

Review Articles

Socialist or Democratic Party?

During the founding convention of the New Democratic Party the newspapers reported—often with relish—the differences that developed between the moderates and the leftists. Differences there undoubtedly were. Yet they were hardly as divisive as those that have recently caused such intense soul-searching in the democratic socialist parties of western Europe. Everywhere the result has been the same, victory for the moderates; everywhere a party image which was deemed appropriate for the hungry thirties has been recast to give it greater appeal in the affluent society of the sixties.

Yet the fundamentalist socialist is still fighting a rearguard action. One illustration is *Out of Apathy*,* the first of the New Left Books, and the result of three years' intensive discussion and controversy among British left-wingers. While the book contains much that is nonsense, some of its analyses are both interesting and challenging. Its editor, E. P. Thompson, emphasizes that the aim of socialism is not equality of opportunity within an acquisitive society, but rather a society of equals, a co-operative community. To create such a community, production for profit must of necessity be replaced by production for use. But the British Labour Party, says Thompson, has been content to accommodate itself to the needs of capitalism, even though "contemporary British society gives as much reason for outrage as the society of the 1880s or 1930s."

Why has the sense of outrage found so little direct expression? The authors of *Out of Apathy* analyze the situation thus: Britain is over-ripe for socialism. The objective pre-conditions for socialist organization matured long ago, and the processes of decay have now set in. This decay appears in the form of apathy. But the usual explanations of apathy are unacceptable. To say that people are uninterested in public affairs because our affluent society leaves no room for discontent does not accord with the facts. "We need only scratch the surface of social life to find not contentment, but envy, frustration and on occasion violence not far below." It is also only part of the truth to say that people are apathetic because they feel their impotence in contemporary civilization—"the

**Out of Apathy*. By E. P. Thompson *et al.* Stevens: New Left Books, 1960. Pp. xi, 308. 15s.

small man in vast corporate enterprise, the simple citizen confronted by the state, the individual trade unionist within the union 'machine.'” One must proceed a step further and realize that British institutions have become so deeply involved in maintaining the *status quo*—the Establishment—that “the energies of dissent become dispersed within them long before they touch the centre of power.”

E. P. Thompson attributes this circumstance to a complex series of events which seem to indicate the lack of a better alternative to communism: Liberal reformism (under the guise of socialism) was able to win substantial benefits for the people; the experience of the Russian Revolution appeared to make the transition to socialism synonymous with bloodshed, censorship, and purges; the British Labour movement becomes increasingly parasitic upon the capitalistic economy as it develops deeper vested interests in its continuance; capitalism got a new lease on life through war, post-war recovery, and preparations for a new war, at a time when communism was discrediting itself even further as a possible alternative. “So that British people find themselves today, with the assent of orthodox Labour, within the grand defensive alliance of international capitalism [NATO], and exposed on every side to the ideology of apathy.”

These events, the analysis continues, have had a marked effect upon British business. Though tamed in some directions, it had regained and even reinforced its hold on the economy by the end of the fifties. Around the corporations cluster new and old forms of privilege which have circumvented and even reversed the attempt to effect a redistribution of income. Once more they are fixing the nation's priorities and shaping the direction of its life. Through advertising and salesmanship they are concerning themselves with the motivation of the individual, shaping his ambitions, fashioning his values, and touching him in parts of his life which were once considered to be private.

What is the way out of the apathy that tolerates this state of affairs? E. P. Thompson and his associates are adamant on one point: Britain must abandon “the Fabian prescription of gradual evolution towards socialism by means of episodic reforms stretching over the horizon into some never-never land in the twenty-first century.” In succeeding volumes they hope to complete their analysis and offer suggestions. One factor encourages them. At the moment there is a precarious equilibrium of forces which is sustained only because political energy is confined within the authorized conventions of public life; even the slightest shift of power might precipitate a crisis.

Stanley Knowles's *The New Party* presents a leftist viewpoint of an entirely different hue.* While *Out of Apathy* was not intended to be highly academic, it will appeal only to a sophisticated audience. In contrast, Mr. Knowles's book was designated to acquaint the average Canadian with the circumstances leading to the launching of the country's newest party. Now that the founding convention is over, it is interesting

**The New Party*. By Stanley Knowles. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1961. Pp. 136. \$3.00.

mainly for showing how much of its author's attitude and outlook is incorporated in the ideology of the New Democratic Party.

Above all, *The New Party* exudes optimism. Not everyone sharing Mr. Knowles's experience would be equally sanguine about the future. Our model parliamentarian for many years, he suffered personal defeat in the federal election of March, 1958. To many politicians this might have been the end of the political road. Yet for more than two years he laboured as a primary architect of the New Democratic Party, and he found it a dramatic and exciting experience. He became convinced that he was participating in something that could change the course of Canadian politics and prove to be a landmark in the nation's history. The mystery of the historical process, he admits, is unfathomable. Yet he dares to believe that there is an inevitability that shapes our course, that "somehow what is good persists," and that "sooner or later Canada must give its progressives their chance."

Accordingly Mr. Knowles continually emphasizes the fact that the New Party is the final stage of a process evolving over a long period of time. For example, the decision of the Canadian Labour Congress to participate in its founding is termed "the culmination of nearly a century of trade union interest in legislative matters and half a century of searching for the best means of taking political action." Similarly, the delegates who set up the CCF in 1933 are considered merely to have laid "the foundation on the basis of which a generation later a new start could be made, bright with the hope of moving forward to even greater accomplishments." Not everyone would regard these events as a *continuum* in the same sense as Mr. Knowles. Yet this was the mythology which the founding convention of the New Democratic Party unquestionably accepted.

The critic must be more than a trifle skeptical of Mr. Knowles's optimism; in particular, he will question his treatment of apathy. Mr. Knowles admits that for many affluence has become an end in itself, that "most of our people have an outlook which is middle-class, materially acquisitive, and fundamentally individualistic." Nevertheless, he detects a revolt against emptiness, because, after all, "man has a nobility, a creative urge, that is expressing itself today in the hope that our tremendous productive capacity will lead to a society in which human dignity might be the lot of all." This view of human nature certainly does great credit to Mr. Knowles's generous temperament, but as a way "out of apathy", it surely appears superficial, perhaps even naïve, when compared with the analysis of E. P. Thompson, *et. al.* Then again, one wonders if Mr. Knowles minimizes the difficulty of getting farmers and unionists to co-operate within a single party. Perhaps it is true that those representatives of labour and agriculture who can be induced to discuss their problems around the conference table discover that their interests are not antithetical. But is it not also true that the image which Canadian farmers in general have of trade unions is distinctly unfavourable, that the CCF has had little success over the years in effecting a mutual accommodation of the two elements, and that to date no significant farm organization has affiliated with the New Democratic

Party?

When it comes to dogma, Mr. Knowles lays special stress upon the need to put the parliamentary system back on the rails. He makes the point again and again that Canadians are concerned because debate in Parliament has become meaningless; it will remain so, he says, until there are two major parties which present real alternatives to action. Mr. Knowles has, of course, an abiding interest in the institution of Parliament. Over the years he made himself the unquestioned master of its rules; during the pipe-line fiasco he turned his expertise to good advantage against the members of a Liberal administration who for twenty years had used their overwhelming majorities to ram their measures through the House of Commons and had not bothered to make themselves proficient in parliamentary procedure. Yet this aspect of Mr. Knowles's work leaves the fundamentalist socialists cold. Bring about the socialist revolution, they argue, and Parliament will take care of itself. As Colin Cameron, a left-wing member of the CCF, put it:

One who does not share Stanley Knowles's intense preoccupation with parliament and its procedures may be pardoned for doubting if the general public is as concerned with the fate of Parliament as Knowles thinks. But if there is a conscious lack of confidence in parliament it seems likely to have stemmed from a public realization that real power in our nation no longer resides in parliaments but in the boardrooms of corporations, and that so long as ultimate power rests there it will make little difference to daily life which party forms the government.*

Both Mr. Cameron and Mr. Knowles deny that the democratic process is operating satisfactorily within the old-line parties as they seek through compromise to make themselves palatable to all segments of the Canadian public. Mr. Knowles wants a realignment of political forces to produce two parties that will offer meaningful alternatives. One would be an old party standing for things as they are, the other a new party standing for social progress. Canadians would therefore have a choice "between social inequality and human dignity, between private monopoly and public planning, between special privilege and co-operation . . . between values based on greed and materialism and values based on human worth." Mr. Knowles sees no harm accruing from this state of affairs. But does it not pose the danger of class conflict, something which is at least sublimated under the present system? Furthermore, if the alternatives are as Mr. Knowles states them, and if the Canadian people are at all rational, would it not mean a perpetual majority party and a perpetual minority party? Would that be conducive to healthy democracy?

The second and basic part of Mr. Knowles's dogma provides a means of tackling the perennial problems which confront our society: unemployment, inadequate housing

*Colin Cameron, "The New Party will die if it's a mere liberal splinter", *Maclean's*, July 29, 1961, pp. 5 and 46.

and educational facilities, substandard welfare services, and the like. The sixties, he says, have brought into being a whole set of new ideas waiting to be incorporated into the framework of the society; these ideas will permit the breakthrough needed to institute the just society. But after examining the specific content of these ideas, one wonders, however good they may be, if they add anything really new to what the CCF has been advocating for years. Fundamentally he proposes a further redistribution of the product of society through taxation in order to provide greater welfare payments, and a full-scale use of economic planning in order to realize broad social objectives.

What does it all add up to? Is it democratic socialism? Throughout most of the book Mr. Knowles seems deliberately to avoid the word *socialism*. Then, in a somewhat curious paragraph (pp. 93-4), he apparently tries to allay the fears of those who might be repelled by socialism without alienating the socialists in the process. Labels, he says, do not matter; certainly the New Party will draw heavily from the principles of democratic socialism. But the latter, he emphasizes, is an endless process, the objectives of which are greater equality, social justice, economic and political freedom, and dignity for all. To meet these objectives, democratic socialists advocate public ownership and other ways of enlarging the public sector to the extent that they are required. The New Party, according to Mr. Knowles, would aim at achieving the objectives of democratic socialism and would derive inspiration and strength from socialist principles; it would be a party in which a core of convinced democratic socialists would welcome the support of all others who believed in social progress.

The difficulties under which Mr. Knowles labours here are by no means new. The initial declaration of the CCF, the Regina manifesto of 1933, stated unequivocally the intention of setting up a socialist utopia: "We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination of one class by another will be eliminated No CCF government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism". But in the changed economic climate of the forties and fifties a party based on class appeal and forever fulminating against capitalism and vicious exploitation had far less appeal than in the days of depression, and its opponents had no difficulty in fastening a repellent image upon it. Against the opposition of a few die-hards, it accepted the hard facts of life at Winnipeg in 1956: "The CCF has always recognized public ownership as the most effective means of breaking the stranglehold of private monopolies At the same time [it] recognizes that in many fields there will be a need of private enterprise which can make a useful contribution to the development of our economy."

In the New Democratic Party it is at least arguable that another shift to the right has occurred. While the programme outlined by Mr. Knowles was merely tentative and suggestive, that adopted by the founding convention was remarkably akin to it in tenor. This was not an unexpected result. The delegates at the convention were for the most part representative of New Party clubs, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the CCF.

Since all who believed in social progress were invited to join the clubs, doctrinaire socialists constituted a small fraction of their membership. As for the Canadian Labour Congress, it was surprising that its craft unions, because of their long record of opposition to political affiliation, could be induced to play any part at all in the new venture. Perhaps they were influenced by the desire to maintain solidarity with the industrial unions within the CLC which have never possessed similar inhibitions; perhaps they were merely acting in self-protection in the wake of recent evidence of anti-union sentiment. In any case they could hardly be expected to be enthusiastic over doctrinaire socialism. Organized labour in Canada as in Britain is reluctant to cause a violent disturbance within a capitalistic system in which they have developed such a deep vested interest.

So the moderates in the CCF—who include Mr. Knowles—had overwhelming support against the left wing of the CCF. Even when Mr. Knowles wrote *The New Party*, he was certain of the general line that the convention would take. The left wing realized it too. Mr. Colin Cameron had already warned that there were people of power and influence in both the unions and the CCF who viewed “the New Party in terms of a mildly leftish liberalism rather than as a new political force to guide Canada through the revolution of our times”; he was profoundly disturbed by New Party seminars which emphasized all the apparatus of the welfare state, but backed away from any consideration of a basic social transformation.

The choice of the moderate T. C. Douglas as leader clinched the defeat of the left-wingers. The Saskatchewan premier has always been more interested in the equitable distribution of the product of the society than in an outright attack on the capitalistic system. He has no intention of taking the cream separator away from its owner: “all we want,” he says, “is some of the cream.” To which Mr. Cameron indignantly replied that the owners of private industry “want the cream, not the fun of owning the separator.” But it took only one day of the founding convention to demonstrate that Mr. Cameron and his associates were espousing a lost cause.

In the choice of a name the moderates also had their way. The convention overwhelmingly rejected any label that would stamp the party as socialist or indicate its affinity to democratic socialist parties elsewhere. Once again Mr. Knowles offered a pre-view of what was to come. For if his book does anything, it stresses the democratic nature of the process which brought the New Party into being. Support grew from the bottom, we are told, until it had “set in motion a pace that exceeded the fondest hope of those who had taken a part in starting it all in 1958.” The conventions of the CCF and CLC which approved the setting up of the New Party both “belonged to the floor”; the key to building it was “the widespread participation in determining what its structure will be”; the provisions of its constitution “add up to a functioning democratic organization, fully controlled by the people who comprise it.”

Yet there are some grounds for skepticism. It is true that at the founding convention the rank and file participated ably and vigorously in the deliberations. But there

was another picture as well, that of the hierarchy of the Canadian Labour Congress, sitting impassively, participating but little in the proceedings, seemingly content to let the ordinary delegates discuss details to their heart's content once it was certain of getting the kind of party it wanted. Yet how representative of Canadian labour were even the ordinary delegates of the CLC? Certainly there are small locals within the organization whose membership is barely aware that a new party has been formed. There comes to mind Robert Michels' dictum of the impossibility of true democracy within large scale organizations, of the inevitable loss of real contact between the *élite* and the rank and file. One must therefore doubt if the trade union leaders can deliver the votes of their members *en masse* to the New Democratic Party. All this is not to deny, however, that democracy may have been carried to its ultimate in the organization of the party.

Out of Apathy and *The New Party* present conflicting left-of-centre viewpoints. E. P. Thompson and his associates are probably correct in one respect—that before the new scale of values which both they and Mr. Knowles want can completely replace the existing ones, radical rearrangements in our capitalistic and acquisitive society will first be necessary. But it is at least arguable that this new order is premised on a concept of human nature which is neither true nor realizable, and that Mr. Knowles's gradualist and reformist approach is therefore the more realistic. Of the two it is certainly the only one that offers any hope of immediate political success in Canada.

It is perhaps unfair to subject *The New Party* to rigorous analysis. Undoubtedly the book contains little that is new in the way of basic ideology. But it was intended simply to paint a fresh and attractive picture of Canada's new party of the left for the general public, and in that aim Mr. Knowles may have succeeded. Already the party has been given support by no less a person than Prime Minister Diefenbaker. For whether or not the New Democratic Party is genuinely socialist, he has declared that the basic issue in the next election will be socialism versus private enterprise. So even before our newest party was fully constituted it appeared to be recognized as the government's chief opponent.

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The Course of Progressive Education

"There is something queer about the genus 'educator'; the loftiest are not immune. I think the cause must lie in their isolation from the rough and tumble contacts with all manner of men. They lose their sense of reality."

Mr. Cremin does not use this remark of Abraham Flexner (which he quotes) as the text of his survey of progressive education.* It is, however, to a surprising degree applicable to a group of men and women who, differing in many ways, were united by an immense concern for an education precisely adapted to the needs of contemporary society. It is possible to be so concerned with what seems real and immediate as to lose one's sense of reality.

The ingredients of progressivism were many and varied. The intellectual leaders of the western world were losing their religious faith. This puts the matter much too simply. Only a small minority of men and women in any age is personally and profoundly influenced by religious faith. But intellectual leaders had long accepted religious dogmas and the social system founded on them. The scepticism of the eighteenth century had been succeeded by powerful movements of religious revival in Protestant and Roman Catholic communions. And yet by the mid-nineteenth century (even before the publication of the *Origin of Species*) these too were losing their influence among the intellectuals. Moreover Darwinism, the teachings of Freud, and other influences were causing another loss: loss of faith in the single power of man's reason to perceive an objective truth; loss of faith in the very existence of "objective truth".

The result of this increasing loss of faith in two great dogmas of the Western world, the dogma of divine revelation through the Christian church, and the dogma of objective truth, left the late nineteenth and the twentieth century a prey to a profound sense of insecurity, an insecurity none the less real because it was for a long time concealed from its victims by other and pleasant sensations. The nineteenth century was a period of immense increase of wealth and power in the North Atlantic countries, wealth and power based in large part on the rational processes of science. These induced an immense hopefulness not only of material, but of moral progress. If religious dogma was losing its hold, virtues hitherto deemed "Christian" (or Jewish) were sublimated in a warm and genuine humanitarianism, which, in North America, at its best tended to be associated with democracy and egalitarianism.

A generation, fundamentally insecure, but consciously optimistic and idealist was faced, in the United States, with very difficult social problems. Increasing industrializa-

**The Transformation of the School; Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*. By Lawrence A. Cremin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited], 1961. Pp. xi, 387, xxiv. \$6.00.

tion in a society still enthusiastically "laissez faire" was creating a vast slum population; the principles of democracy, to say nothing of the demands of the industrial system, emphasized the need to teach more things to more people over a longer period of time; and masses of immigrants from a variety of countries, restless and disoriented, emphasized the need for a teaching-plus-training programme which would reach adults as well as children. Clearly the heirs of Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann would look to the schools as one solution, if not the solution. But when enthusiastic reformers looked at the schools they found them insufficient, inadequate in staff and in all material facilities, too often unimaginative, hidebound, and repressive.

Would-be reformers faced with such a situation were driven, it could be argued, not only by their optimism and humanity but by their very inner insecurity to create a better society using education as the essential instrument. The idea of course was not new except to its promoters, who pressed it with the vigour and enthusiasm of evangelists.

How could education be used in the good cause? There was a variety of opinions. Basically the progressives seem to have had in common a strong faith in the susceptibility of the young to indoctrination if skilfully carried on through free activity within a carefully planned environment. A later post-war group of the twenties placed very special emphasis on the creative powers with which all children are (presumably) naturally endowed—"The notion that each individual has uniquely creative potentialities and that a school in which children are encouraged freely to develop these potentialities is the best guarantee of a larger society truly devoted to human worth and excellence", as Mr. Cremin puts it (p. 202). He adds, however, that, in his view, by exaggerating one part of the earlier programme approved by Dewey, these innovators contrived to distort the whole, transforming what should have been a means into an end.

Along with these ideas and sometimes as cross-purposes with them went the new scientific procedures, the analyses of the learning process, with the resulting new methods, tests, and measurements. And, in these, men did have faith; where other things were vague and problematical these were certain and precise. It may be added, that in the growing immensity and complexity of the school systems if some scientific procedures had not existed it would have been necessary to invent them.

And so it happened that the schools as seen by progressive eyes were not to be agents for conveying facts, or opportunities for pursuing precisely defined disciplines; they were to be the birthplace of the New Eden; from them would emerge Utopia, but not by accident or by divine providence. By careful planning, by "social engineering", there must develop inevitably in an age of science, what good men everywhere had always longed to see, peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Mr. Cremin offers a carefully documented history of this movement; if the stream of his narrative occasionally wanders into a series of case histories of those who may be deemed part of the movement, that must be attributed to the intractability of his material. He writes of a time when in a vast, hustling land offering an infinite variety of societies,

there was likely to be an infinite variety in social and educational planning. He writes too of a country inveterately hospitable to new people and new ideas—a hospitality that threatened to become a new religion. And so he carries the reader through the fight for free schools and vocational training; the practical (with romantic overtones) “back to the land” movement; through Dewey’s predecessor, Dewey himself, his disciples and his disillusionment; through the formal Progressive Education Association, the National Office of Education, the National Education Association, to the Life Adjustment Movement. He touches lightly in the last chapter on the low grumblings of the forties followed by the vehement anti-progressivism of the fifties.

The Transformation of the School is a careful, precise, generally sympathetic but judicial account. It clearly represents an enormous work of research and interpretation. Anyone who has struggled with the educational jargon that our American neighbours in their generous desire to share all good things have bestowed on us, will be grateful for light shed by this most helpful work. Having been led by the trees one by one, there is no further cause to wonder at the strange variety of fruits that some of our Canadian educators have gathered in the progressive orchard.

Mr. Cremin’s own style is readable and refreshingly free from jargon, except in a few instances where he cannot quite resist the intoxication of educational words and metaphors. “Artful” in the sense of wise or skilful is regrettable; “insightfully” is unforgivable; “pregnant” is overworked; and the metaphors “crucial clue”, “a platform to guide the venture”, “work launched on a shoe string” and “the goal [which] had—burned long and brightly” do not illuminate; they obscure.

Again, although Mr. Cremin’s comments are on the whole clear, penetrating and judicial, there are moments when his judgment seems to falter or when from a perhaps too anxious desire to be fair he fails to make a judgment when the occasion demands it. For example, he criticizes the progressives and their movement repeatedly because they did not produce an educational philosophy. But, if they had no philosophy can one associate them as a movement with “progress” and attribute to them, not as individuals but as a group, so much that is good? As a professor of philosophy once said to a group of beginners, “You ought to be interested in philosophy for you all have a philosophy whether you know it or not”. It is surely the task of the historian to exhibit the philosophy, expressed or implied, of a movement, and without which it hardly is a movement.

Moreover, Mr. Cremin does not fully and clearly explore the essential “good” of the progressives. He cites the experimental schools and their enthusiastic teachers and pupils. He even produces *in extenso* the horror of a Lincoln School “project” on boats which leads (by way of trade), oddly enough, to the Vikings, Phoenicians, Solomon’s Temple and the Egyptians, but ignores (in the name of social relevance?) the great trading groups that created the western world, and carried their colonization, for good or ill, over the entire globe: Greeks, Romans, Italians, Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, French, English, Americans. Flexner might well say that educators lose their sense of

reality. Mr. Cremin does concede that many of these experimental successes did not work when applied to schools in the mass. He does not quite draw the conclusion which nevertheless he puts in the mind of his reader: that the greatest needs for a teacher are enthusiasm, optimism, dedication, intellectual ability, and, one must add, "a flair for teaching." The progressive experimenters were people who liked teaching and who, as is shown, were natural experimenters as every good teacher is and should be. This does not mean that the good teacher's notions will work for other good teachers. Teaching is an art. Perhaps the great "good" done by the progressives was to suggest that a dull and despised trade could be an exciting, rewarding, and noble adventure.

Again Mr. Cremin in recording the successes of experimental schools and colleges, as established by tests which showed that their graduates, following in freedom a rich and varied curriculum, were yet able to equal or better others in traditional knowledge, does not draw the obvious conclusions. The leading experimental schools like Dewey's or the Lincoln High School not only attracted a superior and enthusiastic staff and allowed them ample freedom and generous facilities. They gave them a ridiculously light work load in terms of students. John Dewey's school began in 1896 with 16 pupils and two lecturers; by 1952 it had 144 children, 23 instructors and 10 assistants, or about one staff member to four children (p. 135). Bennington College in 1935 had 50 faculty members and 250 students, a ratio of one to five. In these conditions tests which showed parity or even rather better with the traditionally educated are not impressive. Anything less would have branded the experiment a disastrous failure. One might say that the contribution of the progressives was to show that any method will work if applied willingly by a first-rate teacher to a small class. Indeed Dewey himself said something rather like this in the days of his disillusionment: that progressives had destroyed well, but had not built.

And this brings us back to the progressive philosophy, for they did have a philosophy the implications of which Mr. Cremin does not see, or, if he sees them he does not choose to explain them. Education was to be an instrument in the hand of enlightened teachers to produce a new and "good" society. As Dewey said (1897), "education is the fundamental method of progress and reform"; "The teacher is engaged not simply in the training of individuals but in the formation of the proper social life"; "in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true Kingdom of God" (p. 100). George Counts, as represented by Mr. Cremin, put it more bluntly (1932): "Teachers would have to use their collective intelligence to plan the best society possible and they would have to abandon their timid fear of indoctrination and forthrightly teach the vision of this new society in the schools" (p. 260).

Dewey and Counts, without admitting it, are recommending the teaching of religion in the schools, religion interpreted as the highest good which young people are invited to recognize, worship, and follow. And this religion, or highest good, was to be determined by the teachers (or rather by the teachers of teachers) and, at the public expense, imposed by them on a captive audience. Now as Albert Lynd pointed out more

than fifteen years ago, the United States and its schools are committed to democracy; in a secular state allowing freedom and therefore diversity of religion, the subsidization in the schools of religion or of a religious substitute not acceptable to all parents is simply not democratic.* It is a weakness, and a serious one, in Mr. Cremin's work that he overlooks this fundamental character of progressivism, the assumption that the schools not only may but must "form" children according to an essentially secularist, non-transcendental, and therefore (in a dogmatic sense) anti-Christian philosophy. Mr. Cremin might choose to argue that dogmatic Christianity is passing out, and that the new secularism is the most efficient moral and socializing agent that can be devised in its place. If so, it would be better to state the case frankly instead of by-passing it.

He has, however, a certain liking for misty statements. He quotes, three times, once in the introduction and twice in the work itself, a saying of Jane Addams: "unless all men and all classes contribute to a good, we cannot even be sure that it is worth having". "Here", says Mr. Cremin, "was the spiritual hub of progressive education" (p. ix). He is probably right. This either means nothing, or it is dangerous to all liberty. It may be a pious and meaningless aspiration after greater social integration. Or it may mean—it *seems* to mean—that if a "good" doesn't come from the group, and meet with group approval, it isn't good—an idea much more familiar now than it was in Jane Addams' time and one that has associated with it a sense of horror and dread, the culmination of the profound moral insecurity of our day. But Mr. Cremin cites it (three times) without really asking what it means. And in the same way, after a long and helpful discussion of Dewey, he concludes that there is need for further study of Dewey's work: "In the absence of such study Dewey will remain little more than a symbol of the educational hopes and despairs of the American people *at any given moment in their history*" (p. 239, italics mine). The reader, grateful for what has gone before, has a right to resent this retreat into the fog. Mr. Cremin's contentment with mistiness is further reflected in his last chapter. As he has shown, but not stated, the radicals of the 1880's maintained that intellectualism in the schools was not enough and that, anyhow, it had completely run to seed. The radicals of the 1950's insisted that none of the substitutes, admirable as some of them might be, could replace the ordered, disciplined conscious learning that should be restored without loss of the true progress, in the sense of improvement, of the past three quarters of a century. Mr. Cremin seems to believe that he should not take a side. Perhaps he should not; but he might state more clearly both sides, he might even show that each stood for important truths, instead of offering the frustrating fade-out of the last few pages.

These comments are not so much a reflection on Mr. Cremin's achievement, for which all who are concerned with education must be profoundly grateful, as on the magnitude and difficulty of his task. Apart from the amount and complexity of the

**Quackery in the Public Schools* (1953).

material to be presented, he has had to deal with people with whom he has had close personal connection, direct or indirect; and he has been compelled to touch on contemporary controversies in which hard and wounding things have been said and written on both sides. He has done his work with calmness and charity; and if he has occasionally preferred a certain obscurity to ruthless analysis, this may prove only that he has more prudence than has been vouchsafed to one of his reviewers.

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