

worth reading because it says much that is applicable to all teaching situations.

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STUDENTS AND DECISION-MAKING, by Robert S. Morison. 1970. Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C. 142 pp. \$2.00.

The president of Cornell University appointed a commission to study the governance of that university—including the role of the students. This book is, in part, the chairman's personal report.

The first part of the book is a brief, well-written discussion of the university's purposes, relationship to society, and administrative apparatus. It emphasizes the point that many of the misunderstandings and consequent unrest within the university have resulted from the failure to understand and examine problems that have arisen from the public-service function of the university.

The second part was written largely by a commission member, David Moore, dean of Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. It is devoted to a discussion of the student and his discontents, which have grown out of his encounters with society and the university and his general feeling of powerlessness. An excellent description of the university as a community contains the suggestion that some of the student unrest may reflect the quest for community.

The third part lists changes that can be made within the existing framework of the university: students should be given greater responsibility for their own education; every student should have the opportunity to develop a continuing relationship with a wise and concerned faculty member; students should be allowed to "shop around" for courses at the beginning of the term; greater opportunity should be provided for independent study and research; and students should be involved in decision-making at all levels.

The fourth part contains comments by Ian Macneil, professor of law at Cornell, on student involvement in decision-making and its relationship to intellectual liberty. The advantages and dangers of student involvement in decision-making are examined. Macneil prefers to have more alternate courses rather than to have students make decisions as members of course committees: alternate courses provide for greater intellectual liberty, he believes.

Although the book reads like a commission report in places and some of the ideas are difficult to follow, it is an interesting analysis. The suggestions for change within the university seem realistic. I recommend the book to anyone who is concerned with campus un-

rest and wants a greater insight into the problems of governing a university.

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SCHOOLING FOR WHAT?, by Don H. Parker. 1970. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. 285 pp. \$7.95.

American society has been moving through another cycle of crisis, which has included the frustrations of the "generation gap" and the deadly serious confrontations on campuses. We have now come to a contemplative but still unpredictable stand-off among divergent social forces. Somewhere near the middle of these events Don H. Parker talked to 1,000 concerned Americans about the revolt of American youth. This book is, in part, a transcription of the feelings and concerns and the "vast discontent" expressed in those interviews. But, in large part, it is also a podium from which the author delivers his own personal diatribe against "establishment" values and against the inefficiencies and unfounded premises of education as it exists in America today. He uses the common and diverse frustrations and resentments of his cross-section of Americana as justification for one more blast at the way society schools its children.

In formal interviews Parker used 10 questions to glean the feelings and opinions of the respondents, most of whom were 15 to 24 years old. The questions were these:

- "1. Why should we have schools?"
- "2. Can you think of ways to make schooling better?"
- "3. What do you like most about schooling now?"
- "4. What do you like least about schooling now?"
- "5. Why should people work?"
- "6. What else should people do besides work?"
- "7. Do you think schooling helps you learn about these other things?"
- "8. Now what about the individual? In these days we hear a lot about trying to be an individual. The idea of 'being an individual' is probably not very new, but 'being an individual' seems harder than ever in these times. Why do you think this is so?"
- "9. If you believe we should have sex education in the public schools, what kinds of things should be learned?"
- "10. Now in conclusion, can we consider this. It is being said that we are living in an 'age of contention,' an 'age of controversy,' between the younger and the older, between race groups, and between various other kinds of groups. Why this sudden outburst—the demonstrations, the riots, the marches, the sit-ins, even the long hair and the funny clothes? Why do you think this is happening?"

That the biases of the author are implicit in his selection of questions is evident. What is not revealed is the actual bias represented in the population of respondents. This population is not adequately described. Further biases are evident in the selection of certain responses for quotation and as a basis for inferences expressed in this book. The result is that it is the opinions of the author that form the theme that pervades this book. "Today," he says, "youth is a new force to be reckoned with and we are going to have to change the schools fast, or they are going to change them for us. We still have time to choose between revolution and anarchy in our schools—and in our country."

The problem is not that one would disagree but that there is nothing really new in the author's assessment of the nature of things. The only time that America has not been blaming its educational system for its problems has been when it was too busy working itself out of world and lesser wars imposed upon it by external threats to power and to peace. Criticism and philosophic idealism are easy positions to take, as evidenced by the large and growing number of persons of those persuasions. Thus the author documents what most readers will be already well informed about and adds little that is new to the discourse. The crucial question of *how* a society reforms itself is not answered. It is not enough to say, as Parker does, "We must turn the school curriculum upside down, so that the major part of the student's time is occupied in educating the use of the skills and knowledge he has in pursuit of goals he himself sets, based on what his interests are, instead of the meaningless acquisition of skills and knowledge for which he has no use."

The author reveals himself as a romantic by his only slightly concealed admiration of life-style experiments, such as the communes and educational ones such as the free universities, while devaluing institutionalized research programs, such as accountability and national-assessment studies.

None of this is all "bad" or all "good." What matters is that the critic is indecisive in spite of being well informed. His voluminous treatment of what is wrong is out of balance when placed in context with the variety of human needs, aspirations, and frustrations that have, in fact, forced the evolution of the present system and which, inexorably, will force the evolution of another—no matter what we do.

Readers who wish to extend their involvement in, or awareness of, criticism of education can find one model in *Schooling for What?* Others, like myself, may hope for and find more productive involvement in efforts to trans-