

The New—in Review

Alice Miel, Editor

DEMOCRACY MUST be suspicious of great men; democracy requires a special kind of hero. At least, those are some of the conclusions reached by Sidney Hook in *The Hero in History* (John Day, 1943, \$2.50). Since the development of democratic leadership is one of the important functions of American education, this book will have peculiar interest for educators. Although the entire volume should be read for the development of the author's argument, the two opening chapters and the two closing ones are especially recommended.

THE TEACHERS of the United States through the N.E.A. War and Peace Fund have paid for the printing and distribution of the latest publication of the Educational Policies Commission, *Education and the People's Peace* (available from the N.E.A., 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C., at 10 cents a copy). It is to be hoped that every teacher will read the sixty pages of this booklet. Therein is to be found a concise but well-rounded proposal for giving education a chance to make a significant contribution to the cause of a peaceful world.

While it is recognized that the task of building a sound peace begins at home, the authors have not stopped there. They have gone on to suggest (1) that a United Nations council on educational policy be established at once

to fulfill certain specified functions and (2) that these functions be continued and supplemented by an international agency for education to be set up as part of whatever general international agency may emerge with peace. Proposals for this international educational agency are specific enough to give one something to catch hold of. Most of them appear highly reasonable. This document should open up discussion of a crucial question.

"AN INTELLIGENT PERSON never laughs at a new idea." This is the theme of *Fools and Foolishness* by Harry C. McKown (Social Activities Publishing Company, Topeka, Kans., 1943, \$2). A collection of well-authenticated illustrations of the intolerance with which new ideas have been greeted since time began, this little book should help high school and college youth as well as their elders to develop a "tolerant-critical attitude of mind—an attitude which admits the possibilities of all innovations but which, at the same time, evaluates any such seriously, honestly, and deliberately."

ANOTHER NOVEL ABOUT A SCHOOL-TEACHER is just out: *Rusty Carrousel* by Francis Sylvin, pseudonym for two women teachers in New York City (Dutton, \$2.75). This one is likely to arouse a great deal of controversy, especially in New York

City educational circles. Some will think that the authors have spitefully attempted to make the public schools of this metropolis look as bad as possible. Others will claim that the conditions pictured are typical not only of New York but of most large city school systems. Whether anything is to be gained by such an exposé, intertwined as it is with a rather sordid story of the love life of a teacher, might be another matter of debate.

The authors seem to be keen observers and ruthless critics of human weakness, but one wonders whether or not they have any very constructive purpose in mind. They overreached themselves constantly in the use of language, becoming almost a Mrs. Malaprop at times. The novel is a useful type of material in the pre-service education of teachers. Until a better book is written for this purpose, this novel might be studied to learn what happens to the personalities of children, teachers, and administrators under certain conditions.

TUNEFUL SONGS are a language universally understood. Since this is a time when "folks of varied backgrounds need to understand one another better," Dan E. Vornholt's *The Folk Singer* should make a contribution. His little songbook contains the best-loved folk songs of the numerous nationality groups to be found in Wisconsin as well as songs that are part of our American history and culture. Order from the Extension Service of the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Price, 10 cents.

HUMAN REPRODUCTION is

simply explained for children in *Your Own Story*, a small illustrated booklet published by the Minnesota Department of Health, Minneapolis. It is planned that the first part of the book will be read by or to the child and discussed with him. The last part gives some sensible advice to parents.

HOW TO SELECT and use films in schools has been the subject of a five-year study by the American Council's Committee on Motion Pictures in Education. Now the director of the Motion Picture Project, Charles F. Hoban, Jr., has prepared a final report designed to share with all teachers the experiences had by those in the four schools that served as cooperating centers in the study. The volume, which is obtainable from the American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., (\$2), is entitled *Focus on Learning, Motion Pictures in the School*. The book not only explains the unique possibilities of films as an educational medium but shows how to get more than superficial values from them. The section on "Concepts, Critical Thinking, and Attitudes" is especially valuable. There is also a helpful appendix, "Film Sources and How to Use Them."

IN THE CATEGORY of visual aids to education *Building America*, a cooperative, non-profit project now sponsored by the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, is continuing to be a most valuable type of material. The current study unit, "Our Neighbors in North Africa," is designed as an aid in interpreting the military and political events which have taken place and are still taking place in

North Africa today. It presents a timely discussion which sketches the historical and geographic background of that important region and stresses its strategic significance in a world at war. Maps and an abundance of photographs lend graphic interest to the text, help one to visualize the region, and provide the needed background for an intelligent understanding of events in this part of the world. Individual copies may be obtained from *Building America*, 2 West Forty-fifth Street, New York City, for 30 cents. Subscription for the eight issues of a year, \$2.25. Bound volumes, \$3.95 each.

A FILM TELLING what the Junior Red Cross is and does is now ready for distribution. *Hand in Hand* is a sound film, ten minutes long, available both in 16 mm. and 35 mm. Prints are loaned for one week, free except for express charges. All bookings are handled through Motion Picture Distributing Office, American Red Cross, 40 East Forty-ninth Street, New York 17, N. Y. The film may be purchased for \$17 from the William J. Ganz Company, same address.

THERE IS SCARCELY a more important question for educators to think about today than the proper role of the State in the field of education. In *Education Between Two Worlds* (Harper, 1942, \$3) Alexander Meiklejohn sees the overpowering fact of the replacement of the Church by the State in sponsoring, guiding, and directing the development of education during recent decades. He is aware of the inconsistency between the old assumptions of theological control of education and the

basic ideas of science, technology, and political actuality of today, and he is concerned with examining the theory of democratic education to discover how new realities may be encompassed.

Where once men found from God what to teach the young, today this source of authority fails to satisfy. Science offers much help with questions of how to teach but none with the fundamental question of what to teach. Dictatorial governments afford an easy answer but at the expense of the values of personal freedom essential to democracy. Custom is an impermanent, untrustworthy, and non-inclusive guide. The question remains for free men in an interdependent and scientifically powerful world: What authority can set the course for education and, therefore, for the political and intellectual organization of society?

For historical orientation the first part of the book is devoted to an interpretation of Comenius, Locke, and Matthew Arnold whose differing approaches pose the problem. In the second part the author turns to Rousseau for a clue to a solution in the social contract theory of the State. The general will of a society, expressed by government, mobilized by an upbuilding intelligence, may give men their rights and safeguard their freedom. Without such a principle of free, ingenuous, mutual association in common cause, individual men may not find their fullest liberty and opportunity. "To comprehend the mingling of individual freedom and social authority . . . is the intellectual task of modern education."

The third part of the book is devoted to the significance of the pragmatic philosophy in this connection and,

particularly, to the writings of Mr. John Dewey. In pragmatism's emphases upon the eradication of dogma in education, upon the purging of the schools of all forms of useless knowledge, and upon the abolition of aristocratic forms and tendencies in the educational and social system, the author finds no help with the main question. He is especially critical of what he regards as an untenable individualism both in Dewey's theory of learning and thinking through reduction of disturbances and in his concept of the State as the instrument for the adjustment of the conflicting claims of interest groups.

In the final part of the book the author states his own propositions which are basically two in number, as follows: (1) All men are brothers in a common quest for the assurance and wisdom necessary to a good life in a world where it is up to men, without direct help from a God or from the universe itself, to fashion the conditions of that life; and (2) The aim of civilization is intelligence or reasonableness as a principle of human association in contrast to violence or selfish acquisitiveness. Upon the basis of these propositions the author builds a theory of the State as an agency created by men to enable them to work together in the task of building a good life for all.

This book deals with a most timely

theme. Its analysis of the problem of unified authority for education is suggestive and challenging. Those educators who share the experimentalist outlook of Mr. Dewey will doubtless find Mr. Meiklejohn's interpretation of pragmatism's contribution to this problem quite inadequate. Some educators will regard the author's own constructive proposals as both visionary and dangerous for the reason that they seem to cloak a magnified State power over education with pleasant but not entirely substantial sanctions of democratic aspiration and intention.

Some readers will feel that Mr. Meiklejohn does not grapple quite realistically with the conditions surrounding the operation of governments in their relations with the powerful class and special interests to be found in modern society. The present reviewer shares all of these reservations to some extent. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Mr. Meiklejohn is courageously attempting a piece of work that has to be done and that has thus far only been begun by those who chart the course of progressive education. The present book will do much to stimulate thought among curriculum workers who view their task in its deeper aspects.—*Education Between Two Worlds* reviewed by Donald P. Cottrell, *Teachers College, Columbia University*.



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