor and Rickover are right on some points and the psychologists wrong. But whose view should be accepted? Psychologists who have for years studied intensively how students learn or the opinion of Bestor and Rickover who have no more sanction for their belief of how students learn than their own strongly held convictions?

The Structure of a Discipline

Bestor stresses that the structure of a discipline should be taught to all students.³ Many educators would agree, but what precisely is the structure of any one discipline? This is not an easy question to answer.

¹John Dewey, The Child and the Curriculum and The School and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 97-98.

²Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 161; Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 190.

³Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 36-37.

Fortunately, educators are now receiving from scholars some help in answering this question. These scholars are finding out, however, that designing a curricular program is not as easy a task as Bestor might assume.¹ Questions such as these arise: What are the absolute basic principles underlying a particular discipline that all students should understand, regardless of intellectual ability? When should certain principles be taught? Should a dull, likely dropout be taught the same principles and have the same orientation as a bright student who will continue his education through graduate school? How much and what kind of science and mathematics should all students have? In an attempt to answer such questions, educators and interested scholars, will undoubtedly "tamper" with the curriculum. They will experiment. But this is the curse of education, according to the critics. Educators, they say, are

¹According to W. W. Brickman not all is well in the new curriculum reforms initiated jointly by educators and scholars. For instance, Morris Kline, a mathematics specialist at New York University, claims that the new science courses ignore the cultural significance of science. Alvin M. Weinbers, director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, says that some of the new courses in mathematics and science are "puristic monsters" brought into being by mathematicians and scientists who, being concerned primarily with advanced research, ignore the actual needs of most students in these areas. "New Establishment in Education," School and Society, XCIII (November 27, 1965), 442. In an interview Max Beberman, one of the men most responsible for shaping the "new math" used in many schools today, said that "'despite the best intentions of the people who sparked the revolution, the ideas get distorted and the final product bears little resemblance to what was hoped for.'" The Daily Oklahoman, April 18, 1966.

perennially tampering with a curriculum that was perfectly fine in the nineteenth century. It is ironic that the success of the critics' proposals to improve education primarily depends upon improving the content of the intellectual studies and the quality of teaching the basic disciplines. And yet the critics lambast educators for "tampering" with the curriculum and for being so concerned with improving the methods of teaching.

Intellectual Humility

By trying to make a subject interesting and meaningful to all students, educators, according to the critics, are committing the educational sin of "watering down" the curriculum. If educators combine two courses, history and geography for instance, they are making it impossible to teach a student how to think, the critics imply, because thinking can be developed only within the separate intellectual disciplines.¹ How do the critics know this is so? The critics are constantly claiming that educators have no real supporting evidence for their various educational theories and practices. One might ask what evidence the critics have that proves a "straight" history course is more valuable in developing critical thinking than a social

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 58-65; Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 196-198; Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 58-61.

studies course.¹

Educators may be wrong and the critics right, but educators are at least trying to find out if they are right by conducting research on what they are doing. The findings of educational research, however, are of little significance to Bestor, Lynd, or Rickover. They apparently do not need to rely on the findings of research. They are sure about everything. They seem to have all the answers. And anybody who disagrees with them is either ignorant, undemocratic, or an anti-intellectual. Surely there is more than one way to truth. One could reasonably assume that not all educators who have devoted their lives to the problems of education are entirely wrong on every educational question. According to Bestor and Lynd, they are wrong on practically all questions. And Rickover is hard-pressed to credit any educator with even a modicum of insight. Intellectual humility is not one of the more dominant traits of the critics.

The Dropout

Rickover and Bestor are primarily concerned with only one type of talent -- intellectual ability. They

¹Not all of Bestor's academic colleagues would agree with him that history should remain a "pure subject." According to the report of the Harvard Committee, geography "seems to be studied most fruitfully, at least in high school, when it is linked with history." General Education in a Free Society: Report of the Harvard Committee (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 139.

have little sympathy for those who do not possess this ability. The school, as society, is based on competition, they say.¹ Since the school is concerned, or should be concerned, primarily with the intellect, all students must compete intellectually, so the argument goes. But must all students be forced to compete in only this one area? Contrary to popular belief, society is not nearly as competitive as the school.² An adult can choose the area in which he wishes to compete. A farmer competes with other farmers; a garbage collector, with other garbage collectors; a scientist, with other scientists; a football coach, with other football coaches. An adult has multiple opportunities to fail and succeed. If he fails in one occupation, it is possible to succeed in another endeavor. His pride may be ruffled somewhat, but his worth as a human being is not

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 150-151; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 361. It might also be pointed out that society is also based on cooperation, a point that Bestor and especially Rickover consistently ignore. They want the schools to develop a competitive spirit, not a cooperative spirit. They apparently assume that students are innately cooperative; that, therefore, cooperation does not have to be taught in the schools. If Bertram Shaffner is right, this assumption is erroneous. Shaffner says, "It has been amply proved that in man, as well as in many other animals, cooperative participation in groups is learned behavior." "Animal Studies and Human Behavior," Human Organization, XV (Spring, 1956), 11-14. Quoted in Solon T. Kimball and James E. McClelland, Jr., Education and the New America (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 62.

²For an elaboration of this point, see Earl C. Kelley and Marie I. Rasey, Education and the Nature of Man (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), pp. 66-67.

necessarily impaired. He can find another position, and the new position may in fact be a great improvement over his old position. The situation in the school, however, is quite different. All students must compete primarily -- and if Bestor and Rickover have their way, only -- in one area: the intellectual. What is to be done with those students who either will not or cannot compete in the intellectual area? Must those who fail be given an inferior diploma (Bestor's high school diploma) and be shuttled off to an inferior vocational school? When such students, for whatever reason, fail to complete the prescribed academic curriculum, is there to be no other recourse left open to them to prove to themselves that they are worth something as human beings? Rickover and Bestor leave few doors open for the failure.¹ Their attitude toward the dropout is reminiscent of the Social Darwinian theory prevalent during the latter nineteenth century and early twentieth century: the theory that the strong should flourish and the weak perish. As with the "Survival of the Fittest" theory, there is one serious flaw in Rickover's and Bestor's ideas

¹In this connection, Harold Taylor makes a pertinent point. "It is easy," he says, "to keep people out of school and college. The way to do it is to make more demands of the kind the British have made. But the way to raise the level of intellectual ability of the American people is to adapt our educational system to the variety of needs which our people have, to meet them where they are, and to raise them to where they might be." "Education: For What and For Whom?" School and Society, (February 4, 1956), 43.

on the dropout. They assume that most students have an equal opportunity to compete intellectually. This assumption can be questioned. According to Brauner and Burns:

Competition as it occurs in school is a highly stylized ritual, with explicit and implicit rules that favor the child with middle-class advantages and place those below him at a decided disadvantage. It is no surprise at all that the loudest shouts for open competition for grades on a nationally standardized achievement scale come from those in suburbia. They know the odds and the rules. In the name of open and free competition they will fight a duel so long as they have the choice of weapons.¹

Dropouts are either too lazy or lack the ability to remain in school, Rickover and Bestor imply. A dropout, they imply is generally the result of a failure in communication. Just give him more academic work and teach it better, they insinuate, and there will not be so many dropouts.² Is it not possible, however, as Paul Goodman points out, that "there has not been a failure of communication. Perhaps the social message has been communicated clearly to the young men and is unacceptable."³ Is it possible that "guilty as he is for failing to achieve what others expect

¹Charles J. Brauner and Hobert W. Burns, Problems in Education and Philosophy (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 101.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, pp. 73-75; Education and Freedom, pp. 150-151; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 354-355, 362-363.

³Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 11. Quoted in Brauner and Burns, Problems in Education and Philosophy, p. 87.

of him, believing he should stay in school and seek the excellence the society rewards, ashamed at being unable to bring himself to do what he thinks he should, the dropout still senses, beneath it all, that the whole system is designed to use him to someone else's advantage?"¹ Is it possible that the education system is primarily concerned with developing gullible consumers of automobiles, soap, cosmetics, electric shavers, Schlitz, Johnny Walker, and so on? Is it possible that the education system is primarily concerned with indoctrinating students to accept American society as it now exists, with all of its inanities and social and economic inequalities? Is it possible that

¹Brauner and Burns, Problems in Education and Philosophy, p. 87. Whatever the reasons may be for students dropping out of school, a state-wide study in 1963 indicated that nearly 36% of the dropouts left school because they had no interest in school. (It could be conjectured that many of these students left school not because their schools were progressive but rather because their schools too closely resembled the kind of education Bestor believed was ideal at the turn of the century.)

According to the results of a three-year study conducted by the University of Michigan, in most cases "various aspects of the school system itself, rather than any qualities inherent in the students, were the chief factors causing students to leave high school." The New York Times International Edition, November 25, 1966.

Studies which tend to support the statement that the schools are much more traditional than the critics might assume are: W. A. Oliver, "Teachers' Educational Beliefs Versus Their Classroom Practices," Journal of Educational Research, XLVII (September, 1953), 47-55; Edgar Dale and Louis E. Rath, "Discussion in the Secondary School," Education Research Bulletin, XXIV (January 17, 1945), pp. 1-6; P. J. Feany, "A Survey of Instructional Practices and Equipment Used in Observed Lessons in the Social Studies in Grades Six, Seven, and Eight in Selected Cities of the Middle West," Journal of Educational Research, XXX (January, 1937), 348-356.

the reason powerful conservative groups in America urge the education system to emphasize the traditional academic curriculum is because they realize that there is no assurance that students will ever question the "conventional wisdom" as long as they are taught only history, English, science, mathematics, and foreign languages?

It could be argued that instead of criticizing the schools for not meeting the ostensible needs of society today, the schools should be complimented for doing their job only too well. The schools have done their job of mesmerizing the students to uncritically accept the prevailing order of things. As Lloyd P. Williams points out:

The most insidious menace to American civilization is the growth of the homogeneous mind. That is, we are mass-producing minds such that intellectual individualism, intellectual self-reliance, are continuously subordinated to a non-reflective and uncritical acceptance of superficial and popular platitudes.¹

According to Brauner and Burns, "There has been an alarming growth in the number of children so severely conditioned by the age of fifteen that they cannot reason on controversial subjects like segregation, school prayer, the Fifth Amendment, socialized medicine, disarmament, the use of nuclear weapons, and Castro's effect on Cuba."² Rickover and

¹Lloyd P. Williams, "Some Criticisms of American Life and Education," Education Forum, XXII (May, 1959), 423.

²Brauner and Burns, Problems in Education and Philosophy, p. 102.

Bestor apparently assume that students can learn to reason on such topics by ignoring them. It could be argued that many students cannot reason on such vitally significant social problems because they have never had a chance to do so.

Whatever the merits of Rickover's and Bestor's educational reforms may be, there is no assurance that in their ideal educational system students will ever be taught to examine seriously the advantages and disadvantages of American society as it now exists. This is a serious weakness.

Academic and Institutional Labels

Bestor is overly concerned with academic and institutional labels.¹ What real difference does it make whether educational philosophy is taught by a person in the education department or a person in the philosophy department as long as the course is well-taught by a qualified person?² What real difference does it make whether a capable student takes a vocational course in a separate vocational school or in a vocational department of an institution labeled

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 128, 169-171, 328.

²As Francis Keppel points out, "The issue is what is taught, and what is learned, rather than who teaches it in what department." "Contemporary Issues in Education of Teachers," Journal of Teacher Education, III (December, 1952), 252.

college or university? Why is it really necessary to label any strictly non-intellectual talent (as defined by the critics) as being inferior? There is no doubt that there is reason today to respect the intellect more than ever before, but it is well to remember, as Hugh C. Black points out, that "life at its higher levels is not only intelligent and rational, but it is also cultural, emotional, moral, and aesthetic. . . ." ¹ Although one should respect the intellect, in the total scale of values development of the intellect should be a subordinate good, for as John Gardner emphasizes:

. . . Intellect alone is not sufficient basis for the creation of an aristocracy. There is no certainty that an aristocracy of intellect would be more virtuous, more human or more devoted to the dignity of the individual than the aristocracy of knaves and fools which repelled Thomas Jefferson. ²

Those who believe that the most important job of the school is training the intellect, and those who believe, as Rickover, ³ that what people do with their education is of little significance, should ponder the words of Max Lerner:

We must not forget that a Germany which built a lofty

¹Hugh C. Black, "A Way Out of Educational Confusion," Educational Theory, IV (April, 1954), 115.

²Gardner, Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too? pp. 119-120.

³Rickover, Education and Freedom ("Report on Russia"), p. 76.

and imposing house for the intellect was also capable of what was perhaps the greatest collective crime in human history.¹

Education Needed in a World of Crisis

That the twentieth century is a perilous age is recognized by Rickover and Bestor.² Americans, therefore, need an educational system which will prepare them to live in a world of constant change and international tension. To Rickover and Bestor the education appropriate for the modern age seems to be primarily the standard academic curriculum program of the nineteenth century, with content updated and the quality of instruction improved. Even if the public schools were exactly as they desired them, is the solution to contemporary problems only to require all students to take as much history, geography, English, science, mathematics, and foreign languages as they possibly can absorb? This is Rickover's and Bestor's "bold" and "fearless" solution to educational problems today.³ Such a solution seems to be one more of timidity than foresight. One need not doubt their sincere interest in wanting

¹Max Lerner, Education and a Radical Humanism: Notes Toward A Theory of the Educational Crisis (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 19.

²Bestor, Harvard Education Review, XXVI, No. 3 (Winter, 1957), p. 2; Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 99.

³Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 154; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 7.

education to strive for excellence, but by ignoring social problems and by separating education from societal forces, one wonders how interested they really are in obtaining excellence, for, as Joseph Crutch points out, "the attainment of true excellence would involve a total overhaul of our social structure and our culture and a re-examination of every one of our most cherished convictions."¹ Bestor, Rickover -- and especially, Lynd -- do not seem overly interested in a re-examination of our cherished convictions. If they were, they would not be so vigorously opposed to emphasis upon a critical study of current social problems.

It can be argued that the educational ideas of Bestor and Rickover are inadequate for the world of the mid-twentieth century. What is the crying need of people today throughout the world? Some people would say to understand not only ourselves but people throughout the world. As J. Robert Oppenheimer points out, "The global quality of the world is new: our knowledge of and sympathy with remote and diverse peoples, our involvement with them in practical terms, and commitment to them in terms of brotherhood."² If to promote brotherhood throughout the world is one of the most pressing needs of education,

¹ Joseph Crutch, "Innovations, Excellence, and Children's Learning," School and Society, XC (November 17, 1962), 401-404.

² J. Robert Oppenheimer, The Open Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), p. 141.

what assurance does one have that this goal can best be achieved only by exposing children in the traditional manner to the traditional academic curriculum? In this connection, the questions posed by Margaret Mead are worth noting:

Is our present historic idea of education suitable for people in the mid-twentieth century, who have a life expectancy of 70 years, and who live in a world of automation and global communication, ready to begin space exploration and aware of the possibility that we can bring about the suicide of the entire human species?

As all these present and pressing concerns of the human race are new, is it now possible that a system of education may be out of date which was designed for small societies that were connected by horse-drawn coaches and sailing ships, and where any war could threaten only small sections of the human species at any one time?¹

If students are to be taught really how to control their environment, the educational crisis seems to be not how many hours of science a student takes or how quickly he can finish secondary school, but rather how to teach him the attitudes and methods of thinking that will enable him to do his part in resolving the divisive forces in the world. If the primary educational goal is to help a student realize his obligations to the human race, perhaps something more than the traditional curriculum is needed. Perhaps a totally new orientation is needed.² Perhaps a

¹Margaret Mead, "Why is Education Obsolescent?" The Teacher and the Taught, ed. Ronald Gross (New York: Del Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 264-265.

²Boyd Bode's statement might be applied to the critics. He said "everybody realizes that the world is a mess, but the cure too often is to return to old habits rather than

study of social psychology, anthropology, economics, and philosophy is just as important as the study of English, mathematics, history, and physics. It is improbable anyone would suggest that the traditional academic curriculum be discarded. There are some, however, who believe it should be drastically revitalized and supplemented with a serious study of the social and behavioral sciences.¹ Jerome Bruner, for instance, believes there is a need to shift from a study of history to a study of the social sciences because it is necessary to "study the possible rather than the achieved."²

Educational Goals and the Teaching Profession

Rickover and Bestor assume that once American education has clear-cut goals, most educational problems will vanish.³ There are certain problems involved in this assumption, however. For instance, whose purposes are the schools supposedly fulfilling? Are they the purposes of a parent who merely wants his child to obtain the symbolic

to re-examine values and find a new orientation." Democracy as a Way of Life (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), pp. 54-55.

¹For a detailed discussion of this point, see Theodore Brameld's Education for the Emerging Age: Newer Ends and Stronger Means (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

²Jerome Bruner, "Education as Social Invention," Saturday Review, XLIX (February 19, 1966), 103.

³Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 138; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 6-7.

labels of an educated person? Are they those of citizens who want the traditional political and economic mores of the community transmitted unchanged to all students? Are they those of the teacher whose standards may be different from those of the local community? Are they those of taxpayers and businessmen who want good education but do not want to pay for it? Or are they the purposes of certain pressure groups who want to teach children "patriotism," racial inequality, or any one of many purposes that certain pressure groups want the school to emphasize?¹

Let it be assumed, however, that all these diverse groups agree in principle that the primary purpose of the school is to teach all children how to think critically. It should first be noted that psychologists have established the fact that critical thinking can develop only in a matrix of doubt or perplexity. If students are to be taught to accept passively everything they are told they should believe, then there is no reason why a teacher should request a student to examine his own beliefs. But if the purpose is to encourage students to really understand the world in which they will eventually have an active role, then it is imperative that teachers stimulate students to analyze, question, and criticize the values, beliefs, and

¹Most of the questions concerning whose purposes the schools are to fulfill are those raised by Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd in Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1937), p. 232.

attitudes they have acquired from the home, church, and other local institutions.

Undoubtedly, the various groups mentioned above would agree with the statement that a student should learn to think critically. But when it is realized that to develop critical thinking the student must question the community's accepted political, social, racial, economic, and religious beliefs, many people might doubt the desirability of this method of teaching critical thinking. It is possible that various pressure groups would advocate different methods of teaching critical thinking, methods which would restrict critical thinking within certain prescribed limits. But how can critical thinking be taught if investigation of any area is restricted in any way?

The problem is not primarily one of getting everybody to agree upon an educational purpose, as Bestor and Rickover would have their readers believe. Rather it is the problem of finding the means of permitting school teachers to achieve the goals which most people seem to be in agreement on. If the primary purpose of the school is to develop critical thinking, how can the teacher develop it if the community will not permit him to encourage students to question the "conventional wisdom" of the community? Ostensibly, Americans want to develop international understanding,¹ but some communities will not

¹That the schools are making any real contribution

permit a teacher to discuss the United Nations or analyze capitalism, let alone communism. Most people want students to have a good science education, and yet as late as 1966 it was a state law in Arkansas that Darwin's theory of evolution could not be taught in any school. The simple fact is that many communities deny the teacher the means necessary to accomplish the agreed-upon general goals. If a teacher is to be able to resist the detrimental, petty provincialism so prevalent in many communities, to whom can she turn for help? The answer is obvious to many educators. The source of a teacher's moral and intellectual authority must not be the local community but rather the teaching profession. If this authority is to reside in the teaching profession, a politically strong teaching profession is a necessity. As Lieberman argues, "Teachers need power, not for aggrandizement but to attain professional goals."¹

toward achieving this goal is highly doubtful. According to Fred M. Hechinger, who summarized the findings of a commission appointed by the governor to study the public schools of Connecticut, "of the one-hundred schools questioned only three indicated that they had increased their stress on the understanding of international affairs in the past five years. . . ." Adventure in Education: Connecticut Points the Way (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 183. In addition, Theodore Brameld states that a Carnegie Corporation national survey indicates American students are more provincial than students in any comparable country in their understanding of international affairs. "World Civilization: The Galvanizing Purpose of Public Education," Phi Delta Kappan, XLIV (November, 1962), 65.

¹Lieberman, Education as a Profession, p. 490.

Bestor and Rickover write convincingly on the nature of a profession.¹ They recognize that the goals of a profession are set by society in general, but that the methods used by a profession to achieve the goals set by society should be determined by the profession itself. It is unfortunate they did not extend this idea to the teaching profession. Despite the many worthwhile suggestions they make to improve the status of the teaching profession, their idea that laymen should have a strong voice in determining the school curriculum would have, if generally accepted, a disastrous influence on education.

To teach a student to think critically is a general goal which should be established by the public. But how to achieve this goal is a professional question. If educators do not know how to achieve this goal and must ask laymen for help, there is no justification for educators to call themselves professional people. No doctor would ask a layman how to perform an operation. No lawyer would ask a layman how to prepare a brief. No educator should ask a layman how to teach spelling, how to teach history, or how to teach a student to read and think critically. By so doing, the educator is foregoing any claim he might make to professional autonomy and professional respect. Bestor and Rickover would not claim that a doctor or lawyer

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 269-281; Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 61-81.

should ask laymen how to achieve the goals set by society for their professions; nor would they advocate that doctors and lawyers not control certification requirements for members of their profession. It is a different matter, however, with the teaching profession. Rickover and Bestor propose not only that laymen should help determine the public school curriculum but should also help set certification requirements for public school teachers.¹

It is emphasized by Bestor and Rickover that they have great faith in the intelligence and integrity of public school teachers.² Their educational proposals do not support this statement of faith, however. In their extreme distrust of administrators and college of education professors, the first step they take is to reduce the influence of administrators and college of education professors over teachers. Rickover and Bestor are perhaps right in urging classroom teachers to become more independent of administrators and college of education professors. But, here is the problem. Rickover and Bestor remove the control of one group merely to replace it with the control of another group: laymen and the so-called "learned world." Furthermore, Bestor says teachers should be closely allied with

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 218; American Education: A National Failure, pp. 309-311; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 263-264.

²Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 19; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 177-178.

their colleagues in the colleges and universities.¹ The merit of this proposal is debatable. It is also debatable that academic scholars should help determine the curriculum for the public schools but that public school teachers should not help determine the curriculum for college teachers.² Public school teachers comprise either a separate profession, in which case they should control their own profession, or they are a part of a teaching profession which includes kindergarten teachers through graduate school professors, in which case they should have a voice in setting standards for college professors. Under Bestor's and Rickover's plan, the public school teacher seems to be a second-rate member of a profession. The implication of their proposals is that the public school teacher is not capable of running his own profession but requires help not only from his superiors at the college level but also from laymen.

Vocational Education

Bestor and Rickover correctly point out that vocational training which emphasizes only "tricks of the trade" is not liberal education.³ They say industry is perfectly

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 231-233.

²For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Lieberman, Education as a Profession, pp. 118-120.

³Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 66-68; Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 202.

capable of teaching their employees the "tricks of the trade." Why, therefore, should schools have extensive vocational programs? On the surface their point seems to be a good one, but there is one rather serious flaw in their thinking, a flaw in the thinking of all those who want to make a sharp distinction between vocational education and liberal education. They realize many students are going to take vocational courses. They realize most vocational courses are taught from a narrow, utilitarian standpoint, not from a liberal education view. They realize vocational training as it exists today in the typical public school is second-rate. But what do they propose to make it something other than second-rate? Nothing! Just delay vocational education as long as possible, they say.¹ This way its harmful influence will be somewhat minimized.

Why should a course in agriculture be necessarily any less liberal in content and method than a course in mathematics? No subject in itself is necessarily liberal or illiberal. The content of a course and the method in which the content is presented determine whether a course is liberal or illiberal. A mathematics course in which the teacher permits no questions, inhibits students' intuitive insights, discounts principles and emphasizes only memorizing formulae, is unlikely to have a liberalizing

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom ("Report on Russia"), pp. 3-4; Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 329.

influence on a student. (Bestor makes this point himself, but, nevertheless, he equates a liberal education with only the traditional academic subjects.)

The fact seems to be that vocational training is a fixture of American education and is here to stay, regardless of how inadequate it is at present. Now, there seems to be two approaches available to the educator. He may take the critics' approach and isolate vocational training even further from liberal education. Or he may take the approach that John Dewey and his followers have advocated for many years, an approach that attempts to humanize vocational education.¹ As expressed by Sidney Hook, a representative of this school of thought:

What is called a liberal education should be a continuous process, and there is no reason . . . why vocational education should not be liberalized to include the study of social, economic, historical, ethical questions wherever relevant instead of assuming, as in the existing practice, that education in these matters is something already gone through and forever done with.²

Hook believes the greatest obstacle to integrating vocational education with liberal education is the resistance on the part of specialists of introducing anything outside the narrow confines of their particular specialties. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that vocational

¹John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931), pp. 358-374.

²Hook, Education for Modern Man, p. 163.

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¹ John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1916), pp. 198-199.

² Hook, Education for Modern Man, p. 163.

education can be, as it is now, mere job training or it can be humanized. It will not be humanized if the advice of the critics is followed.

Educators and the Use of Power

One or more of the critics claim educators have used devious means to obtain great power and to perpetuate this power, even at the expense of the welfare of the public school; the interlocking directorate has usurped control of teacher certification from the learned world; educators are the major agents responsible for rampant anti-intellectualism in American society; educators have foisted their concepts of education on an unsuspecting public; practically everything bad about education can be traced to faulty progressive educational theories and practices; educators do not want to cooperate with the learned world in improving education. Although there may be an element of truth in one or more of these charges, such blanket indictments are difficult to substantiate.¹

Most of the above charges are based on the assumption that educators actually do possess great power. This assumption can be questioned. After an examination of the major forms of power exercised by various groups in American society, Mary Anne Raywid concluded that "educators are

¹Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 139-155; Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 35-38, 100-102, 168-169; Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 191, ("Report on Russia"), pp. 58-59.

comparatively weak with respect to each type -- legal, political, and economic power; power over public opinion; and personal influence."¹ If professional educators do indeed have great power, it would be logical to assume that the ideas of John Dewey would be widely applied in most public schools. But there is reason to believe that progressive education, as understood by Dewey, has never really been tried in more than a few school systems. According to Raymond P. Harris, "The principles of progressive education have won only very limited acceptance in the public schools. The overwhelming majority of the schools remain conservative in most respects."² Referring to the educative process prevalent in many schools, Kimball and McClellan say "the process more nearly resembles an assembly line operation in which a conveyor belt receives the roughly stamped bodies at one end, and after modifications and additions delivers them as finished products at the other."³ In Robert and Helen Lynd's classic study, Middletown, A Study in Contemporary American Culture, there is evidence that progressive ideology had little significant

¹Mary Anne Raywid, The Ax-Grinders (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 206.

²Raymond P. Harris, American Education: Facts, Fancies, and Folklore (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 240.

³Kimball and McClelland, Education and the New America, pp. 211-212.

effect on the schools themselves.¹ The critics, nevertheless, claim that progressive education has been the ruination of the public schools. They make this claim even though they realize progressive education has not been widely adopted in the public schools, thanks, they say, to the heroic resistance of academically-inclined teachers. It would seem that if professional educators possess great power, it would be a simple matter for them to crush the heroic resistance of these teachers.

Generally, conspirators (as the critics believe the educators to be) comprise a close-knit group, a group which possesses the power to achieve its objectives.² If educators were agreed on certification requirements and had the power to enforce their beliefs, it would seem that various state certification requirements would be more standardized than they are now.³ The same might be said

¹Robert Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, Middletown, A Study in Contemporary American Culture (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929).

²One of the most persistent assumptions of the critics is that the majority of progressive educators are in general agreement on practically all educational issues. Lawrence Cremin's history of the progressive education movement in America does not support such an assumption. Transformation of the School, pp. 180-239.

³Earl W. Anderson and Elfreda M. Rusher say that "each state in the United States establishes its own standards for certification; in no two states are they exactly the same." "Staff-Certification," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Chester W. Harris (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 1356.

about the curriculum. How standardized is the curriculum in the various high schools? There is, of course, extreme diversity, a fact the critics justifiably deplore. But who is responsible for this great diversity, a powerful, unified group of conspirators who know exactly what kind of curriculum the schools should have and have the power to enforce their opinion on a gullible public? Or is it possible that educators give a community the curriculum they want? The great diversity of public school curricular offerings seems to support the latter proposition.

What group wants to hire unqualified teachers at low salaries? It is unlikely that educational administrators want to do this. Perhaps administrators do so because their communities force them to do so. If educators have such great power, why could they not simply refuse to hire unqualified teachers? They could, of course, but if they do so, the result is that they will probably be looking for another position. Furthermore, how many public school systems have the power to oppose powerful community pressure groups that demand the school not mention Jesus Christ, the United Nations, or Karl Marx? The fact is that public school officials generally give in to strong community pressures, whatever they may be.¹ They do so because, among

¹The laboriously documented book, Education as a Profession, by Lieberman, indicates repeatedly that educators do not have even a modicum of power. This thesis is also supported by Howard K. Beale in his book, Are American Teachers Free?

other reasons, many educators have traditionally believed communities should have the kind of education they want, regardless of what kind of education it is.¹ The following representative statements are indicative of the degree to which educators want to usurp control of the schools from the public:

Many administrators are taking the initiative in developing school study groups composed of citizens from all walks of life that are encouraged to join the teachers, the principals, and the superintendent in appraising . . . the curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools, the techniques used to teach the fundamentals. . . .²

Educational authorities generally recommend that it [the State Board of Education] should be composed of laymen rather than educators. . . .³

According to social historian Merle Curti, "In no

¹According to Lieberman, "A sober look at the evidence that educators have tried to seize control of education from an innocent public indicates that if there is any criticism that should be made in this connection, it should be to the effect that the professional educators are relinquishing whatever claims to professional status they might have by their acceptance -- active encouragement even -- of lay determination of professional matters." Education as a Profession, p. 106.

²Neal Gross, "Local Pressures on the School Superintendent," Public Education in America: A New Interpretation of Purpose and Practice, ed. George Z. F. Bereday and Luigi Volpicelli (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 141.

³U.S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, "State Board of Education and Chief State School Officers," Bulletin 1950, 12 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1951), p. 108. Quoted in Lieberman, Education as a Profession, p. 182. For additional evidence that educators do not want to take control of education away from the public see Frederick C. McLaughlin, "Control of Education in Public Schools," Teachers College Record, LV (March, 1954), 296-300.

country did the local community and parents have as great an influence on the schools as in America."¹ If this is true, perhaps rather than criticizing educators for trying to shape public opinion, if anything, they should be criticized for asking rather than telling the public what should be done in the schools.

In what ways have educators, for their own selfish purposes, tried to usurp control of teacher certification from the learned world? According to William Burton, the "evidence that any group, professional or otherwise, is using the certification regulations for selfish ends is completely lacking."² Furthermore, in most institutions of higher learning the president may select a person to represent the institution on certification committees. That the person generally selected has been a college of education professor is perhaps logical; college of education professors are presumably the ones most concerned with public school education. If these people have not truly represented the ideas of the entire institution, the fault seems to lie not in any conspiratorial attempt by educators to ignore the opinions of their colleagues in other

¹Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1965), p. XL.

²William Burton, "The Influence of Educationists upon the Requirements for Teacher's Certificates," Journal Teacher Education, VI (June, 1955), 104.

departments but rather in the machinery established to select the institutional representative.¹

What about the charge that educators are the major agents responsible for rampant anti-intellectualism in American society? Richard Hofstadter, a prominent historian who is an outspoken critic of progressive education and a member of the Council for Basic Education, recognizes this charge is unfounded.² Merle Curti and Henry Steele Commanger, among other recognized scholars, would support Hofstadter on this point. Curti says, "In point of fact, several basic forces in American life in large part accounted for the growing emphasis over the decades on the 'life-adjustment' programs. . . ." It was not John Dewey, Curti claims, but often parents "who demanded that the schools teach good manners, hygiene, the home arts, safe driving, that they provide guidance and direct community activities."³ Commanger states that American interest in education has never reflected "any peculiar respect for learning or for

¹G. K. Hodenfield and R. M. Stinnett, The Education of Teachers (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), pp. 165-166. According to Stinnett (p. 166), "A recent survey by the Council on Cooperation in Teacher Education revealed that nearly 400 colleges and universities have already set up such cooperative machinery."

²Richard Hofstadter, Anti-intellectualism in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 309.

³Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators, p. XI.

scholarship."¹ Fred Hechinger, education editor of the New York Times, believes it is historical nonsense to blame educators for the anti-intellectual tendencies in American society.

America was a pragmatic, anti-intellectual country by virtue of its pioneering, frontier background -- long before the first teachers college exerted its influence. When the public high schools began to drop the "academic subjects" -- Latin, foreign languages, etc. -- the pressure to do so had usually been exerted by the "practical" men on the school boards, not by educators. . . .²

If Americans were not really anti-intellectual, a respect for intellectuals and things of the mind rather than "practical men" and practical matters would be more widespread than it is today. The worst, it seems, that can be said about educators is that perhaps too many of them merely reflect the standards of society at large.

The validity of another charge by critics, that practically everything bad about education in general can be traced to faulty progressive education theories, can be questioned. It is Lieberman's conviction that every major weakness of public education can be traced to higher education, and especially to the liberal arts colleges.³

¹Henry Steele Commager, "Our Schools Have Kept Us Free," Life, XXIX (October 16, 1950), 46.

²Fred Hechinger, "The Fate of Pedagogues," Saturday Review, XXXVI (December 12, 1953), 19-20.

³Lieberman, The Future of Public Education, pp. 136-137.

For instance: Who first started recruiting and glorifying athletes instead of scholars? Who first started looking for the all-round student, or as educators would say, the "whole child"? Who first established anti-intellectual and undemocratic fraternities and sororities? Not the public schools, but the liberal arts colleges. Public schools have merely followed the example set by the liberal arts colleges.¹ If public schools are to follow the example of liberal arts colleges, as the critics seem to advocate, the liberal arts colleges, it would seem, should first set a good example to follow.

And, finally, what is the evidence supporting the critics' belief that educators do not want to cooperate with the "learned world" in improving education?² Even a

¹It is interesting to note that Bestor recognizes that colleges were pressured by the public to do such things as indicated above. But he does not seem to recognize -- or at least, will not admit -- that the public exerted the same pressures on the public school systems. Although college professors are not culpable for giving into public demands (they were forced to do so, Bestor says), public school officials are. This is a most illogical position. Restoration of Learning, pp. 397, 382.

²It could be conjectured that the opposite is closer to the truth -- that the learned world has not wanted to cooperate with educators. According to Eugene Auerbach, "Historical evidence conclusively shows that opposition to schools of education by professors of the liberal arts has been present continuously since education courses were first offered at colleges and universities." "Liberal Arts Opposition to Professors of Education," School and Society, LXXXVII (November 21, 1959), 474.

The critics want educators to cooperate with the "learned world," but it is difficult to understand how they hope to bring this about. They question not only the

cursory glance at educational literature would reveal that educators are pleading for closer cooperation between themselves and academic scholars. To express a desire, however, is not evidence that educators really want to cooperate with the learned world. What is real evidence, however, are the concrete actions of educators to bring about a closer relationship with their scholarly critics. It is a fact that, once scholars expressed a genuine interest in the public schools, educators have made many attempts to work with them in an effort to improve public education. The various cooperative educational conferences the past decade, in which scholars have had an active voice, tend to negate the critics' assumption that educators want to isolate themselves from the learned world. The Bowling Green (1958), Kansas (1959), and San Diego (1960) cooperative educational conferences are indicative of the desire of educators to work with academic scholars.

According to the New York Times, these conferences "grew out of a desire of a few persons on both sides of a

intelligence but the integrity of many, if not most, educators. They all believe that the only hope for improving education is to relegate the professional educator to a minor, subordinate role. They are in agreement that rival professional educational groups that exclude educators should be established. Such a proposal is not likely to lead toward promoting a better relationship between professional educators and the "learned world." If anything, as Fred Hechinger points out, it is "more likely to lead to the permanent splitting up into hostile camps, sniping at each other instead of working together to improve education." Hechinger, Saturday Review, XXXVI (December 12, 1953), 20.

divided educational world to talk things out. . . . The professional societies in the sciences and the humanities agreed to be co-sponsors, and a hundred of the nation's leading universities sent representatives."¹ Referring to the Bowling Green conference, G. K. Hodenfield, education writer for the Associated Press, said:

. . . The greatest, most vital agreement of all . . . was the virtually unanimous acknowledgment that teacher education is the responsibility of the entire college or university. . . . This theme was stressed and stressed again. . . . The phrase "total² college" was used so much it almost became a cliché.

The critics, especially Rickover, seem to believe that educators, for the most part, are not in favor of any of the suggestions they make for the improvement of the public schools. A perusal of The Education of Teachers, a summary of the problems discussed and agreements reached at the Bowling Green, Kansas, and San Diego conferences, might enlighten them somewhat. They might find that many of the improvements they recommend are the very same improvements that many educators have been advocating for many years.³

Relativistic Knowledge

John Dewey is criticized by Lynd for denying fixed

¹Quoted in Hodenfield and Stinnett, The Education of Teachers, p. 174.

²Ibid., p. 26.

³Ibid., p. 43.

natural law, immutable truth, and permanent moral principles.¹ In light of these criticisms, one might assume Lynd believes an adequate philosophy of education should not be based on relative knowledge, but rather on some type of absolute knowledge, to be found either in tradition or a transcendent reality.² The desirability of a philosophy of education based on any kind of absolutes is questionable.

Lynd apparently assumes a relativistic philosophy must automatically reject as worthless any commonly held belief by the people. This simply is not true. As Dewey points out, "There is a long record of past experimentation in conduct, and there are cumulative verifications which give many principles a well-earned prestige." To lightly disregard them, he continues, is the "height of foolishness." Dewey adds, however, that social institutions do change, and it would likewise be foolish not to note how

¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 183-211. Rickover also criticizes Dewey for denying absolute values, but he does not emphasize or develop the point. Education and Freedom, p. 224.

²It should be pointed out, however, that Lynd has made the statement that he was skeptical whether a soul, a supernature, or a fixed natural law existed. He added, however, that he had "considerable respect for people who attach absolute reality to such beliefs. . . ." Whatever Lynd's real beliefs are, the underlying premise of his criticism of Dewey is unmistakable: a belief in absolutes is not only necessary but desirable. See "A Quack Quacks Back," Journal of Teacher Education, IX (June 1, 1958), 115.

old principles apply to new conditions and to "modify them so that they will be more effectual instruments in judging new cases." The choice, he continues, is not between throwing away all the rules developed over many centuries or "sticking obstinately by them." The intelligent approach rather is to "revise, adapt, expand, and alter them" so that they will more truly meet our needs today.¹

Objective knowledge, not absolute knowledge, is what relativistic philosophers are after. They believe it is impossible to have absolute certainty, but at the same time, they realize that "ultimate uncertainty," as Herbert Muller points out, "does not mean complete uncertainty," because "we can and do know plenty of objective truths without knowing the whole or final truth."² Isaiah Berlin emphasizes that "what we can never know cannot make us doubt or reject that which we do."³ A relativistic philosopher does not deny the possible truth of all unverified propositions, for, as Nagel and Cohen remark, "that which

¹John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1922), pp. 239-240.

²Herbert J. Muller, The Uses of the Past: Profiles of Former Societies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 42.

³Isaiah Berlin, "Determinism, Relativism, and Historical Judgments," Theories of History, ed. Patrick Gardiner (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960, p. 328.

is unverified today may be verified tomorrow."¹ He does not deny the possibility that one might gain truth by intuition, guessing, or by any number of other subjective ways. What he does claim, however, is that the best way to negotiate disagreements over values is not to appeal to principles which transcend our experiences but to evidence that is equally available to all.

While faith in absolutes, based on personal choice or temperament, tend to divide men, the scientific method of thinking appeals to the common rational nature of all men and tends to unite men. As Bertrand Russell emphasizes:

A habit of basing convictions upon evidence, and of giving to them only that degree of certainty which the evidence warrants, would, if it became general, cure most of the ills from which the world is suffering.²

Philosophers of a relativistic orientation are saying that the eternal truths generally espoused in Western society are, in the long run, not as immutable as one might think. The deadliest enemy of the eternal and absolute is history itself. The great changes in commonly held beliefs throughout history refute the finality to which many thinkers have always aspired.

Relativistic philosophers are saying that devotion

¹Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934), p. 401.

²Bertrand Russell, Why I Am Not a Christian (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), p. vi.

to fixed ends or absolutes divert attention from a critical examination of the consequences of any proposed action or commonly held belief. Those who believe, for instance, that they know how history is going to turn out can justify any ruthless degradation of the individual on the basis that it is one's duty to help promote what will inevitably happen. Thus, Hitler could quote F. L. Jahn and Richard Wagner, and Stalin, Karl Marx, to justify the necessity of the atrocities they imposed on mankind.

Not only does allegiance to the doctrine of fixed ends divert attention from an objective analysis of the consequences of an action, but it also diverts attention from a critical inspection of existing social conditions. Referring to liberalism, which he equates with a relativistic philosophy, Charles Frankel states what is perhaps the most basic idea of liberal, relativistic philosophers. "It [liberalism] came into the modern world to bring a new kind of authority to social institutions -- an authority that rests, not on the a priori arguments of a philosophy or on the ex cathedra statements of those who claim a special access to eternal truths, but on the tested capacity of these institutions to serve living human interests."¹ Frankel readily admits that a relativistic philosophy can weaken social authority. "It weakens the hold of

¹Charles Frankel, The Case for Modern Man (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 70.

institutions which do not serve the ideals of their members."¹ For the above reasons, then, it is better to have a philosophy of education based on a relativistic philosophy rather than one based on eternal truths.

According to Lynd, the educational implications of a relativistic philosophy such as Dewey's are as follows. If all knowledge is relative to the environmental context which is constantly changing, it is logical to discard most of the "ideas of the distant past." Emphasis upon solution of problems of immediate interest to a student is natural if man is viewed as a "monistic biological organism." If there are no ethical or aesthetic absolutes in human experience, it is a waste of time to study the "stately moral exhortations of Cicero and the poetic beauty of Vergil. . . ."² It is difficult to understand how such philosophical premises can lead logically to the conclusions Lynd makes. It is true that Dewey is primarily interested in the past not for its own sake but for the light it can throw upon present and future problems, but does it necessarily follow that such a belief demands that most of the "ideas of the distant past" be discarded. Dewey said:

I hope I yield to none in appreciation of the great American tradition, for tradition is something that is capable of being transmitted as an emotion and as an idea from generation to generation. We have a great

¹Ibid., p. 69.

²Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, p. 203.

and precious heritage from the past, but to be real, to be translated from an idea and an emotion, this tradition has to be embodied by active effort in the social relations which we as human beings bear to each other under present conditions. It is because the conditions of life change, that the problem of maintaining a democracy becomes new, and the burden that is put upon the school, upon the educational system is not that of stating merely the ideas of the men who made this country, their hopes and their intentions, but of teaching what¹ a democratic society means under existing conditions.

Why should the belief that a person is a "monistic biological organism" necessarily point to an emphasis upon solution of problems of immediate interest to a student? Is it not possible that an agnostic, or even an atheist, might believe in an education consisting of something more than simply catering to the immediate whims of a young person? And finally, why must one necessarily accept ethical or aesthetic absolutes in human experience in order to justify reading Cicero and Virgil? Is it not possible for one to deny ethical and aesthetic absolutes and still justify reading Virgil and Cicero purely on the basis that they are great literary artists whose writings can deepen one's perspective on life?

Actually, Lynd's opposition to progressive education, as influenced by Dewey, is an a priori opposition. He assumes that the practices of progressive education must be bad because they are based on what he considers to

¹John Dewey, Philosophy of Education (Ames, Iowa: Littlefield, Adams, and Co., 1958), p. 40. Originally published as Problems of Men.

be a faulty philosophy: Dewey's philosophy of instrumentalism.¹ Lynd claims that one cannot accept progressive educational practices unless he accepts Dewey's basic philosophical ideas.² According to Sidney Hook it is "nonsense" to believe that "a metaphysical or epistemological position has logical implications for educational theory and practice." As he points out, if educators had to agree on their theory of reality,

. . . our prospects of ever agreeing about educational matters would be remote, indeed. Nonetheless, there are many educational questions on which substantial agreement has been reached, for example, the importance of motivation, the use of visual aids in instruction, the integration of cognate subjects, by educators, who are at odds with each other in their metaphysics and epistemology.³

According to Hook, "No one ever derived a single item of new knowledge about learning either from epistemology or epistemology of education." What has been learned about learning has been gained "through scientific or empirical psychology without benefit of epistemology or metaphysics."⁴ If one wants to improve the teaching of

¹For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Sidney Hook, "Modern Education and Its Critics," American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Seventh Year-book (Chicago: The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1954), pp. 142-148.

²Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, p. 205.

³Sidney Hook, "The Scope of Philosophy of Education," Harvard Educational Review, XXVI (Spring, 1956), 145.

⁴Ibid., p. 148.

reading, for instance, what difference does it make whether an educator's concept of reality is spiritual, materialistic, or pragmatic? Regardless what concept of reality an educator may have, if he wants to determine the best methods of teaching reading, he will do so not on the basis of ontological considerations but rather on the basis of what empirical inquiry indicates is the best method.

Rickover's Analysis of John Dewey's
Educational Philosophy

Rickover says "I am careful to check my facts and know my subject before I speak or write; I do not comment on a book or article unless I have read it."¹ What Rickover claims to do and what he actually does are not always compatible, as is clearly indicated in his analysis of John Dewey's educational ideas.² To begin with, one might assume that if Dewey's ideas were to be analyzed in a scholarly manner -- that is, an objective search for truth -- direct reference would be made to the published ideas of Dewey. At no time does Rickover ever make a direct reference to any statement actually made by Dewey. He seldom even mentions a book written by Dewey.

According to Rickover, Dewey had a profound influence

¹Rickover, American Education: A National Failure, p. 27.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 136-139, 145, 153-154, 190-191, 229.

on both the methods of teaching and the content of curricula in the public schools. But then Rickover adds, progressive educational methods have not been widely applied in the school systems.¹ In what way can Rickover logically reconcile these two seemingly contradictory statements?

It is claimed by Rickover that Dewey wanted to adjust children to life as it is, rather than, presumably, to what it should be.² Nothing could be further from the truth. How can such a conclusion be reached when one considers the following statements of Dewey, statements which were representative of his general thought?

The most fundamental, primary thing in life is of course securing the mastery over the environment (that control of forces and things about us) which maintains and carries on life.³

Instead of accomodating ourselves to conditions, we modify conditions so that they will be accomodated to our wants and purposes. This process may be called adaptation.⁴

Adaptation, in fine, is quite as much adaptation of the environment to our own activities as of our activities to the environment. . . . The savage is habituated; the civilized man has habits which transform the environment.⁵

Dewey wanted the educative process to begin with a

¹Ibid., p. 137.

²Ibid., p. 229.

³John Dewey, "Lectures in the Philosophy of Education," School and Society, XCIV (March 19, 1966), 155-159.

⁴John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 16.

⁵John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916), pp. 56-57.

child's experiences. Rickover, therefore, reasons that Dewey was not interested in teaching subject matter to students.¹ Undoubtedly Dewey would not have taught subject matter in the same way as Rickover, but, as the following statements indicate, it is inaccurate to state that Dewey minimized the importance of subject matter.

Just as two points define a straight line, so the present standpoint of the child and the facts and truths of studies define instruction. It is continuous reconstruction, moving from the child's present experience out into that represented by the organized bodies of truth we call studies.²

In the largest sense the logical standpoint is itself psychological. . . . Hence the need of reinstating into experience the subject-matter of the studies, or branches of learning. It must be restored to the experience from which it has been abstracted. It needs to be psychologized; turned over, translated into the immediate and individual experiencing within which it has its origin and significance.³

When engaged in the direct act of teaching, the instructor needs to have subject matter at his fingers' ends; his attention should be upon the attitude and response of the pupil. . . . The teacher should be occupied not with subject matter in itself but in its interaction with pupils' present needs and capacities.⁴

The problem of teaching is to keep the experience of the student moving in the direction of what the expert already knows. Hence the need that the teacher know both subject matter and the characteristic needs and

¹Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 138-139.

²John Dewey, Child and Curriculum and School and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 22.

⁴Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 215.

capacities of the student.¹

Unless the science of education on its own ground and behalf emphasizes subject-matters which contain within themselves the promise and power of continuous growth in the direction of organization, it is false to its own position as scientific.²

Rickover implies Dewey condoned replacing solid liberal-arts subjects with "hundreds of vocational, recreational, personality, and etiquette courses. . . ." ³ What did Dewey really believe? Dewey said the educational system

. . . is more like a patchwork, and a patchwork whose pieces do not form a pattern. . . . In consequence, the new studies that have been introduced have split up the curriculum into unrelated parts and created congestion. There are too many studies and too many courses of study, and the result is confusion. [Studies should not be] brought in piecemeal, without a unified aim.⁴

It is also implied by Rickover that Dewey did not want a teacher to take a strong hand in guiding a student's learning experiences.⁵ On the contrary, Dewey said because of the teacher's greater experience, she has an obligation to direct, not in a dictatorial manner, but in a cooperative fashion, the learning activities of her students.⁶

¹Ibid., p. 216.

²Dewey, Philosophy of Education, p. 168.

³Rickover, Democracy and Education, p. 140.

⁴Dewey, Philosophy of Education, p. 88.

⁵Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 139.

⁶Joseph Ratner (ed.), The Philosophy of John Dewey (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1928), p. 398.

Developing the point further, Dewey said:

A question often asked is: If you begin with a child's ideas, impulses, and interests, all so crude, so random and scattering, so little refined or spiritualized, how is he going to get the necessary discipline, culture, and information? If there were no way open to us except to excite and indulge these impulses of the child, the question might well be asked. We should either have to ignore and repress the activities or else to humor them. But if we have organization of equipment and of materials, there is another path open to us. We can direct the child's activities, giving them exercise along certain lines, and thus lead up to the goal which logically stands at the end of the paths followed.¹

Rickover believes Dewey was interested only in a narrow, utilitarian education.² It is difficult to support such a charge. Referring to the value of Latin, Dewey said:

It is unsound to say that Latin has a value per se in the abstract But it is equally absurd to argue that unless a teacher or pupil can point out some definite assignable future use to which it is to be put, it lacks justifying value. When pupils are genuinely concerned in learning Latin, that is of itself proof that it possesses value. The most which one is entitled to ask in such cases is whether in view of the shortness of time, there are not other things of intrinsic value which in addition have greater instrumental value.³

Nor does the following statement support Rickover's contention that Dewey was more interested in a narrow, vocational education than in a broad, liberal education.

¹Dewey, Child and Curriculum and School and Society, p. 37.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, pp. 139-140.

³Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 284.

Instead of seeking an education that would make all who go to school aware of the scientific basis of industrial processes, they [the critics of vocational education] would draw the lines still more sharply between those who receive a vocational training, deliberately kept illiberal, and the much smaller number who enjoy a liberal education -- after the Greek literary model. A truly liberal, and liberating, education would refuse today to isolate vocational training on any of its levels from a continuous education in the social, moral, and scientific contexts within which wisely administered callings and professions must function.¹

Rickover apparently assumes if one were to follow Dewey's ideas, it would be difficult if not impossible for a student to gain any type of intellectual discipline because education would always be "stuck" in the "concrete."² Rickover would perhaps say that having children make precipitated chalk is a very anti-intellectual activity. If this is all they did, no doubt he would be right. But such an activity could lead to the development of intellectual discipline, that is, if one planned the activity as Dewey once did with a group of primary school students. The following statement shows how Dewey got education out of the "concrete."

. . . I should like to show how, beginning with very simple material things, the children are led on to larger fields of investigation and to the intellectual discipline that is the accompaniment of such research. I will simply refer to the experiment in which the work began. It consisted in making precipitated chalk, used for polishing metals. The children, with simple apparatus -- a tumbler, lime water, and a glass tube --

¹Dewey, Philosophy of Education, p. 146.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 137.

precipitated the calcium carbonate out of the water; and from this beginning went on to a study of the processes by which rocks of various sorts, igneous, sedimentary, etc., had been formed on the surface of the earth and the places they occupy; then to points in the geography of the United States, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico; to the effects of these various bodies of rock, in their various configurations, upon the human occupations; so that this geological record finally rounded itself out into the life of man at the present time. The children saw and felt the connection between these geologic processes, taking place ages and ages ago, and the physical conditions determining the industrial occupations of today.¹

It is difficult to comprehend how such a method of teaching would stunt a student's intellectual growth. No doubt such a method requires an extremely intelligent teacher who not only understands child behavior but has a great grasp of many subjects. Although Rickover does not seem to realize it, this is the type of education he claims educators grasped at as an "easy" way out of their educational problems.²

According to Rickover, Dewey had a "hatred" for discipline; he did not want to develop self-discipline in students.³ On the contrary, to develop self-discipline was one of Dewey's most important educational goals. That he perhaps did not develop it in the same way as Rickover is not to be denied; to say, however, that Dewey was not

¹Dewey, Child and Curriculum and School and Society, pp. 58-59.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 136.

³Ibid., p. 138.

interested in developing self-discipline is a gross distortion of his educational ideas. A typical statement by Dewey on the subject is as follows:

A person who is trained to consider his actions, to undertake them deliberately, is in so far forth disciplined. Add to this ability a power to endure in an intelligently chosen course in face of distraction, confusion, and difficulty, and you have the essence of discipline. Discipline means power at command, mastery of the resources available for carrying through the action undertaken. To know what one is to do and to move to do it promptly and by use of the requisite means is to be disciplined. . . .¹

In view of several of Dewey's statements cited above, it is difficult to accept Rickover's contention that progressive education, as visualized by Dewey, has already been tried in the public schools, has failed, and therefore should be discarded.² As previously indicated, one could contend with some reason that progressive education, as understood by Dewey, has yet to be tried extensively in the public schools.

One would assume that any person wishing to criticize the ideas of another should himself first be thoroughly conversant with the ideas of the person he plans to criticize. As indicated previously, Rickover expresses the same idea; nevertheless, one is compelled to speculate whether he has ever read anything actually written by John Dewey.

¹Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 151.

²Rickover, Education and Freedom, p. 145.

Preservation of the American Cultural Heritage

Lynd wants the school to preserve the wisdom embodied in our cultural heritage.¹ Few people would deny this is an important function of the school. To have the school fulfill such a function, however, is not quite as easy a task as Lynd might assume. Exactly what cultural heritage should the school preserve? What way of life should the school hold up to the student as a shining model to emulate? What wisdom should be preserved from the past? Such questions are not so easy to answer. Lynd, as many conservatives who want to preserve our cultural heritage, seems to think that America has only one clearly defined cultural heritage. Do all the ideas of our impressive cultural heritage which we are asked to preserve and transmit have the same degree of validity they once had? Are we to preserve the idea that all men have the same kind of rationality and therefore require the same kind of education? The critics would probably say, "of course," but it is difficult to support such an idea in the light of modern knowledge of individual differences. Are we to preserve our cultural heritage of economic injustice, political inequality, religious intolerance, human slavery, and the subjugation of women? Are we to preserve our cultural heritage of seldom questioning any of our cherished

¹Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools, pp. 62, 69-70.

institutions such as so-called "free enterprise?" Are we to preserve our cultural heritage of imperialism? Are we to preserve our cultural heritage of isolationism? Just exactly what traditional wisdom does Lynd want the school to preserve? It would seem, as Kenneth Hansen points out, that America has "a series of inherited culture patterns some of which may be valuable, some worthless, and some overtly harmful."¹

To claim the schools should preserve the cultural heritage without explaining precisely what cultural heritage is intended, contributes very little toward clarifying educational problems. It is easy to say that the school should do this or do that. It is easy to talk about the functions of education in broad generalities. It is difficult, however, to define exactly what is meant by a general function of education. It is even more difficult to indicate precisely the means to be used to accomplish generally agreed-upon goals of education. In this respect educators can expect little help from any of the critics.

Techniques and Methods of Education

If education courses were concerned only or primarily with the techniques of teaching, many of the critics' criticisms of education courses would be more than justified.

¹Kenneth H. Hansen, Philosophy for American Education (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 118-119.

Most techniques of teaching can be learned on the job, such as how to introduce a particular unit of history, how to make tests, how to prepare for a field trip, and so on. Granted, perhaps some education courses over emphasize techniques of teaching; and when they do, they should be roundly criticized. The critics, however, tend to equate techniques of education with methods of education. There is a distinction between techniques of teaching and methods of teaching. Methods, according to Lieberman, are "generalized procedures for accomplishing certain results."¹ Techniques are those ways of putting methods into operation.

One of the most important teaching methods today is developing the student's interest in the subject matter to be learned.² Knowing how to arouse student interest in an academic subject is a question of method which requires not only that the teacher know his subject but that he have some knowledge of sociology, anthropology, and child psychology. Such disciplines will help the teacher develop the best methods of arousing the interest of her particular group of students in the subject matter to be learned. This is no easy task. The method used for brilliant students in Scarsdale would not necessarily be the same method

¹This section draws heavily upon Myron Lieberman's book, Education as a Profession, pp. 199-205.

²Gordon Allport believes interest is the most important law of learning. Pattern and Growth in Personality (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p. 107.

used for underprivileged negro students in Harlem. A solid background in the social and behavioral sciences will enable a teacher to develop flexible methods of arousing interest regardless where she teaches and whom she teaches.

Education professors consider methods and techniques to be just as much subject matter for prospective teachers as history or science. As Lieberman points out:

. . . The difference is not that the prospective teacher learns subject matter in "subject-matter courses" and not in education courses, but that he learns different kinds of subject matter in these courses. In "subject-matter courses" the teacher learns subject matter which he will teach to his students later on. In other courses, the teacher learns subject matter which will help him carry out his professional responsibilities. A course in educational psychology or anthropology or philosophy has subject matter, even if what is learned in such courses is not taught to students later on. Of course, a teacher might learn both kinds of subject matter in the same course.¹

The critics overlook this fact. Hardly any educator would deny that a teacher should know the subject matter he is going to teach. What they do claim is that poor teaching is more often the result of a teacher's inability to understand the needs, interests, and abilities of his students than it is a lack of knowledge of his teaching field. Without an understanding of a student's needs, interests, and abilities, it is difficult to "interest and motivate students, assign educational tasks of the proper degree

¹Lieberman, Education as a Profession, pp. 201-202.

of difficulty, evaluate pupil progress, counsel students properly, and so on."¹

Too often academic professors, whenever they do separate technique from method, tend to consider method only in respect to one specific type of subject matter, such as zoology or chemistry. It seldom occurs to such people that methods in the public schools, especially in the lower grades, are "chosen with reference to many complex factors of social control which need be of little or no professional concern to the professor." Lieberman illustrates this point in the following way:

Suppose in a science class in the lower grades students must share school equipment and work together on a class project. Suppose further that the students refuse to share equipment or to cooperate with one member of the class solely because of the latter's race or religion. In this situation, the teacher cannot decide what to do solely on the basis of which decision will be most conducive to science learning. Other valid and equally important outcomes of learning must be taken into account.²

The point is that methods at the elementary level, and also the high school level, demand a much more comprehensive approach than methods at the college level. It is possible that a teacher of differential equations might be just as concerned over prejudice as an elementary teacher. But, as Lieberman indicates, it is highly unlikely that a college professor will have to grapple with such a problem in order

¹Ibid., p. 199.

²Ibid., pp. 204-205.

effectively to teach differential equations to prospective engineers.¹

Professors of education do not emphasize only methods of teaching, however.² No one denies that political scientists, for instance, should take work in the history of political institutions, in present political philosophies as well as in the classics of political science. For the same reason, the education professor feels justified in requiring prospective teachers to be well-versed in the most important educational classics, the history of education as a social institution, and modern philosophies of education. If education courses dealing with such matters are not intellectually sound and challenging, something, of course, surely needs to be done. There seem to be two alternatives. One alternative is to eliminate all but "one or two" education courses, an alternative supported by the critics. The other alternative is to eliminate those education courses which have little intellectual content and to upgrade the quality of those courses that all prospective

¹Ibid., p. 205.

²According to Lindley Stiles and others, "Only a minor part of the time spent in courses in education has to do with methods of education, for these courses deal also with the basic philosophy of education, the school and society, the history of education, measurement and evaluation, child growth and psychology, learning, guidance, co-curricular activities, school organization and control, support and financing of education in the U.S. . . ." Teacher Education in the United States (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1960), p. 26.

teachers should have: child psychology, methods of teaching, history of education, philosophy of education, learning theories. If a study of education is important, the latter alternative seems preferable.

Robert Hutchins once made the statement that "all there is to teaching can be learned through a good education and being a teacher."¹ This belief seems to be shared by the critics. Such a belief minimizes the complex skills needed to be an effective teacher.²

¹Robert Maynard Hutchins, The Higher Learning in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 56.

²Contrary to the beliefs of the critics, pedagogical training is now being advocated by many "academic" scholars for all prospective college professors. If pedagogical training is important for college professors, surely it is extremely important for public school teachers. See Lieberman, Education as a Profession, p. 210.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Arthur Bestor, H. G. Rickover, and Albert Lynd are three contemporary conservative critics of American Education who oppose the basic direction public school education has taken the past few decades. They vigorously attack the goals and methods of progressive education, as well as the intelligence and motives of many progressive educators. Their criticisms helped arouse a rather lethargic public to re-evaluate its public school system. Their ideas on education, consequently, merit comprehensive critical examination. Therefore, in this study an attempt was made to summarize in detail their basic educational ideas; to indicate the areas of agreement and disagreement among the three critics; and to assess critically the validity of their more pertinent criticisms and the adequacy of their major proposals for educational reform.

On the following major points, the critics are in basic agreement. American education has deteriorated because the aims and content of education are determined by an educational bureaucracy whose cultural isolation from

the learned world ill fits its members for such a role. Being divorced from the wise guidance of scholars and scientists, the leaders of the educational bureaucracy, the college of education professors, lack the intellectual sophistication to recognize and promote genuine education in the traditional academic subjects. In an attempt to meet the felt needs and interests of children, they have permitted, if not actively fought for, the disintegration of the intellectual studies. By ignoring or de-emphasizing the importance of the past, lowering standards, making education merely fun rather than challenging, educationists are depriving students of the intellectual heritage which should be rightfully theirs.

The critics argue that the educational bureaucracy is supported by certification laws which require all prospective teachers to take repetitious, inane courses in education. As a result, teaching candidates have no time to obtain a "genuine" education in the arts and sciences. These laws merely perpetuate the power of the bureaucracy and have little to do with the welfare of the schools. If it were not for these certification requirements, it is unlikely that bright students with intellectual interests would enroll in a course taught by a pedagogue who is so poorly educated he confuses a study on utilization of toilet fixtures with a contribution to knowledge; so anti-intellectual he considers janitorial problems to be of

equal value with studies in the psychology of learning; so arrogant he assumes only he -- not parents, not scholars, not scientists -- is qualified to determine the purposes of education; so sensitive anyone who criticizes his educational policies is immediately branded an enemy of the public school; so deluded he thinks the school should take over the responsibilities of the home and church. How can such a person be trusted to reform the school system? The answer is obvious; he cannot be. Therefore, before it is too late, members of the "learned world" must rescue public school education from the clutches of the educationists. The great responsibility of the learned world is to restore to education its traditional role: to provide a sound education in the liberal arts for all students to the limit of their capacities.

Bestor and Rickover agree also on the following additional major points. Even though students may differ in intellectual abilities, they learn the same way. They differ only in the amount they can learn and the speed with which they can learn. The content of subjects, therefore, should be the same for all normal students. Eventually some students will not be able to keep up the pace as courses become more complex and abstract. They must drop out of the academic program and either get a job or enroll in a vocational school. It must be realized that not all students are capable of profiting from advanced academic

education. Beyond the compulsory school age, advanced education is not a right but a privilege and should be awarded only to those students who have earned it. This selective process should be based primarily upon the results of comprehensive standardized examinations. Such examinations should become an integral part of the educational system at all levels. This selective process will help restore high standards to American education.

In addition, Bestor and Rickover emphasize that education should become more of a national concern, that education in a world of crisis is too important to be left to the idiosyncrasies of the local community. Furthermore, state governments and the federal government should provide more funds to school systems but only for "genuine" education in the intellectual disciplines.¹

The major differences among the critics are as follows:

1. All three agree the curriculum should consist of traditional academic subjects, but Bestor and Rickover justify the curriculum on the basis of mental training; whereas Lynd claims the traditional subjects have intrinsic merit, not as potential vehicles for mental training, but for the wisdom inherent in the subjects.

2. According to Bestor the primary purpose of

¹Lynd also advocates increased federal aid for public school education, but he makes no provision as to the allocation of funds.

education is to teach a person to think critically. Rickover apparently concurs, although he provides no enlightenment on how it is to be done. Lynd, however, states the most important ends of education are related essentially to the 3 R's.

3. While Bestor occasionally invokes John Dewey in support of his own positions, Lynd indirectly blames Dewey for most of the problems of modern education, and Rickover directly labels Dewey as the person responsible for practically everything pernicious in present-day education.

4. Lynd apparently assumes a sound education should be based on transcendent natural law and immutable moral principles. Rickover does not emphasize the point, but it is possible he might agree with Lynd. Although Bestor does mention self-evident principles once, it is highly unlikely he would agree with Lynd.

5. While Lynd questions the value of educational psychology, Rickover seems certain it is of no value. Bestor, however, concedes that educational psychologists have made some important contributions to the education of children.

6. Whereas Lynd implies the local community should have control over the curriculum, Bestor and Rickover claim education is a national concern and is too important to be left to the whims of the local community.

7. Bestor strongly supports the comprehensive school organizational structure, and it may be assumed Lynd is not opposed to this organizational pattern. Rickover's major point, however, is that separate schooling should commence after the sixth or seventh grade.

8. Rickover tends to emphasize science education at the expense of the humanities. Bestor seems to maintain an equilibrium between the sciences and the humanities.¹

9. What a student does with his education once he has finished his formal education is of little interest to Rickover; nor does he recognize any correlation between the kind of political system a country has and the kind of educational system it has. It is highly unlikely Bestor would support Rickover on these two points.

10. The importance of non-intellectual factors in the education of a child is de-emphasized but not ignored by Bestor. Rickover seems to think such factors are of no importance.

11. Rickover seems to be exclusively concerned with the education of the intellectually-talented child. Bestor is vitally interested in the talented child's education, but, by his standards, he does not ignore the education of the average and below-average child.

¹Lynd's position on this and the remaining points is either not stated, not adequately developed, or is not clear.

Conclusions

Bestor, Rickover, and Lynd often overstate their arguments, make dogmatic statements difficult to substantiate, and misuse statistics. Nevertheless, they have drawn public attention to some serious weaknesses of education and have made a few -- although not original -- constructive proposals for reform. The major weaknesses of education pointed out by one or more of the critics are as follows. The importance of sequentially-developed intellectual studies has been minimized; students, especially talented ones, are not really challenged intellectually; educational research too often is concerned with rather trivial problems; certification requirements do not insure a prospective teacher knows his subject matter adequately; too many administrators are not intellectual leaders; some educators have a tendency to brand indiscriminately all critics of education as enemies; too many educators assume there is little to learn from foreign educational systems; vocational training which teaches the tricks of the trade is a poor substitute for liberal education; the value of mental discipline has been minimized if not completely ignored; administrators exert too much control over teachers; and lack of state or national standards has contributed to educational mediocrity.

The more constructive proposals for educational reform advocated by one or more of the critics are as

follows. Teachers' salaries should be raised. Education is too important to be left to the whims of the local community but rather should receive the cooperative attention of local, state, and federal governments. National and state examinations should be established for students and teachers to help raise academic standards. Teacher education should be the responsibility of the entire university, not just the college of education. The organizational structure of the school system must be reorganized to enable all students to proceed as rapidly as their abilities will permit. The teacher should be recognized as the most important person in the educational hierarchy. Teachers should have a closer association with their colleagues on university faculties. All prospective teachers should have a thorough academic background. Students must pursue a discipline long enough to grasp its structure and inner logic.

The value of several points developed by the critics may be questioned, however. One or more of the critics claim that educators used devious means to obtain great power and to perpetuate their power; the "interlocking directorate" usurped control of teacher certification from the "learned world"; educators are primarily responsible for the rampant anti-intellectualism in American society; educators foisted their concepts of education on an unsuspecting public; everything bad about education can be

traced to faulty progressive educational theories and practices; educators do not want to cooperate with the "learned world." There may be an element of truth in any one of these charges, but such blanket indictments are difficult to substantiate. What evidence there is seems to indicate the charges are not basically true. Other questionable points developed by the critics are as follows.

Rickover advocates that at the age of eleven students, selected on the basis of proven intellectual ability, should go to separate schools. Rickover is either unaware or will not admit that segregated schools tend to develop a class prejudice, thus breeding petty provincialism and distrust of people who are different. There is a great need today for schools to make a contribution toward mitigating social frictions. The comprehensive school can achieve this goal much better than separate schools.

Bestor and Rickover have an ivory tower concept of the school and of learning. They separate the school from society, and the brain from the rest of the body. They seem unaware that learning is a social and emotional process, not just exclusively an intellectual process. Furthermore, they seem to think students can learn to think only if they are exposed to the traditional academic subjects. On the contrary, what evidence there is indicates no subject is markedly superior to any other as a means of strengthening mental powers. Nor can Rickover's and Lynd's

implication that knowledge by itself will automatically teach a person how to think be substantiated. Knowledge alone will not necessarily produce good thinking. Learning how to think is a process that must be consciously taught.

The critics are justified in criticizing educators who have carried the "needs-interest" concept too far, but the desirability of a concept should not be evaluated by its application by a few educators who are on the fringe of commonly accepted educational thought and practice.

Bestor correctly urges that the structure of a discipline be taught, but he minimizes the difficulty of doing so. To determine the structure of a discipline and how best to present what principles at various academic levels is most difficult and will undoubtedly require "tampering with the curriculum," the very thing to which Bestor seems to be opposed.

The development of the intellect is overly stressed by Rickover and Bestor. Furthermore, they have little sympathy for those who lack intellectual ability. No doubt one should respect the intellect, and Bestor and Rickover deserve credit for re-emphasizing its importance. Such respect, however, should always be a subordinate good because there is no assurance that an aristocracy of intellect would be any more virtuous or humane than an aristocracy of high-grade morons.

Bestor and Rickover assume once American education has clear-cut goals, most educational problems will vanish. The problem, however, is not primarily one of getting everybody to agree upon an educational purpose, but rather of finding the means of permitting school teachers to achieve the goals accepted by most people. If teachers are to have the autonomy to teach what should be taught in a professional manner, the source of their moral and intellectual authority must not be the local community but rather the teaching profession. Although Bestor and Rickover claim to have great faith in public school teachers, their proposals belie this faith. They remove the control of administrators and college of education professors over teachers, and replace it with laymen and the so-called "learned world." Permitting laymen to have a voice in professional educational matters only weakens the power of the teaching profession, and a weak teaching profession cannot accomplish the goals set for it by society.

Vocational education which emphasizes only "tricks of the trade" is not liberal education, Rickover and Bestor correctly point out. Industry, no doubt, can provide this type of training as easily as the schools. But vocational education, with good reason, seems to be a fixture in American education. Two approaches are available. Vocational education can continue to teach the "tricks of the trade" and be isolated from the concepts inherent in a liberal education, as advocated by Bestor and Rickover.

Or it can be humanized, as advocated by John Dewey and his followers. The latter approach seems infinitely more preferable than the former.

The critics claim educators have no real supporting evidence for their various educational theories and practices. The truth seems to be, however, that on most controversial issues educators have more evidence in support of their positions than do the critics for theirs.

Lynd, Rickover, and Bestor are infuriated by the closed-mind dogmatism and belligerent reactions of some educators to their "constructive" criticisms. Yet, paradoxically, anybody who disagrees with the critics is either ignorant, undemocratic, or an anti-intellectual. Intellectual humility is not one of the more dominant traits of the critics.

The critics claim they want closer cooperation between educators and the "learned world." Cooperation, however, is not engendered by their method of indiscriminately questioning the intelligence and motives of professional educators. Educators can and have cooperated with their university colleagues in other departments, but they have done so as equals, not as unsophisticated shifty conspirators whose sole intent is to degrade the public school system.

Lynd's opposition to progressive education, as influenced by John Dewey, is an a priori opposition. He

assumes the practices of progressive education must be bad because they are based on what he considers to be a faulty philosophy: Dewey's philosophy of instrumentalism. Lynd claims a person cannot accept progressive educational practices unless he accepts Dewey's basic philosophical ideas. Such a conclusion cannot be supported logically. If an educator wants to determine the best methods of teaching reading, for instance, he will do so not on the basis of his ontological beliefs but rather on the basis of what empirical inquiry indicates to be the best method.

In Rickover's judgment, Dewey was responsible for virtually everything harmful in contemporary education. Such a naive explanation indicates how unaware Rickover is of the myriad powerful cultural forces responsible for shaping the American educational system. Furthermore, although many prominent educators disagree with Dewey's basic educational position, learned critics as Robert Ulich and Jacques Maritain do know what Dewey's position was. Rickover's analysis of Dewey's educational ideas is so vague, contradictory, and inaccurate that one is forced to conjecture whether he has ever read anything written by Dewey.

The cultural heritage should be preserved, Lynd indicates, but he fails to indicate what cultural heritage he would preserve; nor does he specify what means he would use to accomplish this objective. To talk about functions of education in broad generalities is simple, but to define

exactly what one means by a general function of education is rather difficult. It is even more difficult to indicate precisely the means to be used to accomplish generally agreed-upon goals of education. In this respect, educators can expect little help from Lynd -- or from Bestor or Rickover.

The critics make no distinction between techniques of teaching and methods of teaching. Nor do they realize that methods and techniques are just as much subject matter and as necessary for a prospective teacher as history or science. In short, the critics minimize the complex skills needed for a person to become an effective teacher.

A dropout, Rickover and Bestor imply, is generally the result of a failure in communication. But perhaps the social message has been communicated clearly, but is not accepted by many students. Perhaps these students suspect the educational system is primarily concerned with indoctrinating them to accept American society as it now exists, with all of its social and economic injustices. Whatever the truth may be, there is no assurance that students will ever question the "conventional wisdom" as long as they are taught only history, science, mathematics, English, and foreign languages. Perhaps something more is needed than the traditional academic curriculum if we are to understand not only ourselves but people throughout the world. A totally new orientation may be necessary. Perhaps

a study of social psychology, anthropology, economics, and philosophy is just as important as the study of English, mathematics, and physics. The critics' bold solution to the problems of the twentieth century is basically to return to the educational methods of the nineteenth century. Such a solution is more one of timidity than of foresight.

To their credit the critics have helped shock the American public out of its complacency toward the public school system. They have forced many educators to re-examine their own ideas and to make them more explicit and lucid to the public. The critics have helped to turn a national spotlight on educational problems. They have, however, often misled the public. Whether they have accomplished more good than harm is debatable.

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