

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Paul M. Halverson

LEADERSHIP AND INTELLIGENCE. By Margaret Fisher. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP. By Gordon N. Mackenzie, Stephen M. Corey and Associates. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954.

The first volume is a critique of Karl Mannheim's theory of the intellectual élite as found in his *Ideology and Utopia*, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, and *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning*. For this reviewer who had read only one of Mannheim's works, Fisher did a service in providing a review and synthesis of Mannheim's major concepts of leadership in a free society. However, Dr. Fisher's greatest contribution lies in the criticism which she makes of Mannheim's theories. She indicts his concepts of an intellectual élite in the light of American pragmatism as advanced by James, Peirce, and Dewey. She also credits Raup and Benne for many of the viewpoints on practical intelligence which she places in contrast with Mannheim's method of Reason.

Very briefly, Dr. Fisher attempts to show that Mannheim's plea for a detached, "relatively, free-floating intelligentsia" can result only in an intellectual élite. This élite will be divorced from the ebb and flow of social reconstruction until its method of Reason

has revealed the necessary "social mechanisms" for a free society. At that time, "the intellectual élite can organize the masses, securing desired behavior patterns through control of groups, communities, situations, field structures, and social mechanisms. . . . The task of education therefore is to find, select, and train the exceptionally capable intellectuals for such a task of planning."

Fisher rejects such a concept of social planning and organization in favor of the method of intelligence employed by all members of a democratic society, which "makes the problem of participation in self-regulative groups central to the study of leadership and eventuates in a theory of leadership as the investment of authority by groups in their chosen agents."

Here we have expounded once again two points of view regarding the nature and source of leadership. The ground has been ploughed before many times in many ways. For this reviewer, Fisher has brought into sharper focus the essential differences between an aristocratic, and therefore necessarily authoritarian concept of leadership, and a democratic, experimental approach to the development of leadership personnel and practice; it is not that leadership and freedom are incompatible, but that leadership vested in any person or group by reason of their superior political, economic,

social or intellectual position, may threaten or destroy freedom.

Leadership Development

The second of the above two volumes comes to grips with the problem of leadership development. Here the crucial problem is how to translate concepts which place a premium on the emergence of leadership in self-regulating groups into practices which encourage wholehearted participation in the improvement of instruction. The setting is a real school situation (Denver, Colorado), involving that school system's thirty-five principals and coordinators. As such, this book should be of value to all who are interested in problems of discovering, developing and utilizing school personnel for better educational programs. One interesting feature of the book is that large portions of it were written by participants in the leadership development program at Denver, rather than having the report prepared alone by the consultants in the project, in this case personnel of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation.

The first half of the book is devoted to a theoretical framework for leadership and its development. A number of concepts of leadership and group work are drawn from social psychologists such as Knickerbocker, Gouldner, McGregor, Krech and Crutchfield and are translated into the setting of educational leadership. This is a real contribution, as much of this kind of writing has been couched heretofore in terms of business management, industrial relations, social welfare work and military affairs. In this book we

find the emphasis in theory-development and examples of practice to be on problems in educational leadership.

Perhaps the most challenging part of the first half of the book is Chapter 4, "Improvement of Instructional Leadership." This is understandable since it bridges the theory and practice aspects of the book. In the foreword the statement is made, "Administrative and supervisory officers generally are concerned with improving the work of teachers. Rarely do they give serious attention to improving their own competence as instructional leaders."

Chapter 4 discusses the conditions essential to an effective leadership education program (compatibility of goals and means, participation by entire official leadership hierarchy, adequate preparation for the program, an atmosphere of freedom, and opportunities for group work).

Part II of the book gives in detail an account of the Denver setting, the project's activities, small face-to-face operations in groups, and the evaluation of the project.

In fact, the major contribution of this book lies in its value for school systems concerned with leadership development and doubtful about how to proceed. This is no handbook, but rather a report of some action research undertaken by one group of instructional leaders to improve their own leadership behavior. The chief purpose of the report is "to stimulate other instructional leaders in other school systems to engage in a similar study of their activities."

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