CRITIQUES OF EDUCATION AND RESPONSES FROM EDUCATORS AT MID-CENTURY

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MICHAEL ALAN CLARK

1977


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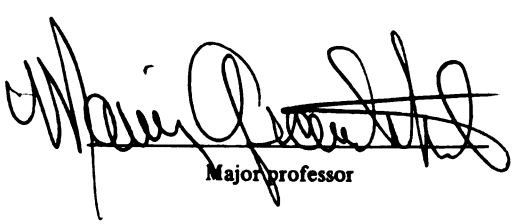

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ABSTRACT

CRITIQUES OF EDUCATION AND RESPONSES
FROM EDUCATORS AT MID-CENTURY

By

Michael Alan Clark

This study was intended to investigate the origin, content, responses to and fate of critical views of American public schools during the years from 1950 to 1964.

This was an era of intense pressure on education to move "back to the basics" or to demand high levels of student achievement, and much of it was found to derive from analyses by "neo-classicist" or liberal educators like Whitehead, Van Doren and Barzun. Once these critics from outside the professionalized education institution provided the basic framework, popular writers such as Bestor, Keats and Flesch were discovered as being the people destined to bring the issues to the public and to make them points of major concern. Educators were seen as largely attempting to respond to their attackers by citing the "progressive" thinkers who had dominated their own preparation, by claiming to need more time and money to research the problem, by developing various efficiency programs, or by producing rather nasty ad hominem counter-attacks.

As these efforts seemed about to succeed, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I which was interpreted as a confrontation of United States technological superiority. This in turn caused the American public to doubt seriously the quality of the public schools and to demand better prepared technicians and scientists. Two leading spokesmen of this position were found in Rickover and Conant, who often appeared to draw upon certain tenets of liberal educational thought to guide their critiques. Rickover was discovered to advocate the "Europeanization" of American schools, but Conant was seen to desire the complete realization of what he perceived to be the public school system's outstanding achievement--the "comprehensive high school." Educators were found to criticize these arguments for being based on "faculty psychology," for exploiting students, for being undemocratic, and for distorting various data. Such things notwithstanding, certain changes were discovered to have occurred at this time within the educational institution: National Defense Education Act passage and implementation; additional efficiency efforts; decreases in numbers of teachers' colleges and normal schools; raised standards for teacher certification; expansion of efforts by NCATE; and expansion of Master of Arts in Teaching programs.

It was discovered that teacher preparation and organization had developed into a major point of discussion

with studies by Koerner, Conant and Lieberman representing the main criticisms. Koerner evidently viewed education's problems as coming from its domination by generally incompetent and poorly trained "Educationists," and he claimed that the answer lay in breaking this domination and requiring liberally prepared teachers. Conant was found to agree essentially with Koerner's views but to see the solution in better financing of schools and instructors and in allowing colleges to experiment with teacher training. Lieberman was discovered to view education's problems as resulting from a lack of truly professional organization of teachers and to have outlined a plan for achieving professional stature for all educators.

This confrontation seemed to have dissipated rapidly in the 1960s as most of the concerned parties shifted their attention to the question of "cultural deprivation" and "compensatory education."

The rapid eclipse of older issues appeared consistent with the effect upon education of these critiques. Indeed relatively little substantive change was seen to have taken place in either the public schools or teacher training programs. This was believed to have resulted from the critics' collective insensitivity to the essentially social nature of every aspect of education.

CRITIQUES OF EDUCATION AND RESPONSES FROM EDUCATORS AT MID-CENTURY

By

Michael Alan Clark

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education and Curriculum

1977

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1977

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Surely the least important person to any doctoral dissertation is the person who actually does the writing, for so many other people make contributions to it that the final product is essentially derivative. Unfortunately, neither time nor space allow for all of them to be properly and formally thanked here.

Of particular importance to this effort have been those people who encouraged and assisted me in its being written. Primarily these have been my committee members, Dr. Marvin Grandstaff who served as chairman and made the entire process as painless as possible; Dr. Keith Anderson who helped define my program and its goals; and Dr. Samuel Moore II who read, criticized and ultimately shaped this document. Dr. William Ewens is responsible for helping me interject sociological thinking and conclusions into this effort, and I am particularly grateful for the time we have spent talking through all these things.

In addition there is a group of people who have simply served as intellectual idols to be emulated in some small way; their influence has been out of proportion to the seemingly too little time spent on their classes

and books. Chief among these have been Dr. George Barnett, Dr. George Ferree and Dr. James McKee.

Finally, there is a collection of family and friends whose moral and financial support have made the entire thing possible. For lack of a better way, I shall simply say that I truly appreciate each of them: my parents, Jean and Vincent Clark; my parents-in-law, Ruth and Bower Sageser; the David L. Clark family; Julie and Larry Ellis; the John S. Malatinsky family; and the John W. Malatinsky family. But even with all these others helping, I still would not have accomplished anything without the love, patience and input of my wife Sandra; it is to her that this dissertation finally must be dedicated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGY

MAJOR EDUCATIONAL EVENTS	DATES *	MAJOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EVENTS
	Sept. 23, 1949	U.S. announcement of first Russian A-bomb
	Jan. 31, 1950	Truman ordered H-bomb developed
	Feb. 9, 1950	"McCarthyism" initiated by Sen. Joe McCarthy's speech claiming 209 Communists in State Department
National Science Foundation Act passed; promoted science teaching	April 28, 1950	
	June 29, 1950	Truman ordered ground troops to Korea
	Oct. 27, 1950	Chinese invasion of Korea
	Nov. 7, 1950	U.S. decided against nuclear arms in Korea
NCATE was created	1952	
	May 26, 1952	Abolition of German High Commission; Conant Ambassador rather than Commissioner
	Nov. 4, 1952	Eisenhower-Nixon ticket elected
	Nov. 16, 1962	First U.S. H-bomb exploded
Department of Health, Education and Welfare created	April 1, 1953	
	July 27, 1953	Korean Armistice
	Aug. 20, 1953	U.S.S.R. H-bomb announced
Bestor's Educational Wastelands	Nov. 1953	
NCATE took over accreditation visits from AACTE teams	1954	
	April 22 to June 17, 1954	"Army-McCarthy" hearings
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka ended "separate but equal" doctrine	May 17, 1954	
Second Brown v. Board decision called for integration with "all deliberate speed"	May 31, 1954	
Smith's Diminished Mind	Oct. 1954	
	Oct. 1, 1954	First nuclear powered vessel, U.S.S. Nautilus, commissioned
	Dec. 2, 1954	McCarthy condemned by Senate for "contempt"; career ended
Flesch's Why Johnny Can't Read	March, 1955	
Bestor's Restoration of Learning	Sept. 1955	
	Dec. 5, 1955	AFL-CIO merger consummated
	Jan. 11, 1956	Dulles' "brink of war" statement indicated depths of Cold War
	Nov. 6, 1956	Eisenhower-Nixon ticket re-elected
	Jan. 30, 1957	McClellan Senate committee began investigation of labor unrest
Conant completed tour as Ambassador; started American High School Today study on March 1	Feb. 19, 1957	
	Sept. 9, 1957	U.S. Civil Rights Commission set up
U.S. Army forced Little Rock Central High School to be integrated	Sept. 24, 1957	
	Oct. 4, 1957	Sputnik I orbited; showed ICBM perfection by U.S.S.R.; "missile gap" threatened
	Jan. 31, 1958	First U.S. satellite orbited
	April 1958	7.5% unemployment at depth of worst post-World War II recession
Keats' Schools Without Scholars	April 1958	

MAJOR EDUCATIONAL EVENTS	DATES	MAJOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EVENTS
National Defense Education Act passed	Sept. 2, 1958	
Van Doren's Liberal Education reissued	Early 1959	
Rickover's Education and Freedom	Feb. 1959	
Conant's American High School Today	Feb. 1959	
	Feb. 16, 1959	Castro became premier of Cuba
Barzun's House of Intellect	April 1959	
	July 25, 1959	Nixon engaged Khrushchev in "kitchen debate" while visiting Soviet Union
Rickover testimony on education to House Appropriations Committee	Aug. 18, 1959	
Lieberman's Future of Public Education	Feb. 1960	
	Sept. 26, 1960	First Kennedy-Nixon debate made "missile gap" major campaign issue
Conant's Child, Parent, and State	Nov. 1960	
	Nov. 8, 1960	Kennedy-Johnson ticket elected
	April 12, 1961	U.S.S.R. orbited first manned satellite
	Aug. 13, 1961	Berlin Wall started; U.S. reserve troops mobilized
Conant's Slums and Suburbs	Oct. 1961	
Rickover's Swiss Schools and Ours	March 1962	
3000 U.S. troops enrolled James Meredith at Ole Miss	Sept. 30, 1962	
	Oct. 14 to Oct. 28, 1962	Cuban missile crisis
	Oct. 20, 1962	First U.S. manned satellite
Koerner's Miseducation of American Teachers	May 1963	
Alabama National Guard federalized so Gov. Wallace cannot block Black enrollment at University of Alabama	June 11, 1963	
	Aug. 5, 1963	U.S., U.S.S.R. and Great Britain signed nuclear test ban treaty
	Aug. 28, 1963	Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech
Conant's Education of American Teachers	Sept. 1963	
Rickover's American Education--A National Failure	Nov. 1963	
	Nov. 22, 1963	Kennedy assassinated; Johnson became president
	Nov. 27, 1963	Johnson pledged "all out" effort to pass Kennedy civil rights program
	May 13, 1964	First anti-ROTC protest reported at Syracuse University
Closing schools to avoid desegregation declared unconstitutional	May 25, 1964	
Civil Rights Act allowed Attorney General to sue to force school integration	July 2, 1964	
	Oct. 3, 1964	End of first "Free Speech" protest at Cal-Berkeley
Conant's Shaping Educational Policy	Nov. 1964	
Elementary and Secondary School Education Act passed; "Head Start" concept accorded Federal recognition	April 11, 1965	

*Dates of events other than book publications were found in Cole's Handbook of American History or The New York Times Index. Dates attached to books were determined by consulting the Book Review Digest and taking the month of The New York Times review of the book or of the most numerous entries.

PREFACE

> When we were boys, boys had to do a little work in school. They were not coaxed; they were hammered. Spelling, writing, and arithmetic were not electives, and you had to learn.
>
> In these more fortunate times, elementary education has become in many places a sort of vaudeville show. The child must be kept amused and learns what he pleases. Many teachers scorn the old-fashioned rudiments; and it seems to be regarded as a misfortune to read and spell by the old methods. As a result of all the improvements, there is a race of gifted pupils more or less ignorant of the once-prized elements of an ordinary education (quoted in Butterworth, 1958).

That was how the New York Sun editors viewed the public schools in 1902. This statement presented the essential elements of what was later called a "subject-centered" approach to education, and surely it appeared in reaction to some sort of "child-centered" reforms having been incorporated in the schools.

Essentially the same thing has happened in recent years. For somewhat more than a decade "child-centered" topics have dominated educational thought; and such ideas as "compensatory education," "Project Head Start," "relevant curricula," "open classrooms" and "students' rights" have developed and grown. However, critics of these ideas have sprung up as well.

To them these forces have resulted in making the United States an "incompetent society" (Science News,

1975). A twenty-year decline in achievement test scores supposedly proves this, and more subjective measures support it also. These points notwithstanding, pupils' average grades have continued to rise, and this logically could result only from a lowering of standards or a decreased emphasis on essential subjects. Critics find evidence of both, but in either case they blame one change:

> Some rather dramatic changes in philosophy occured [sic] in the Sixties. Very rich and varied curricula were developed so that students could choose from any number of exciting courses. But in setting up this smorgasbord, they forgot to emphasize the basics (Dr. Jane Featherstone, director of the Comprehensive English Program, Michigan State University, cited in Braverman, 1976: 9).

In other words, the basics have attracted less attention from both pupils and educators, so naturally performance has suffered. This formulation implies the need for such reforms as these: drastic curtailment or total elimination of elective programs; devoting any additional time realized to basic courses; establishment of tough, specific performance standards for graduation; creation of similar requirements for every grade and level of instruction; reassertion of parental and/or public control over education; and limiting the power of administrators and "spoiled teachers."* This general argument applies to

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*These suggestions appear in a variety of sources, but their most succinct form probably has been found in the series of articles by McCurdy and Speich (1976; 1976a; 1976b). Other sources support or augment these observations. For example, Braverman (1976) probably describes

many specific situations, but most often the emphasis is on the traditional elements of schooling--reading, writing and mathematics.

For example, Kneller (1974) has reported on the need for remedial instruction in reading for college students, and Larsen's group (1976) has found various skills undeveloped in college freshmen. Taking their cue from such academics, the press treats the public to stories about a San Francisco high school graduate who cannot read, 11 percent of Philadelphia's seniors being "functionally illiterate" (AP, 1976) or Los Angeles' beginning to require students to "pass a reading proficiency test before graduating" (McCurdy and Speich, 1976). Most such reports include disclaimers such as "the problem [in the schools] is not of the magnitude that detractors of our schools would have the community believe" (AP, 1976). But the articles persist, and most writers more or less openly accept the headline grabbing conclusions of McCurdy and Speich (1976b): "It is the fundamental and massive shift from basic academic requirements to an array of electives that seems to be the most direct contributor [to the public schools failings]."

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the schools' problems best, but Van Til (1976) and Bouwsma (1975) outline possible reforms in an interesting, academically oriented manner.

Somewhat similarly, observers like Baden (1974) and Burling (1974) lament their students' collective inability to communicate in writing, and they seek the cause of this failing. Again popular journals add their voices to the likes of Degnon's (1976) characterization of pupils as "Masters of Babble" and Lyon's (1976) terming their style "illiteracy." While Sheils (1975) thought he knew "Why Johnny Can't Write," Braverman (1976) rephrased the statement as a question so that she might do some investigative journalism, but she nevertheless reaches the same conclusion: "the root of the writing crisis may be buried in the high schools' de-emphasis of basics" (p. 10). Ganz (1977) goes even further in categorically stating that "in recent years, it has become obvious that schools aren't teaching that basic skill [of being able to write a coherent sentence]."

Mathematics instruction has been studied critically also. Carpenter's group (1975; 1975a) has considered practically every aspect of this topic and makes a variety of reform recommendations. But Shaw (1974) foretold several of these when he claimed that many public schools are shifting back to an emphasis on skill development--even to the point of requiring drill work.

The responses being made by educators to these arguments have been equally diverse. Some attempt to show that particular charges are false. For example, one

study (MEA, 1976) analyzes student performance on standardized tests and concludes that "findings obviously contradict constant media assertions that schools are continually turning out students who are progressively less well prepared." Other articles, taking a slightly different approach, concentrate on boosting educators' morale by telling them that "Test Scores Leveling, Public Faith Holding Steady" (MEA, 1976b). Another group of responses works to discredit reform proposals. Typical of these is one criticizing the "back to basics" movement thus:

> Concentration only on the 'basics' could deny the student--especially the 'underachiever'--opportunity to develop equally important life-long learning skills, individual interests, talents, and attitudes; social and political awareness and responsibility; healthful living habits; and human relations skills (MEA, 1976a).

All the preceding remarks seem to imply that this debate over educational performance and programs displays an orderly, logical progression of ideas. However, as with all general social concerns, this has not been the case. People on both sides have produced a confused mass of reforms and counter-proposals that arise at various times and situations. Moreover, this has happened in the midst of revolting taxpayers, politicized teachers' groups, expanding student rights, doubts about standardized testing's efficacy, and pressures for multi-cultural education. Not surprisingly this creates a need for some

means of organizing things so that both critics and defenders of public schooling might better be understood.* Fortunately much the same issues were debated in great detail not so long ago, and a historical study of that confrontation and its fate can be made fairly easily. Insofar as historical precedents can help us understand the present, then such a study may well be of use to contemporary students of education and its faults.

*Pinkerton's (1976) caustic article, "Spoiled Teachers Give Taxpayers Tough Time," provides an excellent illustration of how confusing and disorganized some efforts have been.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL OUTLINE, RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND DEFINITIONS

For something more than a decade following mid-century a variety of criticisms confronted public education's advocates. Numerous social, political and educational pressures motivated these attacks, and schoolmen responded in equally diverse ways. However, things briefly went as follows:

Events originating with the 1950s elicited a growing concern for such values as free speech, intellectualism and democracy. The Korean War, "McCarthyism," the "Cold War," and economic and cognitive implications of massive technological change in turn buffeted American society and many critics feared that children would prove unable to withstand such burdens.* According to these analysts, educators had allowed pupils for years to determine their own courses of study by merely choosing from the "smörgasbord of electives" comprising the

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*The time line (p. vi) briefly outlines the major social, political and educational developments relevant to an understanding of the 1950s and early 1960s.

seemingly ubiquitous "life adjustment" curriculum; and such aimless dilettantism surely had produced distoriented, unthinking graduates who adjusted uncritically to even the most transitory of social conditions. Only the teaching of life's verities counteracted such trends, and these truths were available only through a study of education's traditional components--history and philosophy, science and mathematics, English and foreign languages. Alfred North Whitehead, Mark Van Doren and Jacques Barzun argued so well the need for basic studies that they became major apologists whose works were read and discussed widely. Although often emphasizing aspects of the problem centered in higher education, these men nonetheless inspired similar commentaries on the public schools.

In many instances these critiques accused the schools of spawning mediocrity--if not outright failure. Evidently originating in Mortimer Smith's The Diminished Mind, this charge was broadened by others to include a variety of complaints: John Keats denounced the public schools for being anything but educational. Arthur Bestor decried what he saw as a conspiracy aimed at neglecting both the gifted child and basic instruction. And Rudolf Flesch thought an entire generation to be growing up essentially illiterate. Although seemingly less sophisticated and more hysterical than their philosophizing

counterparts, these writers attracted much attention and brought the public into the debate.

But as with all public issues, interest began to fade finally. However, an event of great importance soon rekindled general public concern over education: the first artificial earth satellite was orbited by the Soviet Union. Previously people had assumed that the United States was the world's foremost power and that the schools had been the source of this dominance. However, the October, 1957 launching of Sputnik I clearly challenged America's superiority in technology and education both. Two well-known, authoritative spokesmen then led the way in describing the schools' weaknesses. Hyman Rickover (an engineer and naval officer), used a variety of means to publicly grieve the lack of scientists, mathematicians and engineers that was responsible for the nation's worsened technological position. Rickover blamed the shortage on the educational system's inattentiveness toward the academically talented, lack of rewards for superlative performance, and preoccupation with flatulent ideals. James Conant (a chemist, former Harvard University president, and once High Commissioner, later Ambassador, to Germany), directed a series of comprehensive investigations into various aspects of public instruction. He reported to the people on ineffective secondary schools, inadequate course programs,

poor governmental leadership and inappropriate teacher preparation. This last point became increasingly important toward the end of the era.

For some years before Sputnik the main problem with teachers had been finding enough of them to fill the classrooms. However, just as the Russian success had created doubts about American scientists and their training, it also brought teachers and their preparation under scrutiny. James Koerner represented the harshest of critics when he concluded that students of education--apparently less intelligent than their peers to begin with--received but rudimentary general or "liberal" training and studied only shallowly their supposed major field. This resulted from teacher education programs requiring far too many sterile and repetitive professional courses that stressed "how to" rather than "what to" teach. Truly competent students were repelled by such work and entered other fields; those who remained were dull and "miseducated." The effect was the same, however, as there were produced too few instructors to staff adequately America's schools. Although much more reserved than these, Conant's observations on this topic implied similar feelings toward most aspects of teacher preparation.

Somewhat surprisingly, educators seemed almost pleased when critics turned their attention to this topic.

Consisting of discussion of such generalized concepts as "liberal education," "life adjustment" and "the 3 R's" the previous discourse developed a decidedly philosophic tone. As with all clashes among philosophic systems, authorities massed on either side, extremist statements dominated, and resolution appeared problematic. Lay people had used the mass media adroitly to determine the discussion's direction and to give the impression of having the stronger position. Besides being constantly on the defensive, professional educators usually wrote for intellectual or quasi-intellectual journals and were less likely to respond effectively to their detractors. However, by attacking teacher training and qualifications the critics brought up topics advantageous to professional education's supporters. This assault struck at the very core of the profession, and schoolmen often appeared to have joined together to provide a united front. Teacher training interests became united in the newly created National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and teachers' organizations worked more feverishly for the complete professionalization of the field with writers like Myron Lieberman striving to show them where they had failed before and how they might succeed in the future. Other people within the educational establishment who accepted the need for change of preparation and certification practices managed to

discredit much criticism by citing their own efforts to restructure these areas. In short, educators aggressively went on the offensive.

Through a variety of media, detractors and supporters alike had much to say about their perceptions of the public schools' strengths and weaknesses. However, this lively dialogue--which had evolved over nearly fifteen years--broke off quite suddenly. Numerous educational and political developments provided evidence of this shift. Some were as subtle as changes in the titles of journal articles, and some were as obvious as the creation of entirely new government programs; nevertheless, these changes were substantial. While no single factor could have caused them all, there did appear to be a decisive element: a dramatically increased concern for the level of educational opportunity and achievement among Blacks and other "culturally deprived" youth who were to be given "compensatory education."

(While topics and thinkers which had seemed so important became apparently irrelevant, there remained a residual concern for certain aspects of the older debate. Certain Blacks grasped the need for quality as well as equality, and while many people seemingly concentrated on one at the expense of the other, such analysts as Jesse Jackson, Vernon Jordan and Carl Rowan continued to fight for the complete realization of both. Thus the present

"back to basics" movement derived in part from these critics' eloquent descriptions of urban education's failures as well as from the previously outlined sources and suburban parents' concerns.)

Research Considerations

A thorough researching of these events accomplished several things: it revealed the antecedents of education's contemporary attackers and defenders; it exposed the educational institution's means of dealing with critics; it discovered certain changes in educational practices possibly resulting from criticism; and it indicated the likely fate of recent developments. These coalesced around an effort to validate the following hypothesis: once lay people and the mass media focused critical attention on certain issues, professional educators reacted to defuse such attacks by formulating responses consistent with both their own interests and institutionalized conceptions and practices.

Only a multi-disciplinary approach could have accomplished this, so techniques drawn from three distinct fields were applied. History provided a feeling for sequence plus the essence of documentation. The former supplied knowledge of which events to consider important in describing the social framework for change in education; the latter directed the search to original source

materials when feasible.* Sociology afforded a sensitivity for the institutional dimensions involved. This was particularly important in looking at the bureaucratic responses to criticism, the pressures to professionalize education, and the social nature of knowledge. Philosophy furnished a standard for determining causality relationships, consistency of argument and philosophic kinship. This proved crucial in evaluating many aspects of the dialogue. While other fields provided useful ideas at particular points, the ones mentioned afforded the most help.

The breadth of this study not only mandated a multi-disciplinary effort, but it also necessitated limits being set on the materials considered. So much information appeared in so many different sources that any restrictions were certain to be arbitrary; consequently the problem became one of establishing reasonable qualifications for including some rather than others. The essentially open nature of much of the material made this somewhat easier, because it implied that a critic's public presence could become the determining factor. Such recognition certainly was as fickle then as now, but certain people invariably came to mind when considering

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*Strict consideration of chronology did not tyrannize this study, however, because many aspects of the continuing critiques revealed meaningful relationships only when they were analyzed logically.

education's critics in the 1950s: Bestor, Keats, Rickover and Conant. Others developed into major figures after one weighed the impact of their comments: Whitehead, Van Doren and Flesch. Still others became important by virtue of others having mentioned them so often as expert commentators: Barzun, Koerner and Lieberman. Rather than an exhaustive listing, this comprised a representative group whose ideas could be found readily. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, speeches and Congressional testimony--all these were analyzed in an effort to accomplish the goals set for this study.

Determining the response of educators was somewhat simpler, because it could be done through a more traditional review of the literature. Some arguments appeared in general circulation magazines (where even formal debates were published) but much more material turned up in professional or intellectual journals. Certain information was available only in such organizational bulletins or specialized publications as the NEA Research Bulletin, the American Teacher Magazine, AACTE Directories, and NSSE Yearbooks. All these sources contributed to an understanding of how schoolmen dealt with their detractors.

The previous comments outlined the essential style and method of research, but they did not touch upon

the rather difficult question of how certain terms were to be defined. That merited separate consideration.

Definitions

Some words necessarily recurred throughout both the documents studied and their subsequent analysis. However, what was meant by them was not always obvious, and valuative connotations crept in occasionally as well. When compounded by the convoluted relationships among the ideas, these factors made formal definitions inadequate. Therefore, a less restrictive, more wide-ranging approach seemed the appropriate means to analyze and present these concepts.

These terms fell generally into two categories: descriptive names applied to the groups involved and expressions used as a sort of shorthand for larger ideas. In either case, each word's meaning partially derived from its common language usage, but certain other philosophic considerations impinged also. While some of this could be done by considering the pronouncements of the people involved, many points became apparent only long after the fact and depended upon inferential methods. Consequently some of the definitions embodied factual claims, but others represented an attempt to make sense of confusing events and thinking.

At mid-century two sorts of people concerned themselves with the public schools. Professional educators made up one group. These people had received their advanced preparation primarily in normal schools or colleges of education, and they usually were employed in schools, teacher training institutions or government agencies. Often assumed to be unquestioning supporters of established practices, they came to be known derisively as educationists or pedagogists. As faceless as the bureaucratic positions they held, these people had few well-known representatives; as a result their position usually appeared in rather obscure places. The second group was comprised of laymen whose post-secondary training included little or no work in education; nevertheless, they still felt compelled to comment on developments in that area. While many of the more influential laymen held teaching positions in higher education, far more claimed an interest in schooling derived from being parents of school-aged children or publicly elected officials.

A goodly number of those laymen employed in colleges or universities viewed themselves as liberal educators, or, as I often chose to call them, neo-classicists. Espousing very traditional views of education, these individuals tended to have been schooled relatively early in this century in either the liberal arts or the established sciences. They extolled the

virtues of these fields while suspecting the newer social sciences of having undermined excellence at every level of instruction. Because such people usually stressed a reading/lecturing/reciting style of instruction, they were likely to be regarded as educational conservatives by their allies and as obstructionists by professional educators. Such writers as Whitehead, Van Doren, Barzun, Koerner and--in many instances--Conant belonged to this group, and they represented it well.

Another segment of laymen served as popularizers of the liberal or neo-classicist view.* Such commentators generally had easy access to the mass media and had few qualms about using them; some popularizers actually worked as journalists, and others simply were newsworthy. In either case they reached a considerable audience, and by bringing critical comments into general public view, these people made arguments about education more heated and longer-lived than otherwise might have been the case. Smith, Keats, Bestor and Flesch were probably the most well-known members of this group, but many other persons functioned similarly.

The neo-classicists and their popularizing allies fought for the establishment of an up-dated liberal

*The two lay groupings shared members--Arthur Bestor and Rudolf Flesch for example--so they could not have been considered particularly fine distinctions; they were useful ones, however.

education. Much of the emphasis fell upon colleges and universities where one of two things was to be done: restructure higher education so as to focus on the liberal arts (with the accent on history and literature) or reorganize teacher training programs to deemphasize professional courses and expect more work in subject areas. Advocates of liberal education concerned themselves with the public schools also. In the first part of the era they usually called for a curriculum composed of all the basic studies; in the post-Sputnik years they argued for a shift toward science, mathematics, foreign languages and English composition almost exclusively. But no matter what else they intended, advocates of liberal education always stressed rigorous academic study and high performance standards.

This insistance on rigor and achievement derived logically from the way neo-classicists had been taught to conceive of the human mind. They usually had been instructed by teachers using methods derived from faculty psychology, and many liberal educators had learned and accepted its premises. Hofstadter (1962) succinctly defined the term and its implications:

> In this psychology, the mind was believed to be a substantive entity composed of a number of parts or "faculties" such as reason, imagination, memory, and the like. It was assumed that these faculties, like physical faculties, could be strengthened by exercise; and in a liberal education, through constant mental discipline, they

> were gradually so strengthened. It was also generally believed that certain subjects had an established superiority as agents of mental discipline--above all, [languages] and mathematics (Hofstadter, 1962: 347-348).

Such thinking stood in direct opposition to the ideas developed in the newer forms of social science. Students of social psychology and sociology constantly counseled professional educators to be concerned for the pupils' emotional well-being and to plan programs for educating the "whole" child, and to a certain degree this advice caused changes in teaching methods, administrative practices and course work designed to help children adjust to their psycho-social environment. When considered together these things made up the life adjustment curriculum. Liberal critics felt this meant that the schools made "dating and 'driver education' part of the curriculum in place of Latin and trigonometry" (Barzun, 1959: 90-91), and that intellectual training and standards had been downgraded consequently; moreover, they decried the apparent expecting of students to conform to social and psychological norms. As a result, life adjustment became something of an epithet to its opponents, and although the controversy it represented raged on, its advocates used the term less frequently and seemingly sought a substitute for it.

Similar confusion resulted from the use of the term progressive. Professional educators adopted the

name willingly for two reasons: it cloaked them in the philosophic respectability of James and Dewey, and it identified them with a broader socio-political tradition generally acceptable to Americans. However, schoolmen's progressivism tended to be nominal, for it was made to apply to education as it existed, every proposed change and to all educators--with no consideration of philosophic or social situations. To lay critics these tendencies made progressivism seem responsible for the eclipse of liberal education, so they readily blamed it for every educational failure. As a result they turned progressivism into a derogatory term applied collectively to professional educators and their ideas.

Two final terms also appeared often: democratic and critic. Democratic was used in diverse contexts and ended up seeming meaningless. However, it did describe adequately those reforms apparently allowing for broader student involvement or opportunity--as these things were understood during the era. Unfortunately, few proposals met this criterion. Additionally, the materials researched often implied that critic was a synonym for critic of education. Moreover, the word usually conveyed the feeling that critics held exclusively negative views of existing educational conditions. This surely meant that critic ought to have been replaced by another word--caviler, possibly--but that probably would have been

confusing or overly pedantic. Consequently critic was used throughout this study with primarily those connotations.

CHAPTER II

THE NEO-CLASSICISTS: PHILOSOPHIC PROPONENTS OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION AND STANDARDS

Three writers provided excellent examples of the philosophic bases for critical views of education at mid-century: Alfred North Whitehead, Mark Van Doren and Jacques Barzun. Other people produced similar statements; some may even have said it better. But none seemed to have possessed the particular mosaic of characteristics needed to attract public and scholarly attention to quite the same degree as these three. Public recognition, scholarly respectability, dedication, vivid prose style--these traits and others were compounded in these men so as to guarantee them an audience out of all proportion to what might otherwise have been expected. Somehow their criticism was right for the times, and although two appeared years previous, their books excited much discussion during the 1950s and early 1960s. Moreover, they represented the neo-classicist or liberal thinking about education at its very best--both literarily and philosophically.

Whitehead, Van Doren and Barzun emphasized different things, but their books implied similar views of education's recent history. Perhaps their backgrounds caused this. All three were educated in the nineteenth century tradition of liberal education, and their studies had emphasized one or another of the established academic fields combined with the then usual complement of the "classics." Each man became a respected researcher in his chosen field. And through employment in higher education, each developed a concern for the quality of students and curricula generally. Van Doren (1959) spoke for them all when writing that he was "chronically dissatisfied with the condition in which [are sent to college] students," (p. 88) and Whitehead (1949) diagnosed the cause as a curriculum composed of "an unrhythmic collection of distracting scraps" (p. 32). This became even more upsetting, according to Barzun (1959), because "elementary and secondary schools postpone and finally make unpalatable the ancient discipline of work" (p. 116). Students not only were educated haphazardly, but also made lazy.

Thus were established the essential ingredients of their critiques: the rigor of studies, the role of the "classics," the search for "principles," and the development of mental discipline. Believing that these could best be realized through a liberal education concentrating on the classics of literature, history and the

sciences, Whitehead, Van Doren and Barzun strongly represented the neo-classicist view of American mass education. However, each man ordered his thoughts differently.

Alfred North Whitehead

Chronologically, Whitehead's work came first, but intellectually it came to represent a conciliatory position between neo-classicism and progressivism. The Aims of Education, a collection of ten essays written between 1913 and 1927, first appeared in this country in 1929, but it apparently stirred little interest beyond the academic community and disappeared from view. However, the growing concern with public education at mid-century made it a likely choice for reissue, and it appeared in a paperback edition during 1949. The Aims of Education then was read by lay people and academics alike. It enjoyed its greatest popularity then and was reprinted yearly for nearly a decade. This was all the more remarkable because Whitehead's essays focused largely on educational theory and English educational traditions. Although these topics would seem to bear little relationship to American schools, many readers interpreted them so as to resolve the conflict between liberal and progressive educators.

The rather heavy handed, subject-centered pedagogy of English educators concerned Whitehead because he felt that such a style implanted inert knowledge while utilizing dreary methods and producing "merely well-informed" men. Rather, he desired "men who possess both culture and knowledge," and the only way to develop them was to make the "one subject-matter for education . . . life in all its manifestations" (Whitehead, 1949: 13-14). Life provided the curriculum, and within this study there were but a "few and important" principles of a theoretical nature. These ideas, drawn from the traditional academic subjects, were learned most successfully by searching out their relationships and uses. Such searching would make these ideas part of the students' very lives and would set them on the path of both culture and expertise. This inquiry method derived from the pupils' nature: they became interested in a subject because of "a ferment already stirring in the mind" and "the mind is never passive; it is a perpetual activity, delicate, receptive, responsive to stimulus" (Whitehead, 1949: 18). Once aroused, the children's interest carried naturally through a rhythm or cycle of learning which--if properly understood and nurtured--would lead to a continuing realization of knowledge at its highest level. Although certainly idealized abstractions, these factors implied the

intensely personal nature of education and demanded the contant interaction of pupils, teachers and knowledge.

Whitehead was critical of narrow, purely technical education destined to create "a system for catching children young and for giving them one highly specialized manual aptitude"* (Whitehead, 1949: 65). Rather he approvingly quoted G. B. Shaw: "the ideal of a technical education . . . 'is a commonwealth in which work is play and play is life.'" He went on to argue for a 'hands-on' approach that would completely involve the students with all their learning and would be applicable to a broad range of studies. Moreover, "we are only just realizing that the art and science of education requires a genius and a study of their own; and that this genius and this science are more than a bare knowledge of some branch of science or of literature" (Whitehead, 1941: 16). In other words, education was a real and important field that could be approached scientifically.

Such remarks had the effect of making Whitehead appear sympathetic to much that progressives believed. However, his credentials were those of a liberal educator, and he often seemed a spokesman for liberal educators in general. Whitehead began with "two educational

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*Unfortunately, many of Whitehead's readers ignored this point. In fact, in the immediate post-Sputnik era numerous observers called for exactly the sort of system opposed by Whitehead.

commandments: 'Do not teach too many subjects,' and again, 'What you teach, teach thoroughly!" (Whitehead, 1949: 14). From these he developed a highly structured program that almost exclusively required languages (French, Latin and Greek), science and mathematics. While being derived from the students' interests, this course demanded a great deal of discipline, and at times it was dominated completely by rules and facts. The study of the classics was central, because these works provided the necessary truths and discipline while revealing the relationships among all fields of study.

In other instances Whitehead specifically criticized "the Montessori system," which he saw as "browsing and the encouragement of vivid freshness," for lacking discipline and for creating perpetual adolescents unfit for any hard intellectual work (Whitehead, 1949: 33-34). He also was skeptical of the masses' ability to benefit fully from liberal education.

The consequence of all this was Whitehead's being cited extensively by liberal educators. His criticisms were consistent with theirs, but more importantly he seemed to suggest a way to restructure education that might prove acceptable to progressives. However, progressive educators tended to see Whitehead's progressivism as an artifact of his concern for the modernization of English education. They emphasized instead his classicism

and elitism and, thereby, rationalized not following his suggestions. Whitehead's proposals, although often cited as a pattern for compromise and change, did not serve as a basis for accord.

Mark Van Doren

Written during World War II, Mark Van Doren's Liberal Education was intended to be an "intellectual design" for an educational program. Stretching from elementary to adult levels, this plan had as its goal the preservation and promotion of democratic values. "The educated man," the repository of these values, was to be recognized as "one who knows how to read, write, speak, and listen" (Van Doren, 1959: 15). Van Doren believed that the curriculum and the method needed to create such a person had been developing literally for centuries; they currently lacked only articulation. Once described they would become timeless and obvious ideals. When made the core of all schooling, this curriculum and attendant methods would eliminate all but relatively minor difficulties within education. Van Doren consequently supposed that many arguments about education were mere illusions deflecting the thought and study of education from their true course. All of this was quite consistent with the thinking of later critics, and many of them turned to Van Doren's writing for support and direction.

They did so often enough to cause Liberal Education to be reprinted in 1959 and to be cited by sympathizers and opponents of its views alike.

If liberal educators and their fellows had looked a bit more closely, however, they might well have been shocked for Van Doren seemed to agree with much that John Dewey and progressives believed. The conception of democracy, the role of the educated citizen, the need to fully educate all citizens, the life-long continuation of schooling, these were all points of apparent concurrence. Moreover, in a section headed "The Levels of Education," Van Doren outlined a formal education sequence, many aspects of which were consistent with the thinking of educational progressives. He also specifically acknowledged his agreement with their methods: "The foregoing paragraphs might appear to be a description of what today is called progressive education. Within limits it is, for progressive education has hold of a good tradition." However, this was not unqualified support:

> Progressive education . . . misses being perfect elementary education when it ignores two things: the deep resemblances between human beings, calling for a fixed program of learning which no child can evade, and the importance of the human past (Van Doren, 1959: 92).

Van Doren consequently espoused psychology and curricula quite different from those stressed by progressives. He accepted the premises of faculty psychology--that the mind

was a substantive entity that might be strengthened through exercise and discipline. Students were either vessels to be filled or tools to be honed, and neither the capacity nor the material varied much. Consequently, intra- and inter-generational differences seemed relatively minor, and racial and sexual differences were seen to be small. All pupils should have the same opportunity to be filled or sharpened to the limit, and the truly crucial methodological concern was efficiency.

The most efficient curriculum for providing and refining the requisite skills came in two parts: an elementary school study dominated by "language, literature, mathematics, and certain of the sciences" and a higher program encompassing "learning the arts of investigation, discovery, criticism, and communication, and achieving at first hand an acquaintance with the original books, the unkillable classics, in which these miracles have happened" (Van Doren, 1959: 91, 145). Because students and the curriculum were invariable, they could be approached with certainty. In fact Van Doren wrote approvingly of a sample course of higher studies requiring the reading of some 110 certifiable classics.*

*This list of 'certifiable' classics represented the evolution of a 'great books' curriculum through three stages. It originated with Erskine's "General Honors Readings" at Columbia; it was carried to Chicago by Mortimer Adler who revised it; and it was borrowed by St. John's College planners who expanded it. It is worth

These included no works of modern English literature, no twentieth century efforts in mathematics or science, and only history and political science from the social sciences. Among these writings there was no room for the more tentative, problematic efforts in literature, philosophy or the social sciences.

The existing schooling pattern--if not grossly misconceived--was at least totally inadequate to the task according to Van Doren. Students and teachers in the public schools spent too much time on the elementary skills and efforts "to understand whatever world may flash by at the moment" when "permanent studies" should have been the focus (Van Doren, 1959: 89-90). Similarly the colleges had too little time to liberally educate their students and had to become either narrowly vocational or dominated by "sampling and surveys." A somewhat more European arrangement, which would split the time usually spent in high school between the elementary and collegiate levels, was the solution favored by Van Doren (1959: 98).

In sum, he stressed these points: a simplistic, faculty psychology; the "three R's" for elementary education; and the classics for higher levels. These things were essentially timeless, and neither method nor

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noting that Van Doren was involved in the original work at Columbia and in fact helped teach the course derived from it.

curriculum was to be much affected by the developing social sciences. American education was basically inefficient because of its infatuation with these social sciences and its desire to placate students with life adjustment, electives and surveys. An European model stressing higher standards and basic studies was Van Doren's answer. It is not surprising that numerous critics of later years turned to Liberal Education for the essential historical and intellectual references they required.

Jacques Barzun

Jacques Barzun's major works on education represented one liberal educator's continuing efforts to expose the causes of academic mediocrity and to prescribe corrective measures.* An earlier book, Teacher in America, was primarily a study of shortcomings in higher education; but his later work, The House of Intellect, was a more broadly based critique of educational and intellectual affairs. Although it appeared in 1959 when the debate over educational excellence was most

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*In fact Barzun's comments may well be considered the ultimate form of neo-classicist thinking because he represented the second generation of American liberal educators to criticize the schools of the 1950s. Barzun had been a student of both Van Doren and Adler at Columbia, and he acknowledged taking the "General Honors Reading" course that provided the basis for the various 'great books' programs.

clamorous, The House of Intellect comforted neither supporters nor censurers of American schooling; it challenged far too many assumptions made by both groups. This challenge resulted from Barzun's analysis of the historic forces, described as "The Three Enemies of Intellect" and "The Public Mind," which had molded contemporary educational practices and attitudes into the ultimate perversion:

> It [contemporary education] assumes in each pupil the supremely gifted mind, which must not be tampered with, and the defective personality, which the school must remodel. Its incessant desire is to round off edges, to work to moral specifications--in short to manipulate the young into a semblance of harmonious committee, in accordance with the statistics of child development (Barzun, 1959: 102-103).

Art, science and philanthropy in particular interpretations were the so-called enemies, and democratic pressures further undermined intellectual excellence. While often implying the common-language usage of these terms, Barzun also gave each its own peculiar philosophic twist so as to describe general social ills. These ailments greatly influenced education.

Art always has stressed--quite properly--the private, unique and ambivalent elements of experience, according to Barzun; but modern man developed a notion of "art" which did not distinguish novelty from creativity and emphasized sentimentality rather than sentiment. As a result, an essentially non-intellectual means of

apprehension became both widespread and appealing. At the same time, "art" was made a primary social value which directed judgments in all aspects of society--including education. "The 'artistic' element in education enters as the awe-struck acceptance of the pupil's ways and opinions . . . . We must never press for an exact accounting" (Barzun, 1959: 98). Insight and empathy became more important than facts and knowledge. Consequently the student's mind was allowed to develop undisciplined, and education lost all pretensions to standards.

Science became an enemy of intellect as it developed into a professionalized endeavor conducted in a language Barzun named "Patient and Careful." This language allowed "scientists" alone to exercise patience and care in their work, and it made the "scientific method" appear the ultimate means to knowledge. This language was dominated by abstraction, generalization and imprecision, and by using it exclusively, "experts" managed to insulate their work from external influence or evaluation. Unable to decipher a field's more arcane knowledge, outsiders were seen as mere triflers having no right to scrutinize the work of serious professionals. The social sciences and most particularly education were especially susceptible to this process. By exploiting the trappings of "science," educators could claim expertise in

curriculum and methodology, and they exploited this claim to gain full control of education. By destroying any remnants of belief in older ways of schooling, by undermining the public's faith in its ability to make educational decisions, and by discrediting any efforts by non-educators to influence learning programs, professionals defused external pressures upon the schools.

Philanthropy, based on "the liberal doctrine of free and equal opportunity as applied to things of the mind" (Barzun, 1959: 21), was the third enemy of intellect. In addition to being a needlessly democratizing force, "philanthropy" confused neediness with worthiness and assumed a flawed character for each individual. Unfortunately, the "philanthropic spirit" was a crucial source of moral and financial support for all social endeavors, and as such, it demanded and received more than simple lip service from educators--both the assumptions and the spirit of "philanthropy" became the basis for modern mass education. Progressives, the main proponents of "philanthropy," believed that all pupils could benefit from and should be provided with the same education. They also acted as though the children were all somewhat defective and in need of 'shaping' or 'molding' to become properly social.

The final force thwarting intellectual excellence was democracy itself as expressed in the belief that "all

distinctions are false." By confusing learning with life, the "institutional--its properly artificial--character" of school was destroyed, and the life adjustment curriculum was created. The distinction between privilege and right similarly disappeared, and every child was encouraged--even required--to exercise his 'right' to public education. Barzun concluded,

> when under democracy education ceases to be a privilege and becomes a right, the student's motive and attitude change. The class turns into a clientele to be satisfied, and a skeptical one: teach me if you can (Barzun, 1959: 122).

This resulted in multitudes of reluctant scholars who had to be motivated and adjusted. In these masses, the academically talented disappeared or were seen as deviates; in either case, they exercised no special claims upon the system.

Political democracy also was involved, for it controlled the making of educational decisions. Pressures from various groups made it all but impossible for "any communicable idea of the purpose of schools" to develop as each one had a different view. The process of compromise worked to create the "indefiniteness of mass education" which brought society to the point of having "no such thing as a good school" (Barzun, 1959: 131-137).

Barzun's works necessarily tended to be proscriptive rather than prescriptive, and when he did urge

specific changes, he stressed higher education. However, Barzun did imply an idealized system something like the following: elementary instruction would be of longer duration with stress on attainment of skills and the learning of facts; adequate evidence of the pupil's achievements would be required before allowing him to begin secondary schooling. While those few displaying true academic talent then would embark upon liberal studies, most children ought to emphasize "some vocational training that will be immediately marketable." Higher education, being free for the qualified, would become more academic for vocational and professional training were excised from it. Interest and intelligence testing would sort the students throughout the system, and rigorous entrance and achievement standards would be met at each important turn. Life adjustment and electives would disappear to be replaced by a more limited, required course program. Finally, educational decisions would be made by men of intellect rather than by either an ill-equipped public or narrow-minded experts.

These three men--Alfred North Whitehead, Mark Van Doren and Jacques Barzun--were eloquent critics of evolving mass education. However, they were not the only persons seeking the reaffirmation of liberal values and the renaissance of traditional education. At various

times writers like William Bagley, Robert Hutchins, Jacques Maritain, Arthur Bestor, Mortimer Adler and Clifton Fadiman produced works highly critical of progressivism in education that enjoyed a measure of popularity. While often differing in detail, they generally were in agreement about the major flaws and desirable changes. Therefore, across the three decades separating Whitehead from Barzun, there persisted an apparently unified neo-classicist position: children were inadequately and/or improperly educated. They learned nothing of life's verities and so had no standards; they faced little challenging or rigorous work and so became lazy. Such curricular failings were correctable, however, if only the old "solid" courses or classic studies supplanted "life adjustment" programs. Every level of education surely would benefit from such a shift in emphasis, but because they provided the basis of all learning, the public schools had to be changed first.

Educators' Responses

By 1950 American education seemed completely dominated by the problem of perfecting the bureaucratic administration of mass education, and there was little time to be spent on such apparently esoteric things as philosophy. If asked their philosophic position, however, educators likely would have described themselves as "progressive"

for several reasons. First of all, as Edwards and Richey (1963) pointed out, their professional training probably had been dominated by such ideas, and secondly, many administrators and teachers were employed in schools that supposedly had incorporated progressive principles (p. 544). James, Dewey, Kilpatrick and similar thinkers were the ones most probable to be recognized as leaders in educational thought. The term "progressive" represented a mode of thought with an established socio-political tradition that many could acknowledge easily. Finally, alternative educational positions seemed to be evolving into merely different styles of progressivism as even "many 'conservative' schools have borrowed discriminatingly from progressive innovation" (Hofstadter, 1962: 360). Unfortunately, educators' progressivism often appeared as shallow as these reasons for professing it.

Beginning as a philosophy stressing the importance of the individual child, his interests, freedom and democratic ideals, progressivism had "contributed much of great and lasting value to American education" (Woodring, 1957: 27). But in its later stages, debate and study of ideas disappeared to be replaced by dogmatism or nothing. In the one case ideologists "overstressed their tenets until they became clichés" or parodies of themselves (Woodring, 1957: 16), and in the other "progressive"

simply represented a name to be used almost synonymously with "educator." In other words, the term had become either too specific (an extremist argument for license), or too broad (a name for anyone or anything belonging to the educational institution), and so, an empty phrase.

As a result of all this the pejorative formulations favored by neo-classicists seemed apt: all members of the growing professionalized educational establishment were "progressives" who shared the faults of the more extreme people, and "progressivism" was the apologia for the establishment's practices which tended toward educational licentiousness. These statements embodied certain elements of truth and so revealed the essential problem of educators at mid-century--they were ill-equipped for engaging in philosophic debate, and they usually had to simply react to criticism ad hoc.

Once realizing liberal educators were completely serious about their attacks upon public schooling, professional schoolmen had to defend themselves and their practices or suffer a serious weakening of public confidence. At least initially, defenses often derived from established progressive thinkers, and such writers as Dewey and Kilpatrick were joined by more contemporary ones like Hook and Woodring. (In fact, Dewey, who published until his death in 1952, occasionally wrote on then contemporary issues.) Sidney Hook, among the younger writers,

was cited often because, as one 1946 reviewer of Education for Modern Man concluded, "he offers the best response to Drs. Hutchins, Barr and Van Doren that has yet appeared."* In a somewhat less sophisticated, though well-conceived manner, Paul Woodring replied to the critics in his 1953 book, Let's Talk Sense About Our Schools.

Woodring's book was important not only because it was the major philosophic work of 1950s progressivism but also because it was the genesis of a different sort of response to liberal opponents:

> The most far-reaching changes which have occurred on the educational scene in recent decades are ones which cannot be attributed to Dewey or to the progressive movement . . . . The most important of all changes has been the extension of universal education upward through the high school (Woodring, 1953: 13).

In other words, schools held vastly more students for longer periods of time than ever before, and the

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*Hook's involvement had the additional advantage of easing some of the progressives' difficulties with the anti-Communist witch hunters of the time. Along with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Sidney Wechsler, Hook had helped form the fervently anti-Communist Americans for Intellectual Freedom in 1949, and one of this group's first efforts was the sponsoring of a counter-conference protesting the supposedly Communist dominated Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace held during that year (Wills, 1976: 24). Consequently, as progressives (among them John Dewey who had traveled extensively in and written sympathetically toward the Soviet Union in the 1920s) came under increasing suspicion of being "fellow travelers," Sidney Hook's activities helped make progressivism seem more respectable, more "American."

neo-classicists failed to realize the significance of this fact. Thus, having been accused of misunderstanding the 'real nature' of the problem, liberals gradually became entangled in an argument about 'the facts' and were distracted from more philosophic points. With similar consequences, progressives denounced the neo-classicists as being in turn elitist, undemocratic, class oriented and un-American. These ad hominem attacks culminated with the pseudo-psychological charge that the liberals wished to remake education in the image of selective, idealized remembrances of their own schooling.

In sum, the progressives appeared philosophically weak. They were incredulous as liberals mounted the attack, and their first defense was those philosophers who had won the battles in previous years. However, something was subtly different this time--the public was no longer a totally disinterested party. Neo-classicists and progressives alike soon found--or were found by--the mass media.

CHAPTER III

POPULARIZERS AND PUBLICISTS: EARLY PUBLIC CONCERN GENERATED

In the early 1950s neo-classicist thought, essentially philosophic in nature, embodied the major source of criticism of public education. Such views had great impact in academic circles, in intellectual journals, on foundation boards, and frequently at P.T.A. or school board meetings; however, in these latter situations such learned arguments quite probably seemed out of place. Although many of the liberal educators' critiques certainly would have been attractive to parents, taxpayers and school board members, these arguments needed to be translated into terms relevant to the experiences of such people. Certain neo-classicists like Bestor, Adler, Smith and Flesch managed to accomplish this, but more often writers used to working for the mass media served the purpose. Considered as a group, these people popularized critical views of education and helped generate much public concern.

The philosophers, the neo-classicists authored occasional magazine or Sunday-supplement articles, and

they often were quoted or interviewed by the print and electronic media. However, until the apparent consequences of Sputnik were fully defined, the popularizers (mostly journalists, free-lance writers, editorialists and disenchanted, but glib, liberal arts professors) were the ones whom the public heard from most often. These people produced indictments of progressive educators and their programs that were sometimes biased, often inflammatory and always readable. Consequently, they were responsible for broadening the debate about education, and by so guiding public opinion and interests, they largely determined what issues would be considered.

Throughout the era, these publicists concentrated on three main topics. Two could be considered the result of faulty educational philosophizing by educators: misconceived ends that resulted in faulty curricula, and a wrong-headed sense of democracy which made mediocrity the consequence of schooling. The third point concentrated on the source of inertia resisting change within the institution of education: interlocking bureaucratic and professional concerns.

Mortimer Smith joined the battle against faulty studies with a particularly acrid book entitled The Diminished Mind, which posited "life adjustment" and "social reconstruction" as the progressives' curricular styles. These programs, whose very names revealed them

as "false philosophies" to Smith, ran counter to the "improvement of the individual" that derived from the school's primary goal of transmitting "the intellectual and cultural heritage and knowledge of the race." John Keats, in particular, focused on the life-adjustment concept; in numerous articles and a major book, he developed the theme of "mediocrity" as a goal.

Arthur Bestor, a University of Illinois history professor, was a most persistent critic of the public schools who managed to transcend every major distinction within the era. Although he commented at length on almost every topic within the broader discussion, he emphasized two recurring issues: the stifling of the academically talented and the educationist conspiracy. Bestor cited a variety of statistics in an effort to prove that far too few pupils were enrolled in the sciences, mathematics and foreign languages. By stressing certain pronouncements on "exceptional children," he attempted to show that educators saw "the brilliant student as a deviate from the mental and behavioral norm." The gifted students thus were adjusted to "life," and "life" merely reflected the needs of the average. The academically talented pupils were at best neglected and at worst abused, for American education had been perverted by "the worship of mediocrity" and "the cult of easiness" (Bestor, 1957). Rudolf Flesch's best-selling Why Johnny

Can't Read exacerbated this charge by applying it to the most basic component of education. Believing that reading was being taught by grossly misconceived methods which stressed guessing rather than reading, Flesch concluded that every pupil's birthright was negated by instructional mediocrity.

Flesch's book seemingly diagnosed a specific example of Bestor's second point: quality instruction being undermined by collusion among those engaged in professionalized education. Quackery in the Public Schools was how Albert Lynd described the situation in 1953. Already having legal and governmental support, professors of education and teachers' colleges administrators worked upon their captive clientele so as to perpetuate their position. By requiring more methods and less subject-matter courses, pedagogues schooled future teachers and ultimately administrators in the ways of "educationism"; this made of them advocates of hollow methodology and specious curricula. Primarily in Educational Wastlands, Bestor widened the argument to include members of the various education associations or "professional educationists," as he called them. In later years, as the "teacher shortage" became an issue, John Keats explored this theme extensively, and Life and The Saturday Evening Post exploited it in editorials about "Educationists' Debris" and "They Wouldn't Let Beethoven Teach Music in

Indiana!" The latter editorial described the final element of the conspiracy, "the shop stewards in the State Board of Education." This group joined with "doctrinaire educationists" to apply "their self-serving rules" so as to withhold supremely qualified teachers from students. The impression was one of educators who were opposed to true learning: teachers who knew how but not what to teach and administrators who build a blockade in the school-house doors against the knowledgeable but non-professional intruder (Saturday Evening Post: 1958, 8).

The issues raised by popular critics generally received an answer derived from educators' social scientific predeliction. Charges based on the analysis of statistical data often resulted in arguments about the quality or interpretation of the figures. For example, Gross, Wronski and Hanson (1962) noted that respondents to Bestor's accusation that too few talented pupils obtained quality preparation "pointed out that Bestor's figures, being percentage figures, are misrepresentations of the actual pattern of American education today." More students were continuing school; therefore, the percentage in advanced courses could drop while total enrollment increased (p. 411). Speculations about factuality usually met with proposals to initiate or replicate research. Such was the case with most elements of the teacher and classroom shortages; they were subjected to

highly detailed studies, and since good research took so long, educators might claim that they would do something--once they discovered the proper course.

In case neither of these ploys were applicable, educators relied on the same tactics used against the neo-classicists. (This was especially true in the debates over "mediocrity" and "conspiracy," for neither topic readily lent itself to objectification.) However, ad hominem arguments supplanted philosophic ones because the very charges themselves seemed to have been framed so as to malign educators and their works, and such arguments deserved to be answered derisively. In fact, things grew so acrimonious that several years elapsed before educators and their critics could meet and sensibly discuss these various points.*

The research, the debate and the name-calling well might have continued indefinitely but for the effects of the October, 1957, launching of Sputnik I. Aside from wars, Sputnik surely was one of the most important events in American social history. Almost overnight basic changes were wrought in nearly every institution, and education was the one most vitally affected.

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*The first really important, substantive meetings in fact did not come about until 1958 when these groups convened at Bowling Green University to discuss teacher preparation.

Often described as years of apathy, the 1950s were characterized more properly as an era of complacency. From war time successes with weapons systems and the atomic bomb, through work on jet engines and television, to development of the hydrogen bomb and nuclear reactors, Americans seemingly had been responsible for an unbroken series of major scientific, engineering and technological advances. Moreover, emerging from World War II as the sole intact and fully modernized industrial nation, the United States rapidly turned its productive capacity to creating an unprecedented spate of consumer goods. Apparently equivalent achievements in a variety of foreign and domestic endeavors further heightened Americans' sense of accomplishment and well being. Although the resulting quiet may have been manifested as apathy among young people, the older generations were likely expressing a quiet self-assurance which gradually became complacency.

In such a milieu criticism of any sort was unlikely to excite the majority of people, and attacks upon the schools were no exception. Most Americans believed that their nation was the foremost technological, military and diplomatic power and that they were the wealthiest, best fed and most free people in the world; and their political, military, industrial and labor leaders certainly used every opportunity to reinforce these beliefs. This superiority commonly was attributed

to a preeminence in public education, and while acknowledging the existence of backwaters and gaps in educational programs, many people assumed that these flaws were easily transcended by the general excellence of their schools. Within this context small or racially segregated school systems were problems to be solved locally. These and similar issues gained public notice simply because journalists traditionally had written about educational topics and not because such issues seemingly required national attention. If a complacent public heeded the debate between neo-classicists and progressives, they perceived it as an internal power struggle which had no bearing on the broader society or the national educational system. Even the publicists appeared to be addressing specific local problems, such as particular school systems or high property taxes, rather than criticizing the fundamental tenets of American education.

The masses of children making up the so-called "baby boom" represented the first problem that was truly national in scope. As the classroom and teacher shortages were realized and as their solution seemed increasingly costly, Americans sensed the possibility of serious, widespread shortcomings. These early misgivings were as nothing compared to the seemingly complete loss of faith of the post-Sputnik era.

On October 5, 1957, the Soviet Union's Tass announced to the world: "The first artificial earth satellite in the world has now been created. This first satellite was successfully launched in the U.S.S.R." (cited in Goldman, 1960: 307). As Goldman observed, "the chief thing on which Americans had depended--the supremacy of American technical know-how--had been bluntly challenged" (Goldman, 1960: 310). This seemed especially true when Sputnik II followed just twenty-nine days later. And if scientific and technological leadership were suspect, then educational superiority surely was also.

However, more careful analysis of each component would have exposed the absurdity of such thinking. First, the United States also had a space program and a satellite was on the verge of being launched even as Sputnik I circled the earth. The "missile gap" and "space race" thus were less scientific than imaginary creations. Second, nearly all of the scientists and many of the missiles used in the U.S. space effort were German, having been captured at the close of World War II. Other emigrees--such as Fermi, Szilard and von Neumann--essentially created such American items as atomic and hydrogen bombs and computers; radar, sonar and jet engines represented American perfection of foreign inventions. In other words, the United States did not exist in scientific

nor intellectual isolation, and it depended heavily upon the input of foreign ideas, skills and developments. Third and most important, all of this was irrelevant to any evaluation of American education. Too many variables deserved consideration for enumerations of scientists, inventions or space launchings to prove anything; but unfortunately this did not dissuade either Americans or Russians from compiling such lists. In the final analysis this probably implied the important point: Americans at every level seemed incapable of reacting sensibly to the Sputnik launches. Whereas just months before they had irrationally supposed their preeminence, they now had become alarmist about almost everything.

CHAPTER IV

RICKOVER AND CONANT: THE POST-SPUTNIK SEARCH FOR INTELLECTUALISM

The mass media quickly exploited the growing apprehensiveness about American superiority; and education, gradually coming to be blamed for the supposedly poor showing, received much attention. For example, just five months after Sputnik I, Life began a series of articles entitled "Crisis in Education" by citing these "salient points":

> The schools have been overcrowded for years . . . .
> Most teachers are grossly underpaid (some are not worth what they get). A great many . . . have to work without help, understanding or proper tools.
> In their eagerness to be all things to all children, schools have gone wild with elective courses. They build up the bodies with in-school lunches and let the minds shift for themselves.
> Where there are young minds of great promise, there are rarely the means to advance them. The nation's stupid children get far better care than the bright. The geniuses of the next decade are even now being allowed to slip back into mediocrity.
> There is no general agreement on what the schools should teach. A quarter century has been wasted with the squabbling over whather to make a child well adjusted or teach him something.
> Most appalling, the standards of education are shockingly low (Time, Inc., 1958a: 25).

These views were not new; they merely summarized and extended arguments previously developed by Keats, Bestor, Smith, et al. However, such men held but limited attractiveness for the media because of two common characteristics: their credentials as experts (when they in fact had any) were too esoteric to be readily acknowledged, and more importantly, their names and faces generally were not recognized by the public.

In an effort to trade upon the nation's concern about its educational system, American journalists quickly went to work on articles, features and books discussing a variety of topics. Needing "reliable sources" and experts to consult but doubting the usefulness of existing ones, these writers began searching for new "faces," and the simplest thing was to cite personalities whose public credibility had already been established. Since political figures at least partially met the requirement, they were questioned regularly on educational topics. For instance, William Benton, a retired United States Senator from Connecticut, gained a good deal of currency with his impressions of Soviet education. Having been sent by the Encyclopedia Britannica on a 1955 inspection tour of Russian schools, Benton met leading Societ educators, learned the "facts and figures," and came away greatly impressed. By writing at length on "the 'Cold War' of the Classrooms," Benton emerged as a sort of resident

expert, and media representatives consulted him occasionally about the Russian challenge. Along with less prominent politicians, J. W. Fulbright and Clare Booth Luce received attention as they excoriated various aspects of American education. Unfortunately from the publicists point of view these politicians' usefulness was compromised by their susceptibility to being considered gadflies or demagogues, and a certain measure of skepticism or incredulity always attended their statements.

The shortcomings of political personages caused the mass media to search for supposedly less self-serving critics of education. At this point two major personalities emerged--Hyman G. Rickover and James B. Conant.

Each man possessed the desired characteristics of a public presence, apparently disinterested credibility and seriousness of purpose. Rickover (the engineer and Admiral placed in charge of developing a self-contained, portable nuclear reactor in 1947) had gained general recognition as "the Father of Nuclear Propulsion." From the inception of the reactor project, he lamented the scarcity and poor quality of people available to him, and he blamed American education for both failings. All in all, it was difficult to accuse Rickover of being anything but a dedicated public servant striving to defend his nation with inadequate resources, and his speeches and interviews--although often disconcerting to his superiors--

drew attention as honest assessments of American educational practices. Likewise Conant (noted chemist, former president of Harvard, once U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, and first Ambassador to Germany) possessed a "capacity to command public confidence" but more importantly he was a "lifelong student not only of American education but also of comparative education" (Gardner in Conant, 1959b: ix, x). Conant thus presented formidable credentials as an analyst of school programs, and the number of magazine and newspaper articles by or about him indicated his being generally well-received by both press and public.

By producing books, making speeches, appearing before Congressional committees, writing articles and granting numerous interviews, both Rickover and Conant were in the public eye quite regularly during the four or five years following Sputnik. This presence not only indicated heightened concern over education, but it also helped determine the ultimate form of such evaluations through their statements. To many people they stood for two emerging modes of criticism: Rickover represented those seeking the realization of higher educational standards through reorganizing the schools along European lines, and Conant typified those hoping to find domestic models for quality instructional programs. Largely because of their standing as major personalities, these

two men eclipsed other critics of education in both public and media consideration.

Hyman G. Rickover

Admiral Rickover was a determined foe of anything he perceived as undermining America's security or challenging her superiority. His early doubts about the educational system's usefulness originated in his 1947 search for scientists and engineers for his reactor project, and he consequently viewed America's lagging space program as simply the latest manifestation of public education's disservice. He had been making critical remarks for nearly a decade, but as the Admiral himself stated, "there was little patience then [before Sputnik] in this country with anyone who told of areas where we were no longer supreme" (Rickover, 1960a: 35-36). However, "it [Sputnik] pierced the thick armor encasing our complacent faith," sensitized the public to educational concerns, and made a more receptive audience of them (Rickover, 1960a: 157). In a way the time was then right for more open and zealous reform efforts, and Rickover made more scathing attacks than ever. These attracted a great deal of attention and probably reached their high-water mark in his testimony before the House Appropriations Committee on August 18, 1959 (Rickover, 1960a: Appendix 3). Therein Rickover consolidated for the

Representatives views expressed on numerous other occasions, and he baldly stated what he saw wrong with American schooling and what was needed to improve it.

Succinctly stated, Rickover believed the following: Education either was dominated by a "life adjustment curriculum" with all its electives (New York Times, 1958c) or had been democratized falsely by the "comprehensive school program" (Freeman, 1958). In either case, "the traditional task of formal education in Western civilization"--being "transmission of the nation's cultural heritage, and preparation for life through rigorous training of young minds"--had been negated (Rickover, 1960a: 18). Current curricula reflected this denial with frills and electives crowding out science, methematics, English, foreign languages, history and geography. The "talented youth" found the newer additions insipid to the point of boredom, and since they were unmotivated, the "talented" failed to realize their full potential (Barclay, 1957; Rickover, 1960). Only by stressing once again the traditional curriculum could the schools fully educate the gifted pupils (Reston, 1958; Hechinger, 1962). A simultaneous lengthening of the school day and extension of the attendance year (to a minimum of 210 days) would further enhance the benefits of such a shift (Rickover, 1960a: 128). The "talented youth" preoccupied Rickover's every educational thought,

because they represented a "natural resource" to be used in an effort to win the "Cold War" (Buder, 1959: 1; Rickover, 1960a: 99). To instruct them properly "scholar-teachers" having more subject-matter and fewer education courses had to be trained, and only a concerted effort to "loosen the strangle-hold of educationists" could accomplish this (Reston, 1958). Finally, seeking a means of proving the efficacy of his ideas, Rickover proposed the establishment of twenty-five demonstration high schools in various parts of the country (Currivan, 1956). He expected them to follow European patterns, for he unabashedly lauded European--even Russian--practices: early identification of "talented youth," segregation of the "talented" into special classes or schools, constant testing of these able students, extremely high achievement standards, and so forth.

Rickover's most effective argument, however, concerned the need to develop a nation-wide program for education. In every context he saw evidence of national needs--standards for educational performance, requirements for teacher preparation, evaluation of curricula, "Federal equalization funds" for poorer districts, scholarship funds and so on (Rickover, 1957a; Rickover, 1963; Stetson, 1957). The emphasis fell mainly upon the national view and how the Federal government might intervene. While a logical formulation for the Admiral, this approach was a

radical one for most Americans who preferred to believe in the efficacy of locally controlled efforts. They historically assumed that schools were a matter to be guided, staffed, financed and administered locally; however, by helping convince Congress of the need for Federal involvement and by using his public stature to sell the idea, Rickover eased the process of reshaping traditional patterns into more broadly based state and Federal programs. This represented his most lasting effect upon American education.

James B. Conant

By 1957 James Conant long had been an important figure in American education, and although he had been abroad in the early 1950s he had continued making periodic comments on both foreign and domestic schools. In 1957 with his diplomatic career concluding, Conant was invited by the Carnegie Corporation to undertake an exhaustive study of American secondary schools that would be "positive and constructive." While he could be described as a neo-classicist or liberal educator, Conant was also a scientific realist, and he produced a series of books that presented a reasonably balanced analysis of educational problems.

Rejecting out of hand the desirability of following European patterns (Fine, 1956), Conant sought instead

the complete realization of America's educational triumph, the "comprehensive high school." According to Conant,

> . . . In these schools, more than half of the students terminate their full-time education at graduation, and therefore a variety of vocational programs are offered. Programs are also available for those who have high academic ability. In such schools the administrators usually have as one of their objectives the development of a democratic school spirit and an understanding between students with different intellectual abilities and different vocational goals (Conant, 1959b: 23).

Unlike Rickover, who saw these schools as destructive of quality, Conant thought them to be the only ones serving all youth and teaching democratic ideals; quite fortuitously institutions existed all over the country that might serve as models (New York Times, 1958a; Conant, 1959b: 31). Nevertheless, Conant perceived four major weaknesses in the system: (1) the fact that most high schools met but one or two of the stated criteria and therefore were only partially comprehensive (Conant, 1959b: 23); (2) the very small number of fully comprehensive schools (New York Times, 1959b; Conant, 1959b: 31); (3) the likelihood that talented students would go through many high schools unchallenged, barely put to work and unexposed to broadening courses (New York Times, 1959); and (4) the generally low level of vocational counseling and training (UPI, 1959; Conant, 1961b). In fact, these four faults simply embodied specific instances

of the more general observation that most schools were too small or one-dimensional to be comprehensive.

Believing that educators would have to do numerous things to actualize comprehensive schools widely, Conant supported extensive consolidation of smaller schools and splitting up very large ones (New York Times, 1959b; Conant, 1959b).* He further suggested increased testing and counseling of talented students so that they could be placed in more homogeneous, challenging classes; at the same time, the curriculum should deemphasize electives while stressing English composition, science, mathematics and foreign languages (Furman, 1958). Less academically inclined pupils also ought to receive specialized counseling and preparation that would extend beyond graduation to help them make the transition to the work place (Conant, 1961b; 41-42). These efforts demanded more coordinated programs at all educational levels: among these were earlier foreign language instruction (Currivan, 1960), elimination of junior high school sports (Hechinger,

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*Urban school systems supporting specialized vocational and academic high schools needed to be reorganized into smaller, more comprehensive units. Conant felt that this was so because the specialized schools removed students from their neighborhoods, weakened neighborhood interest in the schools, limited the students' exposure to those unlike themselves and so forth; in short, nearly every democratic ideal was undermined. Conant also mentioned that comprehensive high schools should prove more efficient financially (Conant, 1959b: 88-93).

1960a) and emphasis on skill development (Hechinger, 1960).*

Like many other critics, among them Rickover, Conant tended to blame educators for much that was wrong but unlike them he also recognized the political impairment of the institution (Hechinger, 1964). While his views on various aspects of professionalized education are to be considered in more detail in a later chapter, it should be noted here that Conant believed that an educational "establishment" had developed with too little input from concerned lay groups--parents, academicians, state and Federal officials, and so on. He consequently argued for "citizen" involvement in all school decisions as well as "citizen" direction of teacher certification (Conant, 1959c: 58-83). Even as citizens became increasingly involved in every aspect of their operation, the schools were to be depoliticized. This was to be accomplished by making the public realize education's status as a "national interest," by restructuring school financing so that Federal money supplemented state and local funds, by creating policy boards independent of political labels, and by using "Federal bribery" to influence particularly recalcitrant areas (Conant, 1964). Like

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*A graphic summary of these ideas is to be found in a Life article comprising part of the "Crisis in Education" series (Time, Inc., 1958).

Rickover, Conant realized the need for a national policy for education, but he better understood the various formal and informal obstacles to be overcome. Therefore, he wished no radical alteration of the system but rather worked for improvement within the limits set by traditional American values and beliefs, dominant educational theories, and judicial/political considerations.

Rickover and Conant agreed on many specific points, but their underlying philosophies differed dramatically. Rickover, essentially an elitist, saw but one egalitarian element in education--the broadest possible search for academic talent. He relegated less able children to a foreshortened, tritely vocational study. In his eyes the existing schools were hopelessly mired in irrational equality and administrative bumbling; they could only be improved by being radically restructured along European lines. Being a democrat and political liberal in the context of the 1950s, Conant believed that each student should attend school until fully prepared to take his place in society. Academic and vocational training were equally important in this plan, and he had found examples of comprehensive high schools doing both well. Conant meant for them to serve as the

prototype for the broadest dissemination of their essential elements.*

Educators' Responses

As these two men authored such a variety of critical statements, educators were hard-pressed to answer them all. In addition, educators expended some of their energy on arguments which were really meaningless. One such issue, originating in Rickover's assessment of Russian successes, was the supposed superiority of Soviet schools. The resulting discussion--simply a variation of the then basic preoccupation revealed in things like the "missile gap" and Nixon's "kitchen debate"--devolved into an argument over the meaning of second- or even thirdhand statistics. Another such argument, deriving from statements made by both men, questioned the degree of democracy fostered by differing instructional methods and curricula, and this discussion degenerated into either name calling or "parlor psychologizing." While both were at best remotely relevant to determining and correcting American shortcomings, they

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*Like so many of his contemporaries, Conant was little concerned with sociology and its implications; therefore, he often failed to realize the social implications of his views. In fact, he surely would have been disturbed deeply if confronted with more recent social critiques of his conclusions and efforts, and his fellows probably would have been affected similarly. In a sense, any modern reader must judge these men with respect to their times and not later ones.

nevertheless commanded much attention. These topics simply distracted everyone from more meaningful efforts, and schoolmen expended much energy defending themselves against irrelevancies. As a result, these arguments proved to be colossal red herrings.

Although Rickover's work contained both these elements and proved to distract some of his opponents, his more relevant charges still attracted numerous refutations. For example, in a review of Education and Freedom, Theodore Brameld (1959) revealed one especially critical flaw--Rickover's reliance on totally indefensible psychological principles. Brameld discovered a pervasive faculty psychology in the work and concluded that Rickover had built it into a number of his ideas. By assuming that the mind was essentially a muscle to be developed or strengthened, the Admiral had managed to misconstrue the goals of schooling, miscalculate the consequences of "his liberal arts curriculum," misunderstand the merits of the existing programs, and misrepresent the validity of modern teaching methods. In addition, the concept of faculty psychology caused Rickover to argue against teacher training programs requiring methods courses, educational psychology and child development and for those comprised simply of academic preparation, as Lieberman (1959) and others observed. Brameld also pointed out the non-democratic nature of Rickover's suggested methods and

courses, and many others decried the extreme bias in favor of the academically able. Moreover, they suggested that all Rickover's ideas represented a denial of individualism and personal freedom as they objectified students into a "natural resource." Because he advocated changes that were out of step with basic educational theory and political reality, Rickover's views were extremely vulnerable to attack from both educators and lay people.

Conant's general critique of education was contained in three books--The American High School Today, Education in the Junior High School Years, and Slums and Suburbs, and he based it on fairly extensive field work. As a result, many critics concentrated on Conant's research methods. The samples for the two school studies were limited as a result of including mostly institutions in the urban North and East but none from the deep South and few from the West. Very little time was actually spent in the schools, and the faculty and student interviewees were not randomly drawn. The evaluative criteria seemed to be either facile and quantitative or vague and qualitative; in either case they seemed most arbitrary. Finally, some writers attacked Conant's conclusions (or predictions, as some characterized the statements in Slums and Suburbs) for being extrapolated from incomplete or nonexistent data.

Other reviewers focused attention on Conant's biases. He was seemingly more concerned with the academically talented than the poorer students. He favored the traditional "solid" courses over either the arts or practical instruction. Still another group of analysts were concerned by Conant's assumptions. He believed that a certain sized school was necessarily prerequisite to quality; and he supposed that the schools might be altered, at least within very broad limits, without causing social changes. Taken together these comments revealed another criticism of Conant's work--that it lacked philosophic consistency or precision. Often it appeared impossible to establish what Conant ultimately sought, what motivated his arguments, how his suggestions flowed from one to another, and so forth. While such haphazard approaches characterized much American social reform, it seemed particularly distressing when appearing in the thinking of a man like Conant.

By the time Rickover and Conant presented their ideas, schoolmen had been faced with serious faultfinding for nearly a decade, and they had learned to try to present a unified front to their attackers. Therefore, educators tended to stereotype their critics' philosophic positions and to rebut them categorically. Rickover and Conant thus were lumped together whether they deserved to be or not, and educators acted as though an attack upon

either was an attack upon both. Just enough similarities existed to make this plausible, but such a move was unfortuante for it ignored the very real differences between the two critiques. As a result, Conant's carefully researched ideas received inadequate consideration as they became identified with Rickover's reactionary and ill-conceived notions, but much of this probably resulted from a bit of unfortunate timing on Conant's part. Beginning in March, 1957, and conceived months previously, his main study predated Sputnik; but its results appeared at irregular intervals from late 1957 to mid-1959. Although this doubtlessly provided good publicity, it meant that to many people Conant's spadework became nearly indistinguishable from Rickover's speculations, even though their simultaneous emergence as public critics of education was largely coincidental.

Although having the characteristics usually associated with the neo-classicists, Conant also was a realist, and he consequently realized the dominant role of progressive thought and the implied need to work within its tenets. As a result, many of his recommendations were consistent with the best of progressive ideals, for he did not neglect the average or poorer students and did accept many progressive thoughts about democracy. The remaining suggestions were essentially what one would expect from a liberal educator hoping to influence the

progressives and to work within their system. While conciliatory toward professional educators, Conant's ideas were dismissed rather casually by them in many instances. This meant that several worthwhile points received far less consideration than they really deserved.

Conant could best be described as a constructive critic, and many of his thoughts ended up being incorporated in various programs. But this process was somewhat roundabout, and he should have been more directly considered. This was especially true as educators tried to cope with demands for improvements in teacher training and certification.

CHAPTER V

CHANGES IN THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Pre- and post-Sputnik philosophic and quasi-philosophic arguments were intended to cause basic changes in the institutional structures concerned. Originating with laymen and educators alike, these alterations came both within and without the schools, but at least superficially their intended purposes always were the same--improving instructional quality and producing more qualified teachers.

Unfortunately reforms often followed no definite pattern. For example, while certain suggestions rather obviously were meant to realize one or the other purpose, many programs were designed to do both. (The National Defense Education Act of 1958 exemplified this.) Occasionally seemingly identical plans were advocated by quite dissimilar people and were rationalized very differently. (Rickover and Lieberman both advocated increased teacher salaries.) Other instances found the same group calling for several changes whose effects logically stood in opposition. (The NEA's fight to bar from employment uncertified people while seeking reductions in class size

typified this.) Finally, after enjoying some currency, ideas disappeared only to reappear at another time or place or context. (The employment of teacher aides followed this pattern.) So lacking an overall conception of education to order them, reform programs defied neat categorization, and many attempts to make sense of them ended up being little more than chronicles (Morse, 1960). Nevertheless, certain focal points existed, and they might have been outlined profitably as follows.

Efficiency, Quality and Federalism

The "post-World War II baby boom," a well-documented bit of demography, began reaching the schools with the coming of the 1950s and bore more heavily with each successive year. At first average class sizes increased to absorb the larger number of pupils, but this was at best only a partial solution* (McLoughlin, 1956). Both censurers and supporters of public schooling concluded that quality instruction virtually would disappear unless teacher services were used more efficiently.

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*In 1949 the NEA reported a national average class size of 29.9 students in elementary schools and 21.0 in secondary ones; just eight years later the "baby boom" had swollen these numbers to 31.0 and 26.9 respectively (NEA, 1957). In spite of the best efforts of everyone concerned, these figures remained high with the 1962 elementary average being 29.6 (NEA, 1962) and the secondary ones still increasing: the 1964-65 school year saw junior high school classes averaging 30.6 students and senior high ones, 29.0 (NEA, 1965).

An endless variety of organizational and technological innovations were brought forth for consideration: team teaching, teacher aides, programmed instructional materials, educational radio and television and so on. As so often happened, however, the evaluation and application of these developments partly was determined by the public's willingness to spend the necessary money. Consequently their likelihood of adoption remained highly problematic, because people many times appeared more interested in limiting expenses than educating children (Gross, 1958).

Often claiming panacean qualities for their pet projects, the advocates of each idea attracted publicity and funding.* Much of this proved to be more than mere "grantsmanship" or boondoggling, however, because some very important breakthroughs derived from these efforts. (For example, oral-aural language instruction, multimedia presentation of concepts and the attendant learning theories originated during this time.) But like increasing class sizes, these proposals also proved incomplete answers as they simply endeavored to make more

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*One advocate of educational television claimed that it "offers great hope for meeting teacher and building shortages, but more important [sic], for raising the level of teaching" (cited in Morse, 1960: 146). In a similar vein B. F. Skinner reportedly argued for the general adoption of programmed instruction by claiming that "any teacher who can be replaced by a machine should be" (Leuchtenburg, 1973: 782).

efficient those teachers already in the classrooms. After weighing these efforts even the most rabid innovators realized the existence of a practical limit on how much material one could teach to ever-increasing numbers, and they further admitted the continually increasing population. Therefore, since mere efficiency was proven insufficient, nearly every commentator concluded that larger numbers of good teachers were required as well, but a residual belief in efficiency programs remained to this day.

As early as 1951 the National Education Association's Research Bulletin devoted much space to an attempted determination of the teacher shortage's dimensions (NEA, 1951 and 1951a), and such diverse groups as the Fund for the Advancement of Education (1955) and the Council for Basic Education (Smith, 1966) engaged in corroborative studies. Although the actual size and nature of the need appeared problematic, essentially all observers agreed that certain geographic and subject areas required more instructors, and before long most Americans had heard that there were not enough teachers to go around.

With efficiency reforms peaking and the need for more instructors evident, the Sputnik launchings came. The resultant media attention, Rockover's and Conant's commentaries, politicians' remarks and educators' observations--all helped generate public interest in and demand

for better educational programs. The problem usually was posed in its broadest dimensions: Sputnik represented a threat to the United States' security; there was a nation-wide need for more science and mathematics teachers; the state of public education was a national disgrace; most Americans could not communicate in foreign languages. Such problems seemed calculated to require sweeping, basic reforms. Unfortunately, previous efforts by philanthropic foundations or smaller governmental units appeared to have been proven inadequate, and only the national government remained to provide the impetus for the desired changes--or so many people believed. Thus arose the call for dramatically expanded Federal involvement in public education.*

Individuals and groups having vastly different interests and philosophies united in support of such a national approach. (They included Admiral Rickover, Myron Lieberman, John Kenneth Galbraith, the NEA and the American Association of School Boards.) After the obligatory hearings, oratory and compromise the National Defense

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*Seemingly underlying all this was a fearing of success and failure both by many Americans. Federal government success in dealing with the problem was feared because it would have implied the efficacy of centrally ordered social institutions; and failure, because it would have shown democracy as completely unable to compete with totalitarian states. For many people democratic principles appeared to be engaged in a "no-win" situation, and they were scared by this.

Education Act of 1958 became law.* And its introduction incorporated the following statement:

> The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available . . . . It is therefore the purpose of this Act to provide substantial assistance in various forms to individuals, and to the States and their subdivisions, in order to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States (Title I, "Findings and Declaration of Policy" of the NDEA, cited in HEW, 1964).

To meet these goals six of the eight NDEA titles provided funds to improve teaching quality or efficiency: construction, remodeling and equipping of facilities for science, mathematics and foreign languages; summer institutes, in-service programs, retraining study and graduate work for teachers in these fields; "Research

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*This did not mean that private research work decreased materially, for the major foundations remained important sources of funds. They simply had the opportunity to increase expenditures in some areas and to spend monies in previously unexplored areas. Similarly this did not imply that the traditional American fear of "Federal control" disappeared, because articles with titles like "Is Centralization of School Support and Control a Threat to Democracy" and "The Real Crisis in Our Schools--Federal Domination" (both in Kerber and Smith, 1964) appeared regularly, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers attacked the idea vociferously. While most people seemed to accept as necessary some level of Federal involvement, it was indicative of the opponents' tenacity that the NDEA did not cover more areas and that later efforts to expand Federal programs produced major legislative battles.

in Experimentation in More Effective Utilization of TV, Radio, Motion Pictures, and Related Media for Educational Purposes" (Title VII, NDEA in HEW, 1964); and "development and maintenance of a sound national system of educational reporting [of statistics and data]" (HEW, 1964: 9). Like so many previous ones, these efforts became self-defeating because they were to deal with educational problems by simply improving teacher efficiency. They became even more disturbing when viewed in the context of the entire NDEA which specifically mandated some things (e.g., "Area Vocational Education Programs" and increased guidance, counseling and testing services), and generally encouraged others (e.g., smaller classes in science, mathematics and foreign languages) that would have expanded tremendously the need for trained personnel.

These effects were ameliorated somewhat by two other provisions: the loan program giving priority to "students with superior academic background who intend to teach in elementary or secondary schools" (HEW, 1964: 4) and the counseling title allowing funding of new training enterprises. These latter two points finally accorded official recognition to the teacher shortage.

Prior to NDEA the debates over instructional quality, the teacher shortage and teacher training had been unorganized. Numerous people produced diverse materials for various outlets, but these works lacked

precision. By sanctioning certain goals (quality instruction in science, mathematics and foreign languages; training of talented people as teachers; and producing more teachers) the Federal government franchised the debate and gave it a certain direction. It practically guaranteed that teacher preparation and certification would become of even more concern than they were previously.

Preparation, Certification and Accreditation

The neo-classicists' attacks upon the intrusion of the newer social sciences into the schools, the publicists' charges of a "conspiracy," and Rickover's call for "scholar-teachers" represented criticism of the way professionalized education functioned. Each of these three approaches, and many others as well, emphasized one aspect or another of an intricately connected pair of topics--teacher training programs and certification standards. By the late 1950s nearly every commentator had something to say about one or both, but such had not been always the case.

Historically these issues had interested only a very limited segment of the population. Teacher training programs developed haphazardly with the teachers' colleges' curricula often reflecting little more than prevailing administrative desires or community attitudes.

While official acceptance in the form of a certificate might have demanded a specific course or two, it usually represented a mere rubber-stamping of whatever the institutions required of their students. In such an environment reform of teacher education was a subject to be discussed in intellectual or professional journals, and having as their goal the communication of new ideas or methods, these publications primarily were intended for educators (Edwards and Richey, 1963: 589-598). Later as state governments participated more actively in determining certification standards, these journals became concerned with influencing political decisions, and public officials began contributing and subscribing. The general public received little attention from either group.

However, over the years the public took some notice of almost every aspect of education including teacher training and certification, and media interest naturally coincided and resulted in occasional articles and books. But the pressures generated by the teacher shortage, the classroom shortage, falling standards, Sputnik and all brought about a rapid increase in the number of such items, and by the last years of the 1950s most Americans had been exposed to the calls for revamping both training programs and certification standards.*

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*As Conant concluded in a 1963 study, the two were so entwined that people commonly assumed "every

The NDEA helped concentrate national interest on these issues, and commentators came forth with various proposals. Broadly speaking, two groups coalesced; and while the personnel, assumptions and suggestions varied with the situation, people generally argued either for more rigorous academic preparation or for improved professional education courses.

Sounding like more sophisticated exponents of the "educationist conspiracy" charge, those who censured the existing structure of professionalized education felt that the "teacher shortage" was artificial; it really was a "shortage of certified teachers" (Stout, 1958: 60). By making this seemingly slight change, they emphasized that numerous people were capable of serving as teachers--if only they could be certified. Moreover, they claimed that highly capable liberal arts students were discouraged by dull or unchallenging coursework in education and refused to enter teacher training programs dominated by such work (Koerner, 1963a). Consequently too strict adherence to certification standards received blame for both short- and long-term needs for instructors. Quality teaching resulted from quality in academic training and practice teaching, such critics believed, so these were

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person who enters teaching [who becomes certified, in other words] should have first completed a prescribed course of professional instruction" (Conant, 1963: 26).

to become the major variables in the preparation of good teachers and the only valid certification requirements (Jenkins, 1958). To keep exceptional people in the profession, writers proposed "to increase salaries drastically" and "to base advancement on performance and not on seniority" (Rickover, 1960a: 107) while improving working conditions and increasing teachers' self-satisfaction (Keeney, 1960).

The other group, defenders of professional training, agreed to a temporary opening of jobs to degree holders who were less than fully certifiable. Those hired as a result were to understand their provisional employment and to be prepared to continue their training so as to fully meet the requirements (Beery, 1958). According to educators, the certification process could not be circumvented or altered greatly, because it provided the sole means for guaranteeing a certain quality of instructional personnel.* Instead a streamlined, carefully thought out professional curriculum seemed more desirable, and any changes were expected to reflect such thinking (Popham and Greenberg, 1958). However, this group agreed with their opponents that education

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*As Lieberman later pointed out, this also provided the basis for professionalizing educators who ultimately could control entry and retention in the field, wages and fringe benefits, and working conditions. However, to do all this educators first had to wrest actual control of certification from non-professional, political groups.

might be made more attractive, but they placed much greater emphasis on improving the professional standing of education as an important means of drawing more capable people (Tanner, 1958).

Ideas for changes came from all sides and met with varying degrees of acceptance. Some ideas concentrated on local or state efforts, such as requiring fewer education courses or hiring only fully certified teachers; others derived from the expanding Federal effort, as in the case of the national financing and equalization of teachers' salaries. Some were still-born, such as the certification of every college graduate and the granting of a single type of certificate; others realized some acceptance but generated very little action, for instance, the move toward reciprocity in certification and the elimination of specific course requirements. In fact, only four substantial developments occurred in teacher education during this era, and three of them really represented near realization of long term trends.

First of all, schools engaged solely in the preparation of teachers became fewer in number. During the four decades prior to 1950, some 134 normal schools emerged as degree granting teachers' colleges or normal schools becoming simply colleges or universities. In fact, seventy-five such transformations happened between 1951 and 1960, leaving nationally only eighty-five single

purpose teachers' schools (Hodenfield and Stinnett, 1961: 155-156). While figures for later years were incomplete, this trend evidently continued through at least 1965 when evidence of only twenty-four such institutions was found (AACTE, 1965). Doubtless many such changes represented academic status-seeking, as some of the more caustic critics readily observed (Koerner, 1963b: 24-25), but there were beneficial effects. As these schools sought rationalization of their new identities, they expanded or created departments in many academic fields; more faculty were hired; and course offerings became more numerous. Often the competition for faculty and students revolved around scholastic achievements, and as a result future teachers gained access to better instructors and more courses. The campus environment developed a more scholarly air.*

Various states' requiring higher levels of preparation resulted in a second, complementary trend--a demand for thoroughly prepared teachers and extended training programs. As recently as the 1950-51 school

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*Little substantive evidence of such improvements existed; however, two things worth noting happened toward the end of the 1950s: SAT scores of all college freshmen rose to their highest level ever, and large numbers of NDEA grants for teacher training were awarded. (While this latter point may well not have guaranteed that these people actually entered teaching, substantial economic benefits were given those who did for even a short time--10 percent of loans cancelled for each of five years taught.)

year, twenty-four states did not demand the bachelor's degree of beginning elementary teachers, and two allowed secondary instructors to start working without one* (Woellner and Wood, 1950). By 1960 just seven states still admitted non-degree holders into elementary classrooms, and every state expected new secondary teachers to have a bachelor's degree (Arizona, California and the District of Columbia even required a master's degree or five years of preparation) (Woellner and Wood, 1960). This continued until 1965 when only five states opened positions to people without bachelor's degrees, and three of those expected completion of the degree within a specified period (Woellner and Wood, 1965). Of course, all sorts of "grandfather clauses" and emergency certificates existed, but these new requirements produced cumulative effects. While they assisted in the near achievement of the stated NEA goal of "competent professionals in every position" (NEA, 1961: 55), they more importantly caused a general increase in the educational attainments of teachers. Nineteen percent of teachers employed during the 1959-60 attendance year did not hold a degree, and only fifteen percent had a master's or higher degree (NEA, 1962a: 111). But "in 1964-65, over 91 percent of all

*The two states not requiring a degree for secondary employment were Oklahoma, which required one with the coming of the 1951-52 academic year, and Massachusetts, which did not have state-wide certification standards until 1956.

public-school classroom teachers had at least a bachelor's degree and 24 percent had a master's or higher degree" (NEA, 1966: 35). Such national percentages might not have reflected the situation in any one area, and they certainly did not provide an accounting of the real numbers involved; nevertheless, such figures indicated that on a national level students were increasingly likely to be instructed by better educated people.

Some critics argued cynically that educators backed such efforts merely to protect themselves further from competition by qualified but uncertified people or non-degree holders. Other detractors asserted that these shifts reflected a disproportionate number of degrees in education (Council for Basic Education, 1960; McGrath and Russell, 1961). While peoples' motivations and certain statistics were questionable and while there might have been some validity in scrutinizing them, the results remained the same: nationally classrooms were being staffed by more highly trained teachers.

A third major development was the explosive increase in Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) programs. It served to magnify the effects of the previous ones, but it proved somewhat less vulnerable to criticism than they. The M.A.T. concept originated at Harvard during Conant's tenure as its President, and for nearly twenty years it received little notice beyond that campus

(Conant, 1963: 2-3). But the developing teacher shortage and consequent efforts to attract baccalaureate holders to education changed all that. In 1952 under the leadership of Harvard, many of the prestigious liberal arts schools in New England formed the "Twenty-Nine College Cooperative Plan." This group desired "to stimulate outstanding liberal arts graduates to enter the teaching profession," and their method was the M.A.T. (Morse, 1960: 162). The prestige of the Ivy League and "Seven Sisters" attracted much attention to the fifth year idea, and it became accepted--even chic. By the end of the decade fourteen additional schools joined in the original cooperative, and the Ford Foundation assisted at least eighteen other universities (including Michigan State) in establishing M.A.T. programs (Morse, 1960: 170). Numerous others came into existence without such help, and the M.A.T. became a national phenomenon.

Many people who otherwise might not have entered teaching went to work in the nation's classrooms, and certain innovations in teacher education stemmed from the development of M.A.T. plans. (These often took the form of greatly streamlined, more efficient courses in professional education or increased academic content in master's work. Woodring (1957a) and Budd (1959) provided excellent examples of such suggestions.) At its best, the M.A.T. was lauded even by education's severest critics,

but it was abused occasionally by educators wishing to extend the idea to six, seven or even eight years (Drake, 1958; Glennon, 1957; Vander Werf, 1960). Nevertheless, basically an attractive concept, it remained an integral component of many schools' training programs, and better classroom instruction probably resulted from its development.*

In a variety of ways teacher training programs caused much discussion often lacking in precision. The large number and diversity of institutions involved (some 1,149 in 1959), the differences among state certification requirements, the variety of programs students might follow--these factors and many more created a confusing picture, and efforts to make generalizations simply complicated things further. Many observers saw in this the need for some sort of standard that would make things comparable if not uniform; but this was possible, they argued, only if an entirely new and broadly based organization developed. From such thinking evolved the fourth

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*Seemingly unwarranted, this last statement nonetheless embodied an assumption basic to the educational institution: more formal basic education makes better teachers and results in improved instruction. The entire history of certification depended upon this formulation; salary schedules codified and financed it; the NEA and AFT supported it; the NDEA applied it. The bits of evidence mounted quickly. However, they did not validate the basic assumption; that would have been extremely difficult to do. Rather, all the data simply indicated that people acted as though it were true, and that was the really important thing after all.

major change of the era--the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Approved by the National Commission on Accrediting in 1956, NCATE was a committee determined "to raise the standards of education and preparation, and to recognize the institutions that met these standards" (Hodenfield and Stinnett, 1961: 123). The actual composition of NCATE varied over the years, but members always were drawn from groups having an interest in teacher preparation.* NCATE's actual work was done by evaluation teams that visited various schools and made recommendations. Because the schools being evaluated essentially financed the work, because the raters were mostly professional educators, because education courses occasionally seemed of more importance than subject-matter ones, and for similar reasons, these assessments often became the centers of controversy. But they still provided the basic data for accreditations, and by 1959, 317 colleges had gone through the process successfully. Unfortunately this proved time-consuming and expensive, so some different means of accreditation had to be created.

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*For example, the original members came from these groups: the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS of the NEA), and the National School Boards Association (Hodenfield and Stinnett, 1961: 123-124). This group underwent changes because the initial group was thought dominated by the NEA.

As a result NCATE's ultimate development and effectiveness depended heavily upon the expansion of the "approved-program" idea in certification. This concept, which expected each teacher training institution to develop its own curriculum and to have it evaluated, implied that certification of an approved school's graduates would be a matter of course and foresaw reciprocal acceptance of certification among the states. Such thinking proved agreeable to many, and "approved-programs" were relevant to certification requirements in forty-three states by 1961 (Woellner and Wood, 1960). Certainly NCATE affected teachers in these states, but its actual consequences defied determination.

Like the issues it supposedly confronted, NCATE represented a complex question, and it often seemed to have created more arguments than it resolved. Koerner (1963) outlined these as follows: NCATE included far too many "representatives of the field of professional education, and running heavily to educational administrators." NCATE concerned itself only with the professional component of teacher training and refused to evaluate the academic departments of the schools. The standards NCATE applied assumed "that the way to get good teachers in public schools is to look chiefly at what goes into the training programs and not at what comes out; and that the things which should go into these programs are well known,

agreed upon, verified, and that they can be measured." NCATE recognized but one means of preparing teachers--"exposure to an orthodox program of courses in pedagogy in a college or university, preferably one accredited by NCATE." And finally, NCATE threatened, through reciprocity pacts, "to become a vast academic cartel that will ultimately prevent the employment of any person for any job at any level in any public school . . . who has not been through an NCATE-accredited program" (Koerner, 1963b: 230-233). In many ways the entire NCATE effort seemed little more than counting courses and shuffling paper, according to its critics. The likes of Koerner and the Council for Basic Education willingly expressed their views in just such extreme ways, and they surely reflected the concerns of a segment of both the public and the academic community.

Throughout this entire debate over institutional processes, the critics repeatedly lost sight of or chose to ignore an essential fact: the educational establishment was firmly controlled by the educators, and any changes would have been filtered through their good offices. Social, financial or political pressures might be made to bear on educators, but they could not be compelled to respond. As long as they remained in practical control of the system, reforms needed at least their tacit

acceptance; if educators did not agree, changes were doomed, became cosmetic, or were co-opted (McKee, 1969: 186-191).

For example, from top to bottom the educational institution seemed reluctant to accept the need for basic change in paths to certification, so the things proposed by Davis (1960) and Koerner (1962) failed. Some efficiency ideas such as teacher aides and team teaching achieved but partial success because they often seemed to have been imposed by administrative fiat without adequate consideration of the instructional staff. Similarly, certain changes such as advanced work in the sciences and mathematics, the introduction of the "new math" and the FLES program (Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools) ended up appearing cosmetic because they were introduced piecemeal and without thorough coordination. Elementary teachers might not be made to understand the expectations for their students in secondary classrooms, so they went unprepared. Alternatively, secondary instructors might have ignored the training their pupils received in elementary programs and failed to utilize the students' skills. Finally, once an idea became accepted, educators often restructured things so as to make it part of the dominant philosophy: expanded programs in the sciences, mathematics and foreign languages were explained to be necessary for successful living in the modern world and

not as a means of besting the Russians in any "race." These developments were not unexpected, because they represented specific instances of the bureaucracy working to protect itself as Weber had predicted (Miller, 1963: 73-75) and later sociologists had confirmed (McKee, 1969: 184).

Compounding this was the traditional American acquiescence to expertise. While people might question particular programs or argue for certain changes, they seemed largely willing to allow educators to run the public schools without essentially questioning their work. Surely there were things wrong with the schools, and certain criticism was well-founded; doubtlessly reforms were implemented, so educators must have felt the pressure to change. However, no markedly new philosophy emerged. Organizational patterns largely remained the same; teachers continued to be trained in traditional ways; children still were taught much the same things in much the same way as ever. Something was definitely wrong with all this, from the critics' viewpoint, and additional attacks upon the educational establishment were bound to develop. For many people the logical things to concentrate on were teacher training and teacher organization.

CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL YEARS: TEACHER PREPARATION AND POLITICS

The critiques originating in the era's middle years often concentrated on single issues and occasionally coincided with a certain degree of change in practice. By contrast the closing years of the era, those falling within the 1960s, produced many "tinkering" or "fine-tuning" efforts. Efficiency improvement projects abounded; M.A.T. programs multiplied. NDEA was extended twice and amended often; NCATE was debated widely. Appraisals of these programs and others appeared. Those quite narrow in scope merely weighed the consequences of certain efficiencies and generated much controversy over such items as programmed instruction, educational television and other "gadgetry" (Jordan, 1963; Markle, 1961; and Vennum, 1961 were typical). As cited previously, other analyses exploited the traditional American concern over Federal involvement and attacked the NDEA and similar programs (Kerber and Smith, 1964: 302-325).

However, the most instructive criticisms focused on professionalized education and dealt with the M.A.T.

idea, NCATE and teacher training in general. Coming several years after the implementation of the relevant proposals, these efforts usually presumed to be dispassionate assessments of the progress realized and the work remaining. The works of three major critics merit consideration: James Conant's The Education of American Teachers, James Koerner's The Miseducation of American Teachers and Myron Lieberman's The Future of Public Education.* These three studies revealed how contemporary writers viewed educational change, and their fate highlighted some weaknesses of criticisms in general. Philosophic concerns naturally predominated but specific proposals for change, central to all three books, were also relevant as were the writers' backgrounds.

James B. Conant

When the Carnegie Corporation commissioned his "study of the education of teachers for our elementary and secondary schools" in 1961, Dr. Conant enjoyed general recognition as the leading lay critic of American

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*Lieberman's earlier book, Education as a Profession, deserves recognition as a classic in both education and sociology, but it will not be considered directly in this study for several reasons: first, it represented an analysis of a very limited portion of the educational institution--teachers as professional or non-professional workers--and it consequently excited relatively little general discussion. Moreover, The Future of Public Education summarized and incorporated relevant points from the earlier book. Finally, in the later work, Lieberman was able to consider more recent reforms.

education. His previous books on the secondary schools had gone through several printings each, in both hard cover and paperback editions; and one, The American High School Today, was a best seller.* As a result, Conant's remarks usually commanded more than passing attention. Quite surprisingly though, The Education of American Teachers caused much less public comment and media consideration than his previous works. Generally reserved in tone and seemingly conciliatory toward professional education, this particular study tended to create instead a "lively controversy in educational circles;" and "in reply to challenges and criticisms from the establishment, Dr. Conant expanded and clarified his views" in a series of speeches before various educational associations (Conant, 1964a: 220). Conant hoped to influence these very groups, and in a sense, he may well have been more pleased with the effects of this book than with the more public debate resulting from the others.

Conant began with a brief survey of the traditional quarrel between academic professors and professors of education and then looked more closely at what Koerner had termed the "Establishment." Conant studied this complex of professional organizations and associations,

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*Reportedly 200,000 copies reached the public in the first six months after publication (Lieberman, 1960: 220).

governmental bureaucracies, and higher education institutions focusing on public schooling; and he found little evidence of anything but "a loose alliance of groups . . . [that] has responded to public concern about teacher education and has actively sought the cooperation of other responsible groups . . . [including] representatives of academic faculties" (Conant, 1964a: 40-41, emphasis in the original). To the extent that this alliance was cohesive and functional, it concentrated on influencing policies governing teacher certification, but Conant found that the establishment's effectiveness varied greatly from state to state. In addition, such countervailing forces as the traditional animosity and varying relative strengths of educators and academicians generated compromises on certification requirements that did not "effectively serve the purposes of those concerned with quality teaching" (Conant, 1964a: 54).

After studying those of sixteen states, he described these requirements: they reflected "excessive rigidity" but were "not rigidly enforced." Further, the certification process was "a nuisance and a headache and ought to be simplified." As Conant summarized,

> . . . in none of the states do the rules have a clearly demonstrated practical bearing on the quality of the teacher, the quality of his preparation, or the extent to which the public is informed about the personnel in the classroom. In every state literal adherence to the rules is impractical and evasion is common (Conant, 1964a: 54).

He found only one requirement shared by all the states--"practice teaching"--but was pleased to note also that it was the sole aspect of training that academicians and educators alike supported.

Therefore, Conant called for "practice teaching" to be made the cornerstone of teacher preparation. Beyond that,

> . . . what is needed is on the one hand for the state to allow freedom for teacher training institutions to experiment, and on the other for the academic professors and professors of education in each institution to take joint responsibility for the reputation of their college or university in training teachers (Conant, 1964a: 210).

Although such a change would have allowed specific programs to vary greatly, Conant described the general requirements of a model system: all future teachers first spent two years receiving "a general education in some breadth" through study of mathematics; physical, biological and social sciences; English literature and composition; history and philosophy" (Conant, 1964a: 92-102). Building on this basic course work, students desiring to be teachers of kindergarten or grades 1, 2 or 3 concentrated on a program "in the content and methodology of all subjects taught in these early school years. Depth in a single subject or cluster of subjects is not necessary." Instructors in the upper

grades benefited most from a study "emphasizing depth of content and methods of teaching in a specific subject or cluster of subjects normally taught in these grades, with only an introduction to the remaining elementary school subjects" (Conant, 1964a: 155). Training was even more circumscribed for teachers in grades 7 to 12 with certification granted in but a single field--"social studies, English, mathematics, physics and chemistry combined, [or] biology" (Conant, 1964a: 167). People planning to be instructors of foreign languages, art, music and physical education concentrated on their specialty alone and were prepared to teach at any grade level (Conant, 1964a: 179). While thus modifying its program, each school settled on the proper amount of professional education courses for its students, but methods courses were to remain and be taught by academicians with public school experience (Conant, 1964a: 178). Each future educator was to undertake a practice teaching assignment regulated by the state, guided by persons with "competence as teachers, leaders, and evaluators," and supervised by "clinical professors [having] much practical experience" (Conant, 1964a: 63-65, 143).

Conant made the preceding points in approximately half of a series of twenty-seven recommendations. The remaining proposals were intended to accomplish one of three things: some were to facilitate the desired

experimentation, joint responsibility and communication within the training institutions:

> . . . the lay board of trustees [of the colleges and universities] should ask the faculty or faculties whether in fact there is a continuing and effective all-university (or interdepartmental) approach to the education of teachers; and if not, why not? (Conant, 1964a: 110).

Others were intended to help colleges attract students and school boards hold teachers of top quality:

> Each state should develop a loan policy for future teachers aimed at recruiting into the profession the most able students . . . the amount of the loan should be sufficient to cover expenses, and the loan should be cancelled after four or five years of teaching in the public schools of the state (Conant, 1964a: 82).

Also,

> . . . school boards should drastically revise their salary schedules. There should be a large jump in salary when a teacher moves from the probationary status of tenure [and a similar one for] the earning of a master's degree (Conant, 1964a: 195).

Finally, some suggestions were meant to maintain or improve the teachers' performance through in-service training or graduate study:

> To insure that the teachers are up to date . . . a school board should contract with an educaional institution to provide short-term seminars (often called workshops) during the school year so that all the teachers, without cost to them, may benefit from the instruction (Conant, 1964a: 207).

Similarly, "school boards or the state should provide financial assistance so that teachers may attend summer

school after enrolling in a graduate school" (Conant, 1964a: 197).

When taken together these recommendations embodied a plan for the redirecting of teacher education. Conant's work consequently implied that post-Sputnik reforms had not achieved quality instruction because they failed to improve teacher quality. Piecemeal changes had been counterproductive, and only the illusion of change had resulted. The educational establishment remained intact basically, but it had been placed on the defensive and so became jealous of its prerogatives. Consequently, the need for changes remained, and totally new efforts were needed if true improvements were to be realized. Conant felt certain that higher education represented the only likely source of leadership and expertise; therefore, he expected it to shoulder the burden of training better teachers and so creating better schools--if reasonable finances were available.

James D. Koerner

In 1956 with the debate over social adjustment, academic standards and the "educationist conspiracy" rapidly expanding, a new organization was incorporated. Known as the Council for Basic Education, this body had as its avowed purpose

> . . . the strengthening of the basic subjects in American schools, especially English, mathematics, science, history and foreign languages. The council has no special political coloration; it aims to unite all persons who share its conviction that there is an intimate relationship between a healthy democracy and the ideal of excellence in education.*

This group provided a formal structure for presentation of neo-classicist or liberal ideals and had as members or contributors to its publications such people as Mortimer Smith, Arthur Bestor, Clifton Fadiman, Jacques Barzun, Admiral Rickover, Sterling M. McMurrin and Glenn Seaborg. Through its Bulletin and a series of Occasional Papers the Council apprised members of such things as "The Seven Deadly Dogmas of Elementary Education," "On Leaving the Classics Alone," "Latin Revivius," "Education for All--Is It Education" and "Emphasis on Basic Education at the Amidon Elementary School." Besides serving as a clearinghouse for ideas, the Council occasionally funded research, and ultimately it became involved in every conceivable aspect of the intensifying debate. However, the training of teachers and certification especially piqued its interest, and James Koerner (serving the Council as executive director and president of the board of directors), wrote several articles and books on the topic expressing the views of the Council.

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*"[H]as no special political coloration" remained in this statement until 1965 when it was deleted.

By titling his book The Miseducation of American Teachers, Koerner neatly summarized his thinking, but there was more to it than that. By first reviewing a study purporting to evaluate "intelligence, math-science aptitude, and rank in class" of faculty members in all academic areas, Koerner discovered that "holders of the doctorate in Education were on the bottom rank in each computation" (Koerner, 1963b: 36). He then generalized,

> . . . whether one compares faculty members in educational background, in the quality of their teaching, in the quality and performance of their graduates, or in the quality of research and of publications in their fields, Education invariably is found on or close to the bottom (Koerner, 1963b: 36).

"Compounding the problem of inferior personnel" were students "among the least able on campus" (Koerner, 1963b: 39). Instructed pedantically these "weak students" took far too many education courses and too few subject-matter ones. Moreover, these courses in professional education (not being based on a "corpus of knowledge of proven usefulness"), stressed minutiae, glib generalities and useless psychologism and were "the most formless and ill-defined in higher education"* (Koerner, 1963b: 64). Educationists realized all this, but they managed to distract their critics by asserting that method was more important than content and by creating myriad specialties

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*Interestingly, Koerner received his training in another field often accused of similar shortcomings--American Studies.

within the field. In this curricular maze the only desirable element was student teaching, and Koerner had several misgivings about it--most notably "its failure to weed out the incompetents" (Koerner, 1963b: 96).

All this had been made difficult to change by the key factors operating in the educational institution. Koerner listed among them "the state departments of Education, the accrediting associations, the professional associations, and the [teacher training] institutions themselves" (Koerner, 1963b: 205). Coupled with such other forces as the U.S. Office of Education and politically active teachers, these entities, "in complementing and reinforcing one another, compose . . . a monolithic Establishment in which academicians and non-educationist organizations have very little voice" (Koerner, 1963b: 212). This Establishment over the years developed potent socio-political defense mechanisms that made changes difficult, even unlikely. On the one hand, these protective devices practically insulated education from external criticisms, and on the other they made the Establishment powerful enough to severely constrain internal innovation and assessment (Koerner, 1963b: 212-217). And quite surprisingly, these developments had come in spite of educators not having attained even

"gross standards of professionalization."* Further, the entire range of educational efforts were obfuscated by being conducted in the obscure language of "Educanto," that was "both a symptom and a cause of poor academic health" (Koerner, 1963b: 282-296).

Thus had been produced so many certified but inadequately trained teachers, and thus they had been protected. To correct these faults, Koerner made a two-pronged attack on Education. One series of recommendations was designed to destroy the Establishment's power base:

> One: The remaining teachers colleges of the United States should be shut down, or converted to general purpose institutions, and those that have already been converted in name should move faster toward conversion in fact.
>
> Two: The regular four-year undergraduate program should remain the standard preparation for new teachers. The fifth-year programs should by all means be continued, especially the Master of Arts in Teaching programs, and encouraged, but the accelerating movement toward making five years of preparation mandatory for all new teachers is ill advised.

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*In other words, a politically adroit "Establishment" had not further protected itself by "exercising significant control over the caliber of people entering the training programs, establishing standards for admission to professional associations, policing its own ranks and guarding against abuses, administering qualifying examinations to graduates of approved programs . . . or creating some other means for insuring minimum competency" (Koerner, 1963b: 244). As Lieberman demonstrated, this formulation was practically impossible. Political power and professionalization were united inextricably. Either educators were politically powerful and, therefore, engaged in creating a profession, or the "Establishment" had little or no power, and teachers were merely laborers.

> Three: Serious academic preparation should be secured throughout teacher education. I would emphasize the "serious" and the "throughout." . . .
>
> Five: Undergraduate majors in Education should be eliminated, and all teachers, including elementary teachers and special school personnel, should be required to major in an academic subject.
>
> Six: The time devoted in teacher-training programs to professional Education should be restricted to state requirements.
>
> Seven: Education courses that are derived directly from academic disciplines--such as those in educational psychology and in the history and philosophy of education--should be taught only by persons fully qualified in the appropriate academic department of the same institution . . . .
>
> Ten: At the graduate level in professional Education, there should be a drastic reduction in the number of specialties and sub-specialties.
>
> Eleven: At least two-thirds of the work for all graduate degrees in Education (the Master of Arts in Teaching degree excepted, where it might be about half) should be done in the liberal arts areas.

Obvious in both motivation and aim, these dictates were tied to others intended to upgrade the quality of both students and instruction in education courses:

> Four: Grade point averages for admission to, and retention in, the teacher education program should be substantially raised . . . .
>
> Eight: Conversely, persons whose graduate work has been in professional Education, and who have no recognized qualifications in an academic discipline, should not be allowed to teach academic courses.
>
> Nine: If competent faculty cannot be secured to teach courses in methods--and most such courses are incompetently taught now--this work should be incorporated into the practice teaching program and formal courses in the subject eliminated . . . .
>
> Twelve: Dissertation and foreign language requirements should be greatly strengthened in graduate Education.
>
> Thirteen: Selection and admission procedures for graduate study in Education should be toughened (Koerner, 1963b: 265-278).

As often suggested in the preceding inventory, Koerner was wary of professional Education and educators but believed in the beneficial effects of the liberal arts and their practitioners. His proposals consequently seemed very like attempts to remake teacher training into the "liberal education" of Whitehead, Van Doren and Barzun and to place teachers so prepared into the public schools to liberally educate every student. However, the entire process suffered because of Koerner's unconcern for the political realities of education.

Koerner described at length the "educational Establishment" and its various strengths and defenses, but after making his recommendations, he devoted less than three pages to suggestions of how they might be implemented. He began by implying that his and similar efforts would arouse enough public concern to make the changes possible if only there were adequate leadership. Koerner then described three potential sources of leaders ("a handful of very able men now found among the younger educationists," "the academicians," and "a handful of independent-minded school boards in each state") who should show the way in training and employing liberally prepared instructors. How these "forces working for change and reform in teacher education can begin to complement one another, reinforce one another, and push together with a common purpose" remained murky,

however. This resulted from Koerner's failure to propose means of organizing groups to actualize change; although he doubtless supposed that the Council for Basic Education would provide the required leadership (Koerner, 1963b: 278-281). No matter how worthwhile his suggestions appeared, they surely lost some merit by not being tied to an effective plan for putting them into action.

Once again a critic of professionalized education surveyed the years' reforms and found them wanting. Much less optimistic than Conant, Koerner wrote scathingly of educators' efforts, and if his political stance were indicative, he ultimately despaired of realizing the institution's basic reordering. Nevertheless, he felt the need to work for it, and The Miseducation of American Teachers outlined his neo-classicist view of teacher training.

Myron Lieberman

Being at once a critic and a member of the educational institution, Myron Lieberman maintained a quite different position from previously considered writers. However, he was not entirely acceptable to the establishment as he early espoused militant beliefs and joined the American Federation of Teachers. In fact, much of Lieberman's earlier work, often appearing in the American

Teacher Magazine and other union publications, seemed apologias for AFT thought. Nevertheless, he somewhat maintained his standing as both intellectual and educator by producing reasonable appraisals of schools and teaching in books intended for a broader readership.

Ever his own man, Lieberman opened The Future of Public Education by reviewing the various aspects of the discussion of education and reaching some interesting conclusions. Most notably he decided that "the so-called 'great debate' on education has been mostly irrelevant and that its actual impact on education has been negligible" (Lieberman, 1960:9). Lieberman felt this resulted from the various sides ("critics," "supporters" and "middle-of-the-roaders") sharing certain "fundamental fallacies" and so being more alike than different (Lieberman, 1960: 11). The few extant differences, although relatively minor, had been elevated to rather grand positions by being labeled "philosophic" (Lieberman, 1960: 16). Lieberman reserved the field of philosophy for efforts

> . . . to clarify the meaning of such educational concepts as 'academic freedom,' 'equality of educational opportunity' . . . . But it is not the particular responsibility of philosophers of education to tell us what should be the purposes of education (Lieberman, 1960: 31).

As he saw it, "the American people are in substantial agreement that the purposes of education are the

development of critical thinking, effective communication, creative skills, and social, civic, and occupational competence" (Lieberman, 1960: 17). Protestations to the contrary simply obscured these truths with calls for "more knowledge," "better understanding" or the like.

Distracted by such claims, public educators failed to work effectively for the realization of the consensus. The reason for this resided in the interposition of an "anachronistic and dysfunctional power structure" and the misunderstanding of each constituent group's proper role, according to Lieberman.

Characteristic of the power structure were schools dominated by local boards which considered themselves fit to make essentially any educational decision. These boards derived support from such other structural elements as state legislatures, state boards of education, national interest groups, and various Federal agencies and acts. Laymen almost exclusively dominated each of these components and along with them practically every aspect of education from curriculum and instructional methods to financing and teacher training. Thus lay people made decisions that properly should have been the prerogative of professional educators, but they evidently were too weak or disorganized to gain control of the institution and their professional destinies.

This structure was destroying itself, however. The essential ingredient, local control,

> has outlived its usefulness on the American scene. Practically, it must give way to a system of educational controls in which local communities play purely ceremonial rather than policy-making roles. Intellectually, it is already a corpse (Lieberman, 1960: 35, emphasis in the original).

Echoing Rickover and Conant, Lieberman described two causes of this--"mobility and interdependence" and "national survival." But he cited two more controversial flaws of local control--its inability to be "reconciled with the ideals of a democratic society" and its causing "the dull parochialism and attenuated totalitarianism that characterizes public education in operation (Lieberman, 1960: 34). By sapping the strength of local school boards, these pressures stimulated the centralization of decision making which, when once begun, grew exponentially. The sole force capable of dealing with such centralization of power, Lieberman concluded, was a truly professionalized teaching corps that was free to act autonomously.* By mutually animating one another,

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*Lieberman described two elements essential to true autonomy: the professional organization's ability to control entry into and expulsion from the profession (Lieberman, 1956: 90) and freedom to determine the intermediate goals for the attainment of the generally acknowledged purposes of the institution (Lieberman, 1960: 22). This latter characteristic subtended more specific demands to order some things (such as the selection of textbooks, teaching materials and methods and the determination of subjects and courses of study)

centralization and professionalization caused even "abysmally weak" teachers' organizations to evolve into strong, vital protectors of "the integrity of public education" (Lieberman, 1960: 70-75). This entire shift from local control to centralized, professionalized schooling was inevitable, but Lieberman proposed many things that either might hasten it or prepare teachers for full professional standing.

Revealingly titled "Beyond the Cliché Barrier," the concluding chapter of The Future of Public Education presented sixty-seven proposals under seven separate headings. Ten of these relating to "Teachers' Organizations" largely concentrated on their efficient day-to-day functioning and evidently derived from Lieberman's experiences as an AFT leader. Three things were noteworthy: Lieberman called for the merger of the NEA and AFT so as to generate unified effort and direction; he expected "mandatory, though on an extralegal basis" membership of all but "superintendents and other top-level managerial employees" in this super-organization; and he demanded a "code of professional ethics that would be nationwide in scope" and enforced exactingly (Lieberman, 1960: 273-274).

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and to fight others (like loyalty oaths, administrative usurpations and legislative prescriptions) (Lieberman, 1956: 90-104).

Six items under the heading "Strategy and Tactics" suggested possible means of advancing the twin causes of centralization and professionalization. Each of the six stressed things like professional unity and autonomy, deemphasis of "the community-by-community approach" to problem solving, and the clout of national and state organization. Stating that "strategy should be based upon the premise that employee benefits are ordinarily not given freely by employers; they are taken by employees" (Lieberman, 1960: 274, emphasis in the original), the last of these led directly to thirteen well-detailed propositions about "Teachers as Employees" and "Teachers' Salaries." In these areas Lieberman accurately foretold many developments such as negotiations between school boards and teachers' associations, "master contracts," "grievance procedures," limitations on content of employment forms, eliminating restrictions on mobility, dramatically increased salaries, and improved fringe benefits. But others of his ideas departed radically from then existing or even current practice. Among these were the following: differentials in pay and raises based upon "different occupations" within education; teachers readily being allowed to work part-time; and a sort of "profit-sharing" plan for teachers (Lieberman, 1960: 275-277).

Turning his attention to "Teacher Education and Certification," Lieberman offered more proposals (fourteen) than for any other single area. After a review of the same materials Conant and Koerner later used, and much of the same information on certification presented in Chapter V, Lieberman summed up his findings in a single word--"chaos!" Lieberman predictably attributed this to the lack of a strong, unified teachers' organization that might exercise leadership and control of training and licensure; and he chose medicine as a likely model of a group so ordering its own destiny (Lieberman, 1956: 501-504; 1960: 21-22, 51). The extent to which he exploited this example was revealed in calls for such developments as these: "raising the standards for admission, retention, and graduation" of students; a drastic reduction of teacher training institutions to those qualified as "centers of research"; daily "articulation of theoretical and practical training"; "unified control of teacher education and the schools [involved in student teaching]"; "little room for electives in the total program" left by "a system which indicates the specific content which must be mastered"; and academics directing methods courses and student teaching. These clearly mimicked the medical school/teaching (or "university") hospital complex integral to medical education. Just as the American Medical Association acted politically

to direct this apparatus, teachers' associations had to be prepared to exercise their professional rights. As Lieberman saw it, their first goal should be wresting regulation of certification requirements from state legislatures and lodging it in "an agency responsible to organized professional opinion"; in doing this, teachers would reacquire "control over teacher education which has passed by default to the colleges and universities." All these efforts logically culminated in "an examination system interposed between graduation . . . and actual entry into teaching" that would create "national standards for teacher certification" (Lieberman, 1960: 277-278).

With respect to "The Foundations" and "Educational Controls and Citizen Participation," Lieberman provided over twenty suggestions intended to ease the processes of centralization and professionalization. In this context he expected foundations to function as auxiliary sources of funds and guidance for retraining, research, public relations work and the like. Similarly Lieberman hoped for the traditional modes of control and citizen activity to be altered: local school boards were to become largely ritualistic, ceremonial bodies, and other less formal groups of laymen were made into allies of teachers in the fight for professionalization and,

therefore, better schools and improved student achievement (Lieberman, 1960: 278-283).

All this work clearly revealed that Lieberman imagined a decade's worth of reform to have gone for naught. The reason was clear--teachers were weak politically; and the remedy plainly was inferred from the diagnosis. Only political organization and professional autonomy might vitalize education, and Lieberman clearly intended to provide guidelines for accomplishing both.

Like Conant and Koerner who chronologically succeeded him, Lieberman was disappointed in the outcome of previous reform efforts, but he located the source of these failures quite differently. Conant found in education "a loose alliance" of groups that often proved ineffective at controlling things, and he blamed a patchwork of certification requirements for strangling educational excellence at its source--experimentation by unrestricted colleges and universities. Koerner instead held a strong but stupidly shortsighted educational Establishment responsible for undermining the cause of academic superiority, but he exhibited almost blind faith in the abilities of liberal arts schools. Lieberman, on the other hand, ridiculed the idea that educators were even partially organized, and he believed that "the most

constructive step that liberal arts colleges can take for public education is to put their own house in order" (Lieberman, 1960: 278). Instead of considering the need for reform a question of either political power or institutional roles, he blamed education's failure on an overweening belief in local control and the weakness of teachers' groups. When translated into specific proposals this formulation seemed more nearly correct; however, like the others, Lieberman was mistaken about certain things.

All three writers failed miserably when they dealt with practical politics. Far too complacent about the tender mercies of educational administrators, Conant offered teachers little assistance in dealing with real concerns. Similarly he assumed that the responsible officials would spend freely to provide quality instruction, and he seemed quite shortsighted about daily financial problems. Moreover, he indicated nothing that might be used as a means of settling perceived differences among various groups. Consequently, Conant acted like the prototypical liberal politician who tried to provide somthing for everyone and hoped that the parties would accommodate one another in their wealth. Being more consistent philosophically, Koerner evidently thought that the sheer logic of his argument would carry the day; he practically ignored the political factors

involved and relied upon moral suasion. Finally amidst his really astute observations, Lieberman included possibly the ultimate folly--a belief in the withering away of local control. His final series of proposals, those dealing with "Educational Control and Citizen Participation," surely were naive in their almost total subordination of local politics to professional autonomy, and if this ever were realized, it would not have happened as precipitously as Lieberman hoped. Nevertheless, Lieberman's book withstood the years most successfully. Many of his suggestions remain as relevant as when first stated, and those now irrelevant were made so by having been put to the test in the interim.

Educators' Responses

The response of educators to these three writers was confused to say the least. Nearly every commentator began by acknowledging the need for reforming certain aspects of teacher training, and many accepted portions of each man's analysis (Allen (1960) provided a good example of this.) Nevertheless, certain arguments were made against each effort.

Conant stood accused of expecting too much to be accomplished during student teaching and of acting to lower not raise standards by criticizing accreditation programs (Maucker, 1964; Stinnet, 1964). Elsewhere he

drew criticism for allowing far too much latitude in certification requirements (Whittier, 1964).

While many of the same things applied to Koerner, he was more likely to be taken to task for unquestioningly assuming "the efficacy of the liberal arts" (Johanningmeier, 1964). Once revealed as a latter day version of neo-classicism and subjected to all the arguments against that position, The Miseducation of American Teachers was not considered an essential part of the broader educational controversy.

On the other hand, Lieberman's book unfailingly generated serious discussion with educators occasionally writing against his ideas. Calling the work "unorthodox," Jencks (1960) voiced concern over the evident equation of nationalization with quality in education. Somewhat similarly, Woodring (1960) concluded that The Future of Public Education's "failure to grapple with the problem of the goals of education makes it dangerously incomplete" (p. 54). Finally, some critics noted Lieberman's AFT connections and doubted his sincerity.

While they might harbor misgivings about his ideas or motives, many educators viewed Lieberman as an important respondent to arguments like those of Conant and Koerner--intellectually, if not sequentially. And many later commentaries often were derived conceptually from Lieberman's themes. For example, several writers

expanded his position that "critics" usurped the label from those in the educational institution who had exercised their critical faculties for years and applied it to themselves. Brickman (1964), in a joint review of their books, found both Conant and Koerner guilty of "pontificating about things outside their training," and charged them further with ignorance of much self-analysis by educators. Other observers, especially those greatly enamoured of Lieberman's call for true professional organization, viewed Conant and Koerner as erecting obstacles to professionalism that made the task all the more difficult (Trump, 1964).

The preceeding reactions notwithstanding, perhaps the most important thing was the relative paucity of response from schoolmen. A study of the era's literature revealed little beyond book reviews, and as might have been expected, these were more suggestive than definitive. For several reasons only a truncated dialogue developed at this seemingly crucial time.

One element probably was the appearance of a new book by Conant, Shaping Educational Policy. Following the original publication of The Education of American Teachers by mere months and dealing with the explosively controversial subject of national programs, it soon eclipsed the previous work as a topic of discussion. However, this should not have affected directly

consideration of either Koerner's or Lieberman's efforts. They declined in relative importance because of social pressures. Chief among these was the growing emphasis on "cultural deprivation" and "compensatory education."

For much of this century civil rights have been a major concern with the way being led by Blacks. In the 1950s suburban parents like John Keats (1957; 1958a) denounced the public schools' mediocrity, but Blacks simply sought to share equally in the educational system. While the 1954 Supreme Court decisions may have guaranteed "equal educational opportunities," it provided no specific mechanism for attaining them and so the struggle persisted. Later legal actions culminated in integration orders affecting many school systems, but a disproportionate number of Blacks still failed to benefit completely from education--no matter what measures of educational achievement were used. Some factor more subtle than racial separation seemed to be involved, and after some study researchers developed the concept of "cultural deprivation" which implied its own meliorative program, "compensatory education." These educational developments coincided with the vigorous civil rights efforts and ready availability of research funds during the Kennedy-Johnson years, and educators consequently came under increasing political and economic pressures to study

these issues. As indicated in the following table, they readily succumbed.

During the era's first ten years or so, "cultural deprivation" and related ideas did not appear as topic entries in the Educational Index, but at the same time "Education--Criticism" headed substantial lists of articles. While these reached a peak in the immediate post-Sputnik years, general critiques remained reasonably constant otherwise. However, in 1961 the first reports on "deprivation" were published, and by the mid-1960s other critical issues had been overwhelmed as topics for journal articles. In fact, for the year from July 1965 to June 1966 the Education Index listed more than ten times as many citations dealing with "cultural deprivation" or "compensatory education."

Interestingly, topics for Bulletin articles and Occasional Papers of the Council for Basic Education revealed a parallel shift. In the 1950s appeared such titles as "English?" (1957), "On Leaving the Classics Alone" (1958) and "The Search for National Standards" (1959). However, in 1963 the Bulletin ran a series under the general title "The Education of the Slum Child" and followed it with the likes of "Educating the Deprived: Two Schools of Thought" (1965) and "The Sociologists Ride Again" (1965) (all articles in Smith, 1966). Also in 1965 came the paper "How Should We Educate the Deprived

EDUCATION INDEX ENTRIES ANALYZED BY YEAR AND TOPIC

Time Span	Number of Entries Under "Education--Criticism"	Number of Entries Under "Cultural Deprivation" and Related Topics
June 1951 - May 1953	69*	--
June 1953 - May 1955	51	--
June 1955 - May 1957	30	--
June 1957 - June 1959	70	--
July 1959 - June 1961	53	--
July 1961 - June 1963	33	21
July 1963 - June 1964	24	50
July 1964 - June 1965	30	136**
July 1965 - June 1966	28	281***

*During these two years, the first articles from Bestor appeared and outlined the basic neo-classicist position; Adler and Smith produced various restatements of this. The numbers for these first two entries were inflated by a large number of articles dealing with various concerns about the position of democracy and education in war time, as befitted the Korean War era.

**This figure included the first separate "Project Head Start" entry--two articles.

***This entry represented a great deal of growth in concern for "compensatory education" because it included not only that very phrase as a separate heading but also incorporated forty-nine citations under "Project Head Start."

Child?" and a Bulletin article, "The President's Education Program," which included this declaration: "the new program directs most of its money toward improving the education of the poor, on the grounds that this is the greatest need. We are inclined to agree" (Weber, 1965: 136, emphasis added). Levin (1966) adequately summarized the Council's position as he followed this mode of thought to its logical conclusion and arrived at a program for "Raising Standards in the Innter City School." Evidently even the educationally conservative Council for Basic Education became involved in the developing preoccupation with social policy considerations.

Further evidence of a changing educational environment appeared in the printing history of Conant's Slums and Suburbs. Inspired by visitations made as part of his study for The American High School Today, the later book incorporated a new analysis that highlighted the weaknesses of both sorts of schools. Its 1961 publication caused relatively little discussion with articles on the original study outnumbering those on the newer one by a three-to-one margin in the Education Index (and most of those dealing with Slums and Suburbs represented book reviews or speeched by Conant). However, a 1964 revision of Slums and Suburbs appeared as a paperback edition and caught the attention of a larger audience.

Practically overnight, educators seemed to have shifted their interest from academic achievement and scholar-teachers to deprivation and a "Head Start." To most analysts this logically implied a need to focus criticism on the newer topics, and they modified their comments to reflect this. Similarly, if they were to remain viable and attract new members, such groups as the Council for Basic Education had to alter their efforts also. The old issues suddenly appeared dull, disinteresting or irrelevant. All parties to the debate over education reacted accordingly, and only the precipitousness of this move should have surprised anyone. Nevertheless, it had several unfortunate consequences. The books by Conant, Koerner, and Lieberman were committed to a sort of limbo from which they were not extracted, and since each in its way was highly provocative, these works deserved more thorough consideration than they received. But more importantly the preceding represented the general fate of the reforms and criticisms herein discussed. With their effects unconsidered and their destiny unresolved, many of them simply persisted because educators had become accustomed to them. Ultimately this may have been responsible for the current revival of concern over standards, achievement, skills and the like: the issues had never been settled and they simply reemerged when the social and educational environment was once again right for them.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As originally conceived, this study was intended to evaluate this hypothesis: once lay people and the mass media focused critical attention on certain issues, professional educators reacted to defuse such attacks by formulating responses consistent with both their own interests and institutionalized conceptions and practices. Much evidence supporting this formulation was discovered, as indicated by the following summary.

Most criticism arose outside the educational institution with liberal educators often providing the basic statement of concern, and largely through the efforts of popular writers, these charges were brought to the general public and made into points of serious contention. Professional educators' efforts appeared primarily reactive and defensive; moreover, they often seemed willing to study problems until they disappeared or to placate the public with superficial tinkering. In either case, philosophic shifts were unnecessary. Social pressures continued to mount, and especially after Sputnik, they could be ignored no longer. As Americans

were caused to doubt the general quality of the nation's public schools, teachers and curricula, demands for reform became intense with teacher education attracting much attention. Being expected to make some real changes, professional educators responded by supporting the formation of NCATE, by suggesting various changes in teacher training programs, and by seeking increased financial support for all things educational. But before the effects of these efforts could be realized, social and political developments caused the educational institution to take an entirely different tack.

The same materials which culminated in these conclusions also provided the basis for another, possibly more important one: broad criticism, research programs, governmental involvement and increased financing produced remarkably little substantive reform. In 1965 teachers prepared in much the usual way applied the same methods to teach the normal courses just as had been done in 1950. A few schools, a few programs surely had changed; but the precipitous, institution-wide reforms demanded by critics simply had not occurred.

Although many of the elements supposedly essential to radical change existed during the era, only abortive efforts appeared. Such problems as bureaucratic inertia, lack of commitment or insufficient funds explained but a part of this failure. Something more subtle must have

been responsible, and the fault stemmed from the very nature of the analyses themselves. Drawing inspiration from highly personal and idealized views of society, each critic ultimately proposed changes inconsistent with reality. In some cases this resulted from a nostalgic yearning for less-complicated answers to contemporary problems; in others, from a desire to radically restructure education, society or both. The consequences were the same, however.

Typical of the former position were the neo-classicists--Van Doren and Barzun, Bestor and Flesch, Koerner and the Council for Basic Education. To them the schools seemed once to have been places of hard work that obviously had produced generations of great men and had since fallen on hard times. Their solution was to resurrect the old standards and reaffirm the old curriculum. The implications of such generalities revealed them as simplistic ideas completely at odds with the times: strictly determined and followed standards either would have increased dramatically the number of students forced out of school at the very time that "drop outs" were becoming a national concern or would have required many more "remedial" classes of smaller size just as the "teacher shortage" was developing. A curriculum dominated by "solids" likewise presented problems. Requiring the study of French and Latin by slum-dwelling students

appeared absurd, and advanced mathematics and physics seemed equally irrelevant to the majority of pupils not being prepared for professional or semi-professional careers. Arguments for the elimination of socially beneficial courses and vocational programs epitomized the insensitivity of liberal educators, and revealed their apparent ignorance of the rather hard-headed pragmatism of middle and lower class parents. Believing that education prepared one for the world of work and that the schools should reflect this, this majority refused to consider seriously neo-classicist reforms. Undaunted by such a lack of support, these critics persisted in their attacks--even to this day.

Somewhat different issues confronted those writers hoping to effect radical reorientations of things. Some commentators, typified by Rickover and Conant, called unabashedly for changes that would have made both the educational system and society much more meritocratic. This at first attracted support from the middle classes' apparent belief in meritocratic principles (McKee, 1969: 408-409). Rickover--and to a lesser extent Conant--thus found backing for plans to determine the students' futures by weighing their abilities through national, competitive examinations; to assign pupils to differential, highly specialized schools on the basis of such ratings; to depend solely on the results

of further testing for advancement or retention in school; to concentrate money and effort on the most able children; and to apply similar means to determine entry and success in the broader society. Although limited, the foregoing described the bleak consequences cited by attackers of technocratic/meritocratic educational proposals, and by identifying their advocates with such extreme positions, critics showed the ideas to oppose a number of other potent social forces and beliefs. Specifically meritocracy was shown to contradict American tendencies to provide people second or third chances at success, to support the underdog, and to believe that hard work and not talent guaranteed success. However, these and similar attitudes might well have proven minor obstacles if there had not been much evidence that people simply did not believe in a meritocracy as firmly as its implementation would have demanded.

Conant (1961b) himself found eloquent support for this. In Slums and Suburbs he described how suburban parents--supposedly those Americans most apt to believe in and work for a meritocracy--fought to maintain privileged positions for their children. They demanded college preparatory courses for even untalented students; they pressured students and teachers alike for higher grades; they expected counselors to find places in college for every child; they downgraded the need for or

appropriateness of vocational courses; and they generally refused to aid less fortunate schools. Even as he admitted that such counterproductive behavior had to be rooted in some sort of social consideration, Conant saw the real problem as being one of inadequate school financing; it was practically impossible for him to admit that meritocratic ideals were unrealistic.

By stressing this latter point, more recent analysts revealed the subtle social forces undermining acceptance of a meritocracy. After reviewing the relevant sociological literature, McKee (1969) concluded that evidence revealed the meritocratic ideal as a convenient myth employed by members of the middle class to rationalize their success and dominance (p. 408). Somewhat more harshly, Bowles and Gintis (1976) wrote that "beneath the façade of meritocracy lies the reality of an educational system geared toward the reproduction of [pre-existing] economic relations." Because arbitrariness and inequality characterized these relationships, "the educational meritocracy is largely symbolic and used only to legitimize inequality" (p. 103). In both views the middle and upper classes simply exploited the concept of a meritocracy to explain, maintain and strengthen their hold on choice positions in society; and according to Bowles and Gintis, challenges of this dominance resulted in the definition of "merit" being changed.

This analysis formed but a small portion of the study made by Bowles and Gintis. More generally, they endeavored to show that all previous efforts to reform American education had ended as "contradictions" or "broken promises" and that the "dynamics of the larger society" caused this (pp. 3-49). Preoccupied with considerations appropriately described as like those of classic "political economy" these men produced a work citing "At the Root of the Problem: The Capitalist Economy" and stressing that "educational strategy is part of a revolutionary transformation of economic life" (p. 14). In other words, the economic structure was what ailed education and only a change of systems could cure it. Their data, analytic methods or conclusions might be criticized, but Bowles and Gintis drew attention to an essential fact often neglected in debates over educational issues: the schools and society have been bound together in the most minute detail so that changes in one invariably result in changes in the other.

Historians of education have studied this process extensively. For example, Katz (1971) considered a variety of data to indicate that masses of immigrants and labor agitation had formed the basis for compulsory education and attendance laws. Investigating the bureaucratization of urban school systems, Tyack (1974) deduced the causes to be the pressure of increased enrollments

and the general trend toward "rationalization" of public administration. And in his pioneering study Callahan (1962) similarly concluded that the "cult of efficiency" among educational administrators had originated equally in the public's infatuation with "scientific management" and in incessant demands for economy in school budgets. While all these examples cited changes in education deriving from social pressures, there existed no logical argument against the reverse process.* However, it might well have been that the two were so interconnected as to make impossible determinations of cause-effect. Although in part problematic, such mutual influences determined the fate of educational reform programs.

The failures of some proposed reforms resulted from complete ignorance of this relationship; such was indeed the case with neo-classicist ideas. Liberal educators lamented the state of contemporary education and prescribed the revival of older methods, but this implied in turn a move toward older social patterns that had complemented such practices. Backward looking,

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*Callahan believed the former to always be the case, and he saw educators unthinkingly reacting to accommodate the public's every whim with educational consequences often given little consideration until needed as rationalizations or public relations coups. However, other observers felt the reverse to be true. According to them, educational changes facilitated or even forced social changes and the schools then could be made instruments of social policy--as in the case of racial integration.

simplistic solutions were still-born because they essentially negated the process of social change and denied the concept of progress. Meritocratic thinking had the exactly opposite effect of making change the goal, but it failed because meritocratic ideals were less important than other, conflicting ends. This implied that most Americans (at least those having significant socio-political presence) vastly preferred a rather comfortable present existence over either a severe past or rigorous future.

Two things characterized the partially successful reform efforts. Their authors strived to understand the existing structure on its own terms, and they attempted to establish and work toward intermediate goals more consistent with the nature of the system. The effectiveness of critics was directly proportional to their making such efforts: Koerner's propositions were rejected categorically, Conant's won some acceptance, and Lieberman's foretold many developments. But even Lieberman's work had limited applicability, because he stressed professionalized political power as the determining factor. Such a one-dimensional approach allowed great precision and guaranteed a certain measure of success, but it ignored many other variables and finally resulted in failure.

Ultimately the experiences of the reformers supported one final conclusion: no analysis of or reform

programs for education succeeded if they downgraded the relevance of education's social setting or alternatively emphasized but a single social variable.

However, students of education should not be discouraged by the fruitless efforts of neo-classicist and meritocratic system makers or by the partial advances of mid-range proposals like Lieberman's. The experience of these critics indicates that demands for broad, substantive changes must be based upon a profound social realism. This suggests that critics must unite philosophy and social perceptiveness so as to establish sound, workable short-term goals and to develop effective procedures for realizing them. However, there exists no good reason why these efforts cannot culminate in the attaining of some more abstract ideal. As Bowles and Gintis (1976) stated it, "a revolutionary transformation of social life will not simply happen through piecemeal change. Rather, we believe it will occur only as the result of a prolonged struggle based on hope and a total vision of a qualitatively new society" (p. 17).

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