

Martin CARNOY *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1974. pp. 378. \$8.95.

The main thesis of Carnoy's book is that schools have been used as cultural tools by imperialistic nations to subjugate people in the Third World and weaker members in their own societies to the interests of the powerful. His argument is very appealing, but it is less than convincing to any except the naive, disillusioned utopianists who fail to criticise even the most unscholarly generalisations that the author renders.

Carnoy tries to impose some structure upon his utopian ideals, couching them in a theoretical framework, replete with detailed footnotes and historical case studies. However, his work suffers from a reliance on secondary sources, poor training in historiography, and a unifactorial analysis of history that is too simplistic. Even though some of his ideas are extremely perceptive and captivating, it is all too obvious that he fails to see contradictions in history or problems and conflicts in his own alternatives for the future. He harks back to Rousseau's notion of "*le bon sauvage*" when he describes his ideal society as one in which men have unlimited potential for goodness if only they are placed in the right environment:

It would be a nonhierarchical society, in which property will not have rights over people, and in which, ideally, no person will have the right of domination over another. This would not be an "egalitarian" society in the sense that everyone is the same: people would have different work, but that work would not give them authority over the lives of others. Work would be done *for each other*, out of common agreement and understanding" (italics his) (p. 366).

Carnoy writes clearly and never tries to hide his assumptions or ideological leanings. In the first chapter, he defined the focus of the book as an exposition of how schools have functioned in western, industrialised societies and in those countries they colonised during the past two hundred years or so. (In his work, he does not adequately differentiate between schooling and education and uses the terms interchangeably.)

His second chapter was the most interesting, in my opinion. He systematically reviewed different theoretical approaches to the study of imperialism, colonialism, and the function of schooling in these situations of dependency. He also explicitly stated that he preferred Lenin's interpretation of history as opposed to Schumpeter's. He defined these two opposing theories of imperialism as follows:

Schumpeter's view proposes that schooling therefore contributes significantly to economic growth and world peace. Schooling brings people into the capitalist culture, makes them function more "rationally" and makes them more efficient producers than when they functioned and produced in traditional cultures. Lenin's theory argues that the spread of capitalism brought countries under the influence and sometimes absolute control of advanced-country monopolies. A primary purpose of schooling, as an extension of this theory, is to incorporate people outside the advanced countries into the sphere of influence and control of these countries and their monopolies (p. 43).

His next five chapters traced the spread of schooling from Europe to the Third World (India, co-authored with Marc Weiss, West Africa, Brazil and Peru, co-authored with Isaura Belloni Schmidt) and to the New World (United States — Immigrants and Black Americans) and then from the United States in its neocolonialist form to the rest of the world since 1945. His thesis throughout these historical case studies is that western formal education came to the Third World and to the poor and powerless in the United States, not as a liberator, but as part of imperialist domination. After he presents this rather manipulative interpretation of the influence of western schooling in these countries, he describes, in the final chapter, what sort of educational system he would design in order to truly liberate people from their situations of dependency.

Before commenting on his final chapter, there are several criticisms that I would like to offer regarding his interpretation of the function of schooling in society. It appears as though Carnoy does not fully recognise the two-edged sword that schooling can be, for it not only can be used as a means of socialisation (or, to employ Carnoy's terminology, as an instrument of colonisation or cultural imperialism), but it often can result in an urge by individuals to question the status quo, to change their situation of dependence (and in this case, it truly "educates" them). These *unintended* consequences, although referred to by Carnoy, are neither well-defined nor

taken into account in his theoretical argument. Granted, he occasionally mentions that there are some other functions of schools, besides the subjugation of people to the interests of the powerful, such as social mobility for the poor and the possibility that schooling may contribute to dissent and original thinking — but he argues that these are not the primary purposes. One can ask, as Rooke so aptly did of other revisionist educators in an article that recently appeared in this *Journal*, why wasn't Carnoy colonised by the inordinate power he attributes to the force of schooling?

Even if one accepts the premise that schools condition, train and indoctrinate their clients into docility by suppressing their humanity, their critical faculties and their creativity, this seems a problematic area. The North American society does in fact turn out a variety of end-products with a myriad of acceptable public behaviours and a range of differing opinions and perceptions. Where is the evidence that all people go through the same factory and come out "processed" as the same package?

He also asserts that educators and social scientists have misled the Third World into believing that education will improve the individual morally and materially and provide him with upward mobility. He goes on to suggest that, not only those in the Third World, but also those in the western world have been tricked by historians and social scientists into a certain interpretation of history — but, do not dismay, Carnoy is here to "enlighten" us! He points out that we have been conditioned to think that "educational history is written with philosophers as the driving force behind educational change. It is ideas that mold the actions of men and women" (p. 342). He informs us that the real moving forces of history are not people and their ideas, but social and economic factors; and Marx, is he not a western social scientist? and what about Durkheim and Weber, Anderson and Foster? The sociologists of education have been telling us for years that schools are merely reflections of society and not easily used as instruments of change. They have repeatedly pointed out that, if you want to change society, you should begin with restructuring the economic and social systems Carnoy has even quoted Foster in the previous chapter in a different context, but stating exactly the same maxim, that we need to examine "what goes on outside the schools rather than what goes on inside them" (p. 329).

Another disturbing characteristic of Carnoy's writing is his penchant for generalisations. For example, in discussing education in Africa, he states "the children of domestic slaves and the poorest villagers were the first pupils in most missions" (p. 82). This was indeed the case among several tribes and the discovery of this fact so startled missionaries and government officials that the incidents have become legendary and several African writers have used this theme in their novels. My knowledge of the Ugandan colonial experience would suggest that this was the exception rather than the rule. However, perhaps Carnoy could prove, by citing examples in other African states (which he failed to do in this work), that the Ugandan situation was unusual. According to several historical accounts, the missionaries in Uganda set up primary and secondary schools to cater principally to chiefs' sons. It is possible that poor children were sent first to see if they would come back alive or unharmed, but after that, the poorest children were rarely found in schools unless they were granted scholarships.

Another generalisation which he makes about the African situation — "tribes who had contact with the Europeans were among the weaker tribes" — is contradicted by the Ugandan experience. The British met the powerful, highly sophisticated political kingdom of Buganda when they crossed Lake Victoria. It was among these people that education spread most rapidly. They were neither weak nor naive, but felt the need to learn "the white man's magic" in order to control his influence over them and the rest of the country. The Buganda people were not passive and subjugated entirely to the interests of the British administrators. Indeed, the culture that emerged from their contact with the latter was not determined merely by British design, but was the result of the interaction of many factors and perhaps the least important was policy emanating from Whitehall.

That societies are experiencing a tremendous convergence in the type of institutions that are developing in all parts of the world — urbanised, bureaucratic, industrialised, credentialised, consumer-oriented — appears to be true, but to assume that this is all a part of a grand plan designed by the elites of the dominant societies to keep the poor and the weak subjugated is hardly realistic.

¹Rooke, Patricia T. "From Pollyanna to Jeremiah — Recent Interpretations of American Educational Thought," *The Journal of Educational Thought*, Vol. 9, No. 1, April, 1975, p. 22.

Even though I do not agree with Carnoy's conspiratorial interpretation of history, I do concur with his contention that attempts should be made to reorder the priorities of most societies in the world and, most importantly, that, if effective change is to occur, the economic and social systems should be restructured first. I also agree that one should not forget the school as an important force that needs to change along with society. He correctly criticises Jencks, who implies that schooling is not a significant factor in explaining individual income and, *therefore*, that it does not have to be considered in a plan for change. Jencks asserts that, during the 1960s in the U.S., changing school quality had little effect upon social and economic inequality and, to reduce this inequality, society should concentrate foremost on political action to equalise income distribution. Carnoy agrees that the latter should be done, but he stresses that there should also be a change in the distribution of schooling.

Carnoy takes a stand half-way between Silberman, who feels the alternative to the present schools should be "open classrooms" (freedom of movement and individualised instruction), and Illich, who would like to destroy schools altogether and build learning networks. Carnoy feels that only a society in the process of liberation can decide whether to have schools or not and, until that time, his alternative choice would be "free schools" like the Washington, D.C., mini-school based on the Freire method of making children and adults politically aware — "to demystify that which is subjective and to have children discover that institutional organization and purpose is not derived from 'natural order' but from people's minds" (p. 367).

I shall conclude this review with several questions that pertain to Carnoy's alternative school. Firstly, his new school will attempt to solve one of society's evils, hierarchical institutions, but what about consumerism and the emphasis on technological improvements and the efficiency cult that pervade society — how will these values be changed in free schools?

Secondly, if schools are to be restructured by enlightened reformers, who is going to ensure that these changes are not co-opted by the "powerful"? Just as the missionaries and their schools became pawns in the systems of British and American imperialism, who will stop these "free schools" from being manipulated by the "elite"?

Thirdly, he mentions briefly the possibility of changing other hierarchical structures in society, such as the family, but what of other institutions that help shape values, such as the mass media, churches, youth clubs? If you do not change these, what will the effect of non-hierarchical schools be?

Finally, I would like to encourage Carnoy to describe in more detail the type of school that he envisions as a good alternative to traditional, hierarchical, teacher-centred schools (in this book we get only a snapshot view) and to try to predict the possible conflicts and problems that will be encountered in establishing them. We have had enough ideological rhetoric about why schools should be changed, but we have barely begun to describe how and in what ways this change should occur. Why did he not pursue a study of societies that had begun to change their economic structures and examine how their schools were changing? He does suggest that "in China and Cuba, schools serve a much more vocational function. The dichotomy between school and work is greatly reduced, and the work place rather than some institution external to the work place serves to select people for various roles" (p. 8). Perhaps he can turn, in his next book, to examining just what the function of schooling is in those societies undergoing this kind of major societal change.

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David B. Tyack. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974. 353 pp. \$12.50.

David Tyack has set himself an ambitious task in this, his most recent effort. He describes his book as an "interpretive history of the organizational revolution that took place in American schooling during the last century." Relying heavily on the paradigms of historians Michael Katz and Raymond Callahan, and of sociologists Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensen, Tyack locates the sources of administrative change in economic and technological transformations occurring in American society throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.