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Book Review (reviewing Solon T. Kimball & James E. McClellan, Education and the New America (1962))

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society the 'working principles of justice . . . transcend reason and lie rooted in the religious conceptions of the meaning of existence' " (p. 232).

Nonetheless, I must credit Father Drinan with a volume extraordinary among writings that deal with the problems of church and state in the United States because of its fair treatment of the views of his antagonists and its full disclosure of legal authorities pro and con. Despite Father Drinan's eloquence, however, I am still of the view that religious doctrine is not superior to civil authority and that controversies of the kind that this volume considers must be resolved by reason rather than faith.

PHILIP B. KURLAND *

EDUCATION AND THE NEW AMERICA. By Solon T. Kimball¹ and James E. McClellan.² New York: Random House. 1962. Pp. xiv, 402. \$6.75.

Kimball and McClellan have written an excited book full of overtones of urgency in favor of education. For the preschool child they emphasize three kinds of learning: first, that "love is possible, even to modern man" (p. 285); second, "a vague and permeating sense of dissatisfaction with himself and his environment" (p. 286); and third, "a clear sense of the distinction between the inside and outside of things" (p. 287). For the first years of school, they urge more experiments to determine whether a discipline based on "ritual, incantation and unquestioning acceptance" (p. 292) may not be replaced or supplemented by greater participation by youngsters in the educational process. The authors ask whether social interaction among the children might not be employed in the process so that "the basic forms of discipline in the adult culture could become the operative forms of disciplines in a childhood peer culture" (p. 292). For secondary schools and colleges they emphasize instruction in four disciplines, although they disclaim any suggestion that the four disciplines should serve as a basis for curriculum organization. The four disciplines are: logic and mathematics; experimentation; natural history; and finally "the discipline of esthetic form" (p. 301). These ideas are advanced with a seriousness which belies their lack of development. One wonders why their promulgation should entitle a book to admission into the select circle of non-law books reviewed in the *Harvard Law Review*. Perhaps greater significance is to be found in the breathless way in which the authors view what they regard as the crisis of our culture.

According to the authors, the crisis of our culture is reflected in the lack of commitment of Americans to the social system they serve or to any institution in a sufficiently meaningful way. The results of this lack of commitment include an unsatisfactory cult of self-fulfillment

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and a sense of loneliness. People no longer understand the society of which they are a part; individuality is not in fact flourishing; "individual American men and women are not achieving a satisfying sense of each being a man or a woman related in a definite way to other men and women and to young people and old" (p. 12). The crisis arises because of the unbridged gap between the closely knit nuclear family and the large, structured, highly mobile, seemingly impersonal world of the corporate society in which we live. In the commercial agrarian society of the Middle West in the nineteenth and, presumably, early twentieth century, education could and did play a peripheral part in preparing the individual for his role in life. Town-community relationships then gave to individuals direct access to experience and a knowledge of their respective roles. For example, "in an America of Main Street towns and rural hinterland the young men came to adulthood through the claims they asserted and the corresponding sponsorship by their fathers and other men within the community. The claiming was validated by the inclusion of youth within the activities and associations of the adult male world . . ." (p. 235). The child as he moved toward maturity "could have direct experience through participation and observation with those of his own and other social groups" (p. 130). In this setting, education was not needed to build a relationship with agrarian community life or the social order. Indeed the chief role of education then was perhaps to prepare people to escape from agrarian society (p. 96), and the progressive education movement may be viewed as instrumental in aiding the transition from agrarian to contemporary society. The progressive education movement attempted to carry into the modern world the values based upon the experiences of the agrarian society "but the time came when their own symbols of value lost connection with the living reality of the world around them" (p. 107). This failure, which is the failure of schools in general and not just the progressive movement, is particularly serious because the schools now occupy the crucial structural position of the only bridge across which the child can move toward his participation in the adult and public world (p. 183).

The change in the responsibilities of education has come about because of the decline of local community life and the domination of giant corporate superstructures. There is no longer the autonomy nor the wholeness of the town-community. The authors find that "social structure is epitomized in the great superstructures of government, industry, education, health, and commerce, in the isolated conjugal family of parents and children, the family of 'togetherness,' and in the ephemeral but repetitive gatherings of the 'lonely crowd'" (p. 116). "The family has not lost its significance, but it has become discontinued from other institutions and from any general symbolism in which all of life may be interpreted" (p. 237). And "other institutional forms of great significance are only indirectly related to either family or community" (p. 237). The sense of history and of tragedy have been impaired. The complexities of technological process and of social groupings prevent

a comprehension of the whole. "Metropolis presents no total community for which the fathers can claim their sons in the same sense that youth had been previously inducted to the institutional arrangements and cultural practices of the town-community" (p. 236). The individual can no longer relate to the vast social order through participation in some segment of communal relations and the extension of this participation as was once possible in the town-community, since the "society does not admit of that sort of relation" (p. 283). The society is characterized by mobility and restlessness, and the civilization is symbolized by the superhighway. In this new environment, "the school must provide the whole range of educational experiences that had earlier been given by an organic complex of community living" (p. 103).

Granted the changed role of the schools, the question remains how to teach a sense of commitment to a "vast, technologically advanced, urban, industrialized social order" (p. 11) — "a society that offers no fixed and eternal ends in life, but only powerful, dynamic means, as its major gifts to the individuals that make it up" (p. 17). Somehow men and women caught up in our modern system must be brought to "*feel* its pull for change, for the exercise of initiative, and for personal growth and at the same time *know* the system with sufficient objectivity and detachment to escape being victimized by it" (p. 182). The answer of the authors is that while retaining the nuclear family with its own special tasks and relationships, commitment must be sought in the details and actualities of social relations, and for this reason commitment in our highly mobile and generalized world must not be to inherited social arrangements; rather it must be built on generalized skills and attitudes, intellectualized from one's own experiences, with symbolic systems which are transferable, and with skills in participation "that are equally universal in the sense that they may be applied in any locality or social stratum" (p. 252; see pp. 249, 284). Great emphasis is placed on group operation, for "group association in contemporary culture . . . represents the medium through which commitment can be expressed" (p. 270). Anyway, "part of the price of being an American is *being* an organization man" (p. 315). Thus the skills to be inculcated must include the ability: (1) to adapt and contribute to the objectives of the group; (2) to respond to a wide range of personality traits in associates; (3) to appreciate the ephemeral quality of relationships and the likelihood of disruption; and (4) to find symbolic significance of the goals or purposes of particular relationships against the background of the larger social system (p. 269). Commitment is regarded by the authors as "primarily an intellectual affair though with emotional overtones that cannot be ignored" (p. 243). The four disciplines (logic and mathematics, experimentation, natural history, and esthetic form) suggested for secondary schools and colleges presumably will provide the basis "for learning the process of acceptance and rejection and learning to judge among the objectives for those that are worthy of acceptance" (p. 243). The categories, to the extent they are filled in, seem somewhat narrow, and there is some suggestion that

this is intentional. The authors do assure us that they intend the four intellectual disciplines to provide the basis for a new kind of education which "would make ultimate freedom possible" (p. 319), by giving the individual the ability to create meaning, order and purpose for himself as the "final step in the democratic experiment" (p. 318). It is clear the authors intend to be scientific and are wrestling with the problem, about which they feel deeply, that they see no answers to the "ultimate meaning of life" (p. 318) other than through this "ordering of an individual, his world and the symbols by which he understands both" (p. 322).

The writers of this book describe themselves as "educationists." They point out that they give graduate training to those who will go on to positions of leadership and authority in the schools of this country (p. 4). While they seem somewhat defensive about attacks on educationists (I may confuse defensiveness with verbosity), they are clear that educationists should be informed and conversant with issues economic, political, ethical or organizational, even though the writings of educationists in the arena of the "great conversation" "do not reflect this competence" (p. 33). There does not seem to be much limitation in any event to the kind of subject matter upon which the authors are moved to write. They tell us, although one wonders how they know, that there seems to have been a "serious deterioration in the ability of the sexes, as male and female, to communicate with each other" (p. 55). They may be right, and it is nice to know important things like that so easily. They inform us, and this undoubtedly is a truism, that we have failed to solve the problem of how to finance medical care equitably (p. 110). They assure us that the fantastically high costs of construction in the cities mean that "only corporations seeking favorable tax write-offs can construct new . . . buildings" (p. 122) although they do not elaborate why steps which do not make economic sense should be undertaken because there is a tax writeoff. As an aside they express their surprise that Archibald MacLeish's play *J.B.* was successful (p. 164). They remark that Galbraith's complaint that we have an unbalanced ratio between the production of goods for private consumption and goods for public life is justified from an economic viewpoint (p. 174). They inform us that "theology is necessarily a parasitical and *post hoc* intellectual activity" (p. 167), and that "Americans have had no authentic geniuses in the field of religion" (p. 160). They conclude that "the big distributing corporations — A & P, Safeway, etc. — will soon dominate both basic production and process packaging" (p. 192). They are moved to comment that voluntary associations may have agreements "suspected of contributing to violations of antitrust laws," which seems a safe enough statement (p. 200). They point out that there is "even a 'think-tank' for the social scientists" (p. 178), which is surely an unobjectionable point to make, but the gloss is at war with the need for a place for quiet serious thought which the book in its own way suggests. They worry about the lack of recognition given to scientists for their achievements (pp. 50-51) — an inter-

esting sociological observation which perhaps should be elaborated. The suggestion is made that the Roman Catholic Church in seeking aid for its parochial schools is attempting to modify a constitutional provision "under the guise of labeling the issue a political one" (p. 207). They find — and one must admit that this seems to be in the center of the subject on which they are writing — that the symbols of Christianity and Judaism do not make sense within the larger structures of society and nature (p. 312). They comment on the "senselessly huge salaries paid to corporate presidents" (p. 321). Many of their remarks are lively although it is frequently not clear against the background of what discipline or investigation they are made. To borrow from the language of the book, sometimes the essay seems to be in a state of entropy (p. 5), and the language can be taken as only phatic (p. 141).

The authors early in the book indicate the stimulation which they have received from John Kenneth Galbraith, David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, W. H. Whyte, Jr. and A. A. Berle. Among others they also mention Paul Tillich, Margaret Mead and W. Lloyd Warner. It seems clear that the drinking has been heavy from the font of Galbraith, Riesman and Berle, but I would not say they are to blame. The authors clearly believe what they have read about the large modern structures. The book conveys a sense of euphoria. This is combined with nostalgia for the life of the Midwest at the turn of the century which is graphically and repetitiously portrayed in terms of the virtues and quite a few of the vices. Somehow one gets the impression that the "thundering condemnations of . . . [midwestern] ministers" (p. 71) has a relationship to this book. It is more difficult to find as much of the effect of the intellectual disciplines needed for commitment, as one might wish, but this is not to say that the book is without ideas or amusing stimulation. It must be admitted that it is extremely difficult to take seriously the undeveloped and sketchy final thrust of the book in which the discussion of the four disciplines is apparently intended as philosophical discourse. Most worrisome is the failure of the book to observe self-disciplining standards with the consequence of the too easy repetition of common talk and an amazing willingness to write on all subjects with an air of authority. It is perhaps unfair to remember the apocryphal story of the Kaiser, who priding himself on knowing all decorations, was puzzled at a rather handsome decoration worn by a stranger at the Imperial Ball. He sent his aide to find out what the extraordinary decoration was. The answer came back: "He is an American and he made it up himself."

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