New York's New School
Author(s): Albert W. Landa, Theodor Schuchat and J. Kirk Sale
Source: *Change in Higher Education*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 1969), pp. 4, 61-63
Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40160952
Accessed: 06-03-2019 01:25 UTC

LETTERS

The Antioch Plan

As an Antioch alumnus, I thought Arno Karlen's piece ["The Hazards of Innovation," July-August 1969], while terribly precocious, came out like a beautiful cat, on its lovely feet.

Warren G. Bennis
Vice President
State University of New York at Buffalo

Student Revolutionaries

How unfair it was to publish the biased, highly emotional, ludicrously rhetorical and selectively inaccurate diatribe by Thomas J. Cottle ["The Voices in Harvard Yard," July-August 1969] in the same issue with the honest, accurate and factual statement by Governor Ronald Reagan on similar problems ["Academic Freedom and Academic Order"]. You made Reagan seem a scholar and Cottle a charlatan, or worse.

Bertrand W. Hayward, President
Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science

•

Thomas J. Cottle certainly has his right as a proponent of one philosophy of students' rights to assert his views, but I would question his objectivity and his dedication to the ideals of responsible journalism. The article reeks of the glorification and romanticization of his cause in a manner one is accustomed to seeing in the tabloids. Certainly neither side is entirely pure and innocent, but this portrayal with complete lack of objectivity and so much mushiness only reveals the blindness of the beholder to the whole picture.

Brent Smith
Staff Assistant
American Association of Junior Colleges

The Upstarts

You quote Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr., ["The Upstarts," May-June 1969] as saying there are thirteen major cities, including Detroit, without a community college. Make that twelve; Wayne County Community College just opened at ten locations in Detroit and eight others in Wayne County. We have students, teachers, counselors, temporary headquarters, borrowed sites, a board of trustees, a few administrators, lots of problems, lots of ideas; the only thing we lack is the support of a tax millage, and we think that will change.

Murray Jackson
Executive Director
Wayne County Community College, Detroit, Mich.

Effects of Teaching

I read your report of the analysis of research on college teaching methods, *The Teaching-Learning Paradox,* by Robert Dubin and Thomas Taveggia ["Happenings," July-August 1969] with much interest, albeit with some dismay at their conclusions. Your report said Dubin and Taveggia "concluded that there are no measurable differences in effectiveness among various methods of instruction." In the original study the sentence concludes, ". . . when evaluated by student performance on final examinations." While my own reviews (1968, 1969) and that of Wilbur Schramm (1962) do find some differences that are relatively consistent, we would agree that on the whole differences in teaching methods produce relatively little effect on student performance on *final examinations,* particularly if the content evaluated by the examination is included in a textbook available to all students. We do *not,* however, agree that there are no measurable differences in effectiveness of different methods of instruction.

Dubin and Taveggia say, "To say that content learning, as measured by course examinations, is not relevant to the reasons why students are in college is simply to fly in the face of reality" and "transmission of knowledge is a primary function of college training." This implies that most college educators would say that content learning is not important, but I suspect that the more common view is that while knowledge is an important outcome of higher education, there are other important goals, such as the retention and application of knowledge to new problems, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, interest, motivation, skill for further learning, and attitudinal or value changes. It is in these areas that consistent differences between teaching methods do appear. Thus administrators may not assume that all teaching methods are equally effective so that they may choose the cheapest without concern.

Wilbert J. McKeachie, Chairman
Department of Psychology
The University of Michigan

New York's New School

The New School for Social Research was not founded for interested graduate students who did not want degrees, as J. Kirk Sale asserts ["The New School at Middle Age," July-August 1969], but for interested adults of varied educational backgrounds. The average instructional cost of New School courses is not $450-$550, but considerably higher. It is not true that "nobody is checking to see what really goes on" in the planning and conduct of the New

(Continued on Page 61)

and business schools within the same universities.

Black Enrollment

Two recent surveys based on 1968 data underscore the continuing college education lag among Negroes. The Office of Civil Rights in the federal department of Health, Education and Welfare found that of 4.8 million full-time undergraduates in 1,400 colleges and universities it surveyed, only 245,000 (slightly more than 5 percent) were Negroes. Of these, 150,000 were enrolled in "Negro" colleges, leaving just 95,000—or slightly under 2 percent—in all other institutions of higher education in the nation. The other survey was made by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges of its 100 member institutions, which enroll about 30 percent of the nation's college students. It found 5.3 percent of the total enrollment was Negro. But when the eighteen predominantly Negro land-grant schools and the universities of Hawaii and Puerto Rico were disregarded, the remaining Negro enrollment again fell below 2 percent.

Student Consumers

What is thought to be the nation's first credit union solely for students has been established at the University of Michigan. The U-M Student Credit Union will offer educational loans, personal and auto loans, check cashing and savings account services, and general credit and consumer information.

Quote: Robert Hutchins

Robert Hutchins in *The Christian Science Monitor:* "The student has no role in the American university now . . . unless he is prepared to be a technician. If he does not want to be a technician, or if it's too early to decide, as in the case of a freshman or a sophomore, then he's simply lost."

LETTERS

(Continued from Page 4)

School's adult program; the dean of the New School has a staff that does nothing but check the quality and substance of the courses offered, recommending changes in the offerings each year. (Mr. Sale evidently missed a whole floor of offices devoted to this task.) And Professor Peter Berger has achieved his fame in the field of sociology, not in philosophy.

This kind of carelessness might obviously have been avoided had the author's research been more thorough, and had he bothered to interview the deans administering the various academic divisions of the New School. Instead, Mr. Sale seemed content to secure his facts from random unidentified sources without checking their credibility. In one part of the article he uses extensive quotations from SDS publications, without citing that source or letting his readers know about its aims or general reputation for accuracy. Even more important than such factual errors, however, are the impressions the author imparts by innuendo and superficial analysis.

For example, Mr. Sale in one sentence dismisses the New School's Center for New York City Affairs as a place "for middle-level bureaucrats and other urbanists to hear what upper-level bureaucrats and academic urbanists had to say about the city." Does Mr. Sale know of another university located in a central city which attracts more than two thousand adult students a year to courses on city planning, housing, poverty, narcotics addiction, public health, community action, city government, public education and other problems associated with the urban crisis? Is it not innovative and, to use one of Mr. Sale's favorite words, "relevant" for a university to help develop an informed citizenry on urban problems through adult education? And is there any reason to exclude "middle-level bureaucrats and other urbanists" from a program which can conceivably deepen their understanding and improve their performance? Moreover, is there no value in the basic conception of the Center for New York City Affairs as an educational and research institute focusing on the problems of a single metropolitan area rather than on urban problems generally? Mr. Sale may not believe that other institutions can benefit from knowledge of this program, but the avalanche of letters we receive from universities seeking guidance in their urban affairs programming indicates that he is wrong.

In like manner, Mr. Sale dismisses our Institute for Retired Professionals as a place "allowing older people to putter around in their own courses." The Institute for Retired Professionals, established six years ago, has provided the only university-sponsored program in the nation committed to the proposition that higher education can and indeed must play a more constructive role in the lives of older and retired citizens. It fulfills its mission by giving such students (retired physicians, teachers, lawyers, business executives, etc.) responsibility for conceiving and administering their own educational programs in cooperation with the dean of the New School. It has been hailed as a unique educational experiment by education and health experts across the country. Mr. Sale might well have benefited from a day of "puttering around" in the Institute's classes.

One gets the feeling that Mr. Sale approached his article on this

adult-centered university with a fatal bias—a lack of enthusiasm for adult education and, perhaps, for adult students as well. It leads him to characterize an adult student body of twelve thousand as containing no more than "bored housewives," "well-meaning goo-goo types," "youthful beards," "matronly slacks - and - earrings," and "a white-haired cane-bearer." If he had made the effort to secure factual data on the student body, he would easily have seen the error of his ways, since those stereotypes he has so frivolously described do not jibe with the fact that the average age of our adult students is thirty-six, or that 40 percent are business executives, 25 percent are professionals and 70 percent are college graduates.

Mr. Sale glibly portrays the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science as isolated from the world around it, and then lists among its permanent members such scholars as Hannah Arendt, Saul Padover, Robert Heilbroner, Stanley Diamond, Peter Berger and Paul Douglas. It is difficult to reconcile this particular roster of scholars with isolation. Mr. Sale goes on to attribute the relatively small number of degrees awarded by the Graduate Faculty to its "German tradition." The real reason is that the Graduate Faculty admissions policy is a liberal one, providing entrance for as many qualified students as possible; however, its degree standards are rigorous, particularly in the doctoral program, and it has never compromised excellence for quantitative purposes. Incidentally, although Mr. Sale criticizes "credentialism" in the Graduate Faculty ("all but two have PH.D.'s"), he bemoans the lack of such credentials in the adult division faculty ("less than 20 percent of them have PH.D.'s").

Mr. Sale also overlooked an important and innovative program. Three years ago, the Graduate Faculty, with the aid of a Ford Foundation grant, inaugurated a Master of Arts program in liberal studies designed for part-time evening students who wish to pursue graduate work, but not in those specialized programs usually associated with PH.D. study or professional certification. This three-year program is interdisciplinary in character, requires attendance in only one course each semester (a seminar in the History of Ideas), and awards the degree, not on the basis of credits, but on the student's performance in a single comprehensive examination. Here, the Graduate Faculty fulfills a growing educational need which has been largely ignored by other graduate schools.

Albert W. Landa
Vice President for Development and Public Relations
New School for Social Research

•

J. Kirk Sale was misinformed, I believe, about the requirements for an undergraduate degree from the New School for Social Research after World War II. It was not true that "any kind of student could come and take enough evening classes for credit until he had amassed enough for a degree." In my day (B.A., 1948), admission was mainly on the basis of the Graduate Record Examination administered only to students with at least two years of acceptable undergraduate study elsewhere. President Everett might look up some of those old scores. The exam also served diagnostic purposes; for example, I was required to take biological science courses, but not physical science or mathematics, on the basis of my scores.

An undergraduate thesis was required before graduation, and it was common knowledge that many of these works were subsequently submitted at Columbia and other renowned institutions in partial fulfillment of their graduate degree requirements. Perhaps most significantly, the New School then had a quota of 200 undergraduates according to the catalog, yet during the peak years of veterans' enrollment, 1946-48, only 175 were accepted.

As to whether "there was no guarantee of quality whatsoever," I cannot say. I suspect, however, that this statement is based on hindsight, the faculty's standards having risen in the meantime. In any event, at least two of the New School's present teachers who were mentioned with approval by Mr. Sale—Reuben Abel and Anatole Broyard—were among my relatively few classmates.

Theodor Schuchat
Washington, D.C.

•

The author replies:

Mr. Landa seems to have confused the role of reporter—mine—with that of public relations man—his. I spoke to scores of people at the New School for the space of a month, and if their impressions of the place do not jibe with his, perhaps that should not surprise him as much as it does.

1. As to the original purpose of the New School as a place for post-B.A. students rather than simply interested adults from the community, I rely both on what I was told by the present chancellor, Harry Gideonse, and the following statement (obviously not aimed at middle-aged job-holders) from the very first New School prospectus: "The work will be arranged with a view of preparing those who desire to enter the fields of journalism, municipal administration, labor organization and the teaching of social sciences."

2. The $450-$550 figure, as the article made clear, refers to the salaries of teachers in the New School adult division—not, as Mr. Landa believes, the "average instructional cost" (which is more than just salaries) of courses in *all* divisions—and was given to me and my wife [who assisted in the

research for the article] by Allen Austill, dean of the New School, and by the instructors themselves.

3. There may be a whole floor of people whose job it is to check on adult division courses—though that would seem to be a strange thing to waste a floor on in a supposedly liberal university—but not one of the many adult teachers I talked to indicated that his curricula or readings or procedures were ever checked or commented upon, and they all seemed to feel that the administration regarded them as doing their jobs so long as a dozen students signed up every year.

4. I was quite in error in placing Mr. Berger in the philosophy department, having been misled by his reputation in, courses about, and contributions to the study of religion.

5. As to my sources in general, there was a fair share of administrators—including Dean Austill, President Everett, Chancellor Gideonse and Mr. Landa himself—though I felt that the voices of the students and teachers mattered, too. The newspapers he refers to as "SDS publications" were in no official way associated with SDS, local or national, though it is quite true that a number of contributors identified themselves with the SDS; in every case I did cite the newspapers when using them as sources, and in every case it was the *opinion* of the paper that I reported, nothing having to do with "accuracy."

6. Mr. Landa is necessarily enamored of the New School's Center for New York City Affairs and its Institute for Retired Professionals, and I can only repeat that I am not. But his emphasis on these two divisions as unique and special to New York only reinforces my feeling that they are not particularly valuable in suggesting directions for other universities.

7. Nothing I said about the adult division student body is at odds with Mr. Landa's statistics of average age and occupational percentages. I wonder if he believes that bored housewives, goo-goo types, and youths have to be over thirty-six.

8. As to the Graduate Faculty's "Germanism," I have as evidence both the analysis of President Everett himself in his previous remarks to me, and Mr. Landa's letter, which admits to the rigorous standards and lack of compromise. (Incidentally, *having* credentials, which is a good thing, is not the same as credential*ism,* which is the rigid imprisonment and servitude to them, and is a bad thing.)

I am grateful for Mr. Schuchat's informative letter and its correction of an impression I may have given that there were no standards whatsoever. There were a number, as he points out, and there were respectable graduates who met them, but the fact remains that the system was slapdash, the graduates as a whole of vastly varying qualities, and compared to any other university, then or now, the control over student quality woefully minimal. As to the quality of New School theses, I can only offer as evidence two cases of which I am personally aware in which the documents were written by friends of the students themselves and passed without the teachers being the wiser.

J. Kirk Sale
New York City

Response to Edgar Friedenberg

Edgar Friedenberg's observations ["The Revolt Against Democracy," May-June 1969] raise the question of how a new interest group, the students, comes to be integrated into the political decision-making system. The problem is rooted in the nature of the college's social structure and in the characteristics of the society that surrounds it. What we are witnessing is the birth of a new interest group within both structures, not some Communist-inspired attempt to subvert our society through the colleges. The question that must be answered is what will be the limits of influence of this group in dealing with both campus and social problems.

Gustav A. Koehler
Social Science Department
Hiram Scott College
Scottsbluff, Neb.

•

Edgar Friedenberg's article was well worth the price of a year's subscription.

Arthur M. Cohen, Faculty
University of California,
Los Angeles

Response to Bruno Bettelheim

Bruno Bettelheim ["The Anatomy of Academic Discontent," May-June 1969] makes certain comparisons between today's student activists in America and the Nazi students who attacked the German universities in the late twenties and early thirties. I disagree with two bases for his comparisons.

He quotes Walter Z. Laqueur as saying, "National Socialism came to power as the party of youth." Actually, Nazism was a youth movement in only the most relative terms. Hitler was thirty-four years old at the time of the Munich beerhall putsch, forty-four when he became chancellor. His closest collaborators were his contemporaries—already over thirty when they came to power: Göring was forty, Goebbels was thirty-six, Himmler thirty-three. More importantly, the men who paved Hitler's way to power were well-aged members of the German establishment—von Papen, Thyssen, Krupp, Hugenberg and others who had no relationship whatever to the young. Hitler appealed to the young because he appealed to their nastiest instincts. However, no one under thirty was among the top Nazi hierarchy.

I also disagree with Dr. Bettel-