A Constant Clamor
Education in the United States: A Documentary History by Sol Cohen
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marches in Washington, pickets a draft board, sits in at a college, or even attends a rally for Eugene McCarthy. Some radicals!

Yet in assessing the role of young people during the sixties, Decter can find it within her heart to fault them, in Polonius-like fashion, for their priorities: "And above all, you seemed to find it difficult if not impossible to touch the world at just those tangents where its real work was being done and its real decisions being made." Well, where were the real decisions being made in those days, and where was the world's real work being done, if not in places like Washington, Berkeley, and Montgomery, Alabama? And who was in closer touch with reality—the young people who marched at the 1968 Democratic convention, or the Chicago police who clubbed and maced them? (Or Hubert Humphrey, for that matter, who the next day told a reporter, "In any case, I assure you those hippies are not from Chicago"?) Decter seems to be saying that many of the great disturbances of the sixties—the ones that had young people marching and shouting and bleeding and sometimes dying—were products of childish wrongheadedness (arising from parental permissiveness!) rather than the consequences of real and disastrous events occurring in a real and disastrous world.

In sum, then, Decter both provides us with many wrong answers about radical children in the sixties and fails to raise the right questions about those same radical children in the seventies. For example, why don't *they* have children? Is it because of their allegiance to ecology, women's lib, and the like, or is it something less modish and more dangerous, like alienation—a repudiation of parents, a negation of progeny?

In *Young Radicals* (1968) Kenneth Keniston characterized youthful anti-Vietnam protesters as "psychological adults but sociological adolescents": they "have not made the...commitment to occupation or to a lasting relationship with one other person that is said to be characteristic of adulthood." Could it be that now, nearly a decade later, these men and women still have not made the commitment, and that in ways deeper and more disturbing than any Decter might imagine, our radical children have surrendered their dreams? I pray that this, too, is a wrong question.

—Richard J. Margolis

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A Constant Clamor

Education in the United States: A Documentary History edited by Sol Cohen. New York: Random House, five volumes, 3,511 pages, $165.

The rationale for a five-volume (3,511-page) documentary history of education in the United States is its uniqueness. Other source material on the subject is, according to editor Sol Cohen, "limited in one respect or another." E.W. Knight's five-volume history, for instance, is limited to the South before 1860; Hofstadter's and Smith's documentary collection is restricted to higher education. The present opus is intended to be "better balanced...and more comprehensive."

Chronologically, the collection spans more than half a millenium—from 1392 to 1971, from Vergerius on "A Liberal Education" and Lionardo Bruni on "The Study of Literature" to Richard Nixon on "Higher Education" and Sidney P. Marland on the "National Institute of Education." The reason for the earliest date is the use of the first 300 pages to deal with the colonies' European heritage.

Ideologically, the compilation is catholic and ecumenical, stating the positions of conservatives and radicals, traditionalists and nontraditionalists, sectarians and universalists in the words of their proponents. Thus does Cotton Mather have his say and so does Benjamin Franklin in the eighteenth century; and in more recent times, so do Arthur Jensen and Kenneth Clark.

Geographically, materials are arranged to cover the country. In the earliest period, the South, the Middle Colonies, and New England are treated separately. In later years, the focus falls on those states organized under the Northwest Ordinance and the West.

The racial and ethnic interest is wide-ranging. For each of the three major divisions of the volumes—The Planting (1607-1789), The Shaping of American Education (1789-1895), The Transformation of American Education (1895-1973)—there are distinct subsections dealing with Negroes, Indians, Jews, and Chicanos. Likewise there is recurrent attention to women.

All levels of education are embraced—from early childhood and kindergarten (Piaget, Froebel, Felix Adler, Susan Blow) to the college and university (Wayland, Tappen, Charles Eliot, William James, Abraham Flexner, Hutchins, Nicholas Murray Butler). The types of materials are varied: learned disquisitions, excerpts from textbooks, legal documents, relevant fiction, autobiography, curricula, charters, advertisements. Some of the authors do not discuss education: Copernicus, Freud, Newton, Darwin. But they are included anyhow because their ideas revolutionized man's notion of self and universe and, hence, of what should be taught and how it should be taught.

Conceptually, the editor follows Bernard Bailyn's dictum (*Education in the Forming of American Society*) that a proper history should "see education in its elaborate, intricate involvement with the rest of society." While such a thesaurus is always in order, the present work is especially timely for American educators who, in the current crisis of frenzied soul searching, can use the experience of the past for guidance or solace.

Although our present troubles in academe seem of sudden and recent origin, starting with campus riots, followed by political reaction, and then by economic recession, the last section of this weighty history, entitled A Critical Reappraisal, strongly suggests that American education was running into difficulty long before the traumas of the late sixties and early seventies. As early as 1950, Albert Lynd was crying out against the "superprofessionals" and the "superpedagogues," who were far less interested in serving either the society or the children than in massaging their own bureaucratic egos.

In 1951, Frank Chodorov pointed to the conflict in Pasadena as evidence of "progressive" arrogance of professionals who acted as if "parents have no competence in the field of education and ought not to interfere with the experts." In 1952, the founder of progressive education, John Dewey, expressed his fears that his ideas had become ossified into clichés devoid of life juices. In 1953, Arthur Bestor assailed the "interlocking directorate of professional educators" whose one-time "philosophies" had "congealed into educational dogma passed on from generation to generation by men who no longer speculate but merely expound." In 1955, Rudolph Flesch complained that "Johnny Can't Read." William Whyte noted that "parents sometimes wonder if perhaps the school isn't a bit too permissive." And so it went year after year in a crescendo of criticism—before the big blow-up of the late sixties.

While this concluding part of the book is specifically entitled A Critical Reappraisal, it would really have been possible to interject that label at many points in these five volumes. Over 300 years of American schooling, there was hardly a time when the system was not under fire and in transition. And, perhaps, this is the single most revealing lesson of these hundreds of items.

Education is always "new" in America because America is always new. If education is reasonably defined as "the entire process by which culture transmits itself across the generations," then in a culture in permanent flux it is inevitable that both the body of knowledge and the process for transmitting it should also be in constant commotion.

Unlike ancient civilizations, cast in static state, America started as a dynamic and has continued that way ever since. Education, then, has never found it easy in this land to transmit a culture, since the culture itself was never defined by the custom of ages. Hence, in the United States even more than in other nations, the schools had to be used to create a culture.

But what culture? To the seventeenth-century Puritan the answer was easy: the "chief aim" of education "was to produce pious and learned and well-mannered Christians." The fulcrum was Harvard where an elite of ministers would be trained to oversee the process. These governors would reach down to the lowliest to teach obedience, to meet "the threat of barbarism, (of) children (who) would grow up wild and illiterate."

But the colonies were not all the progeny of the Mayflower. The Germans in Pennsylvania insisted on teaching their children in German, despite the fulminations of Benjamin Franklin against the corruption of the native culture by these "Palatine boors." Although the first three colleges—Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale—were founded in the name of the established churches in their colonies, after the "Great Awakening" of the mid-eighteenth century, schools were founded by New-Side Presbyterians (Princeton), Revivalist Baptists (Brown), Dutch Reformed Revivalists (Rutgers), Congregationalists (Dartmouth), Anglicans and Presbyterians (Columbia). In some colonies (later states) colleges were nonsectarian; but in each political jurisdiction, the school served the culture of the bailiwick.

After the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, there were serious efforts to use the schools to create a national culture. Starting with George Washington, every President up to Jackson proposed a national university—without success. Benjamin Rush went further, proposing a whole national system of education to "render the mass of the people more homogeneous, and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government."

Over 200 years, this uniformity has eluded our schools. Indeed, multiplicity has multiplied—as a rising bourgeoisie turned Latin into English schools, as a burgeoning urban proletariat demanded universal free public education for its children, as immigrants from overseas and migrants from rural America threatened the stability of the social order.

Education, like America, has been plural, contradictory, changing, responding to domestic pressures, foreign influences, and the political needs of an ever-expanding class of professionals. The diligent and intelligent assembling of materials revealing the interplay of these forces makes these five volumes an appetizing smorgasbord of meaningful morsels.

In terms of macroediting, these five volumes live up to their "balanced and comprehensive" promise: wisely selected and gracefully structured, tied together into an integrated whole by three major essays for each major division of the work. In the area of microediting, the work shows an annoyingly inappropriate sloppiness. Thus, for instance, there is a short essay by Walt Whitman, reprinted from the Brooklyn *Evening Star*, October 22, 1845, entitled "Walt Whitman Describes 'The Whip' in the Schools of Brooklyn." Two pages later is another item, entitled "Walt Whitman on the Faults of the Public Schools," reprinted from the Brooklyn *Eagle*, February 4, 1847, that is a verbatim copy of two thirds of Whitman's first piece. Whitman obviously sold the same lines to different editors, or some linotypist copied the wrong copy when setting the book—but, in any event, this goof should not have gotten by the microeditor. There are also other baddies in spelling and grammar that might be attributed to typos. The work, however, is too big to be lessened by these slips. They are, at worst, minor blemishes on a monument of uncommon sense and scholarship.

—*Gus Tyler*

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Publish and Perish

The Invisible Woman: Discrimination in the Academic Profession by Joan Abramson. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 237 pages, $12.50.

Lewis Carroll's Wonderland, with its sophistries and absurdities, persists today in academia. Here, according to Joan Abramson, one may be punished for errors one has not committed, and the rule of "jam yesterday and jam tomorrow, but never jam today" is reserved for women.

Restrained by good humor and a rare sense of irony, Ms. Abramson has succeeded in presenting the outrageous events of her academic career with compassion and understanding, even for those who injured her. Her account begins in 1968 when she was hired as an untenured instructor of English by the University of Hawaii. Since then, her struggle for academic survival has led her to file suit against the university in state court; file a sex discrimination complaint with HEW, another with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and an equal-pay-for-equal-work complaint with the wage and hour division of the U.S. Labor