

schooling and society must be examined in terms of the reciprocal relationships that hold them together across time and space so that the day-to-day practices may be seen as both socially constructed and historically located (p. 151).

The theory toward which Hamilton's title indicates he is groping would resolve an apparent contradiction in his view of schooling as both social regulation and social redefinition. He claims this *can* be accomplished if teachers and learners are seen to be simultaneously the target of teaching and the means through which that target can be reached. He says:

If a curriculum is to be effective, the active engagement of teachers and learners is required. Yet, in their activity, teachers and learners also have a reactive effect upon the curriculum (and beyond). Regulation and redefinition are not, therefore, mutually exclusive outcomes. They are inseparable aspects of the same social process. (p. 154)

Hamilton's prologue to the task of constructing a theory from the prelude of history is compatible with much current holistic thinking. May he continue his intellectual explorations until he is ready boldly to proclaim his ideas in a fully integrated fashion and in a fully developed form.

It has been a pleasure to have had the opportunity to review *Towards a Theory of Schooling*, both for its content and method and for the hope that teachers of the history of

education, especially those who might not have guessed its value and relevance by its name, may be encouraged to read it. It is a book whose author succeeds in his wish to produce a volume not simply about the past, but one that could "illuminate the continuous present" (p. 3).

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Sol Cohen and Lewis Solomon, eds.
From the Campus: Perspectives on the School Reform Movement. New York: Praeger, 1989. \$42.95 U.S.

The twelve essays in this edited volume address the 1980s school reform or "excellence" movement in the United States initiated by the 1983 publication of *A Nation At Risk*, the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The report projected an alarming indictment of public education and the reform movement it sponsored has been directed toward substantively upgrading school performance. The professed objective has been to improve the measurable skills of students in order to make the nation more productive and therefore more competitive in the international marketplace. The correlation between school system performance and economic prosperity is an issue which has attracted world-wide attention. For this reason, the analysis of educational reform presented in *From the Campus* is relevant to an international audience. Recurrent

themes appear not only in the U.S. but in educational reforms in Canada, Great Britain, and Western Europe among others (pp. 205-7).

The authors in this collection concur with the effort to provide for excellence in education; yet, as Carl Weinberg notes, current reform strategies tend to emphasize "accountability" in improved standards in ways which not only diminish the humanistic objectives of education but also stifle past gains made toward the provision of educational equity. The editors, Sol Cohen, an educational historian, and Lewis C. Solomon, dean of the University of California, Los Angeles, Graduate School of Education, economist, and authority on higher education, point out that the current movement for reform has largely been allied with elected officials in state government, the heads of foundations, civic leaders, and business executives "outside the education profession in general and the schools of education in particular" (p. 2). James Catterall and Harry Handler cite the "incursion" of the "lexicon of the corporate world" into the field of education in the recurrent emphasis on "quality" in terms of "productivity" (p. 201).

From the Campus presents the alternative perspectives of a single faculty of education, that of the Graduate School of Education of the University of California, Los Angeles, in opposition to a corporate view of excellence applied to schooling. The editors and authors represent diverse disciplines in the often eclectic mix of scholars and practitioners typical of schools of education. The primary aim

is to encourage "educationalists" to "join the debate" over reform (p. 4).

This collection is of special relevance to historians interested in what has been termed "recent" history and the uses of history in the analysis of educational policy. Sol Cohen's essay, "Every School a Clinic: A Historical Perspective on Modern American Education," sets the stage for an analysis of the current reform efforts in the continuum of historical change. Cohen's provocative discussion underscores the usefulness of an historical perspective in delineating the underlying assumptions which have guided policy decisions in the past as applicable to understanding the parameters of contemporary change.

With this in mind it is important to call attention to a fact that historians of education know well, namely, that reformism is not new to contemporary school politics. The history of universal (compulsory) public schooling over the past one hundred years is a story of controversial expansion and adaptation. The history of public schools in both the United States and Canada can be seen as a series of contests and compromises over the content, purposes, and clientele of classrooms. Yet as much as education has changed over the twentieth century, we constantly seem confronted by the observation that the problems have remained much the same. From an organizational perspective, Richard Williams attributes this to the persistence of "first order" reforms rather than deep-structure "second order" changes. Cohen postulates that the

problem of illusive and ineffectual reform is the persistence of unexamined paradigms which have evolved over this century. Among these, the therapeutic and environmental ideology of the mental hygiene movement is cited as especially significant.

The mental hygiene movement was founded in the United States in 1909 and in Canada in 1918. In the interwar years, mental hygienists developed a clinical approach to the identification and remediation of the problems of childhood in order to improve the quality of adult life and thereby society in general. The assumption that the individual was the location of the problem and early socialization a source of maladaptation made the school a logical point of intervention between the family and the work-place. This expanded the surrogate functions of schooling with the objective of eliminating crime, insanity, labour unrest, and even war. Clinically, the characteristics, needs, and abilities of student populations had to be matched with curriculum and pedagogical techniques conducive to developing the "full potential" of the individual. Therapy, in this sense, became an organizational imperative. Cohen suggests that this therapeutic tradition is pervasive, and while not all of it is misguided, we lack conceptual alternatives.

Three trends in current reforms reflect the therapeutic tradition: individualization, decentralization, and privatization. These themes are evident both in the "excellence movement" and in the subjects and

recommendations addressed in *From the Campus*. The individualization of excellence, for example, is a readily apparent theme in *A Nation At Risk*. The fate of students unlikely to achieve excellence under the projected standards, as several authors in this collection point out, remains undetermined (cf. chapters by James E. Bruno, Concepción M. Valadez, and Barbara Hecht). Yet policy alternatives generally remain immersed in a therapeutic orientation.

Individualization continues to epitomize the dilemma of education as therapy. As described by Frank M. Hewett and Virginia de R. Wagner, the focus on the individual as both the source and solution to problems is most evident over the past twenty years in the expansion of labels and controversies surrounding the classification of exceptionalities in special education. The differentiation of students according to their "educability" has been paralleled by the elaboration and stratification of curriculum into special, vocational, and other academic groupings. Therapeutic arguments which originally selected students out, "for their own good," have more recently been used to advocate normalization for similar reasons. Both sides of this debate persist, as illustrated in the defence of vocationalism by Harry F. Silberman and John E. Coulson. It remains a fact that failed efforts to solve underlying socio-economic factors which shape school performance continue to leave "neglected" a large percentage of those children who are "different" or "ordinary," instead of "excellent," by

reason of their family status or cultural or linguistic heritage.

Contemporary debates present decentralization as a possible solution. Increasing choice and diversity at the school level by restricting impersonal bureaucratic structures at the middle level of authority appear to diminish the therapeutic tradition, which has generally supported the consolidation of administration in order to expand specialized programmes. Decentralization, as a current consideration, would reduce local bureaucratic authority over the school level but retain strong regulation, including testing, at the state level, as James E. Bruno points out. This position is not inconsistent with the position of mental hygienists in the interwar period.

Privatization extends the arguments for individualization and decentralization. Donald Erickson does this in disturbing ways by idolizing the therapeutic "communal" qualities of private schools over public schools. Erickson questions the efficacy of heterogeneous public schooling on the basis of its inadequacies as a clinical environment. Not only normal children are cited as benefiting from private schools, but especially "disadvantaged children," presumably because they are even more in need of therapeutic classrooms. Studies in Canada and elsewhere inform Erickson's ideological position. He examined changes in the "sense of community" of private schools in British Columbia before and after the passage of legislation in 1977 which legalized the use of tax funds in support of

non-public schools. The seemingly profound implications of such legislation, however, are not the same in Canada as in the United States. Tax funds for sectarian, or separate, schools have long been collected by other provinces both prior to and since the confederation of modern Canada in 1867. Erickson's conclusion that tax support compromises the therapeutic quality of private schools rejects a "corporate" argument for privatizing non-public education while it undercuts public schooling altogether. Consistent in this argument, he is pessimistic about school reform as "doomed" because of flaws in the implementation of the public therapeutic tradition (p. 151).

From the Campus is not dull reading. The major themes and omissions of the current educational reform movement are addressed in a critical and insightful manner. The recommendations and suggestions are worthy of debate. In the unlikely event that the reader rejects Cohen's strongly argued position that the therapeutic ideology of the mental hygiene movement contributes domain assumptions to educational policy, one can still support with little quarrel his statement that "two things are certain: the public school did not acquire its characteristic biases in an intellectual vacuum, and it did not acquire them overnight" (p. 20). Cohen's example of how historians can contribute to the study of the institutionalization of ideas is especially powerful. An historical perspective, in this instance, demands that we critically evaluate the domain assumptions of both the advocates and critics of the current

reform movement. In the absence of easy answers there is an urgent need to sift through the arguments, their alternatives, and possible consequences in order to determine what has merit and what does not. This, of

course, fulfils at least one objective of this collection, which is to broaden the debate.

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