

BOOKS

Educating the Educators

EDUCATION AND WORLD TRAGEDY. By Howard Mumford Jones, Geoffrey Cumberlege. Oxford University Press.

THE author begins by making our flesh creep, a not entirely well-judged proceeding, as it does not prepare the reader adequately for the constructive proposals which he later puts forward for the reform of higher education in the United States, nor for the quality of his dispassionate and careful sketch of the predicament of modern man. He is—as who is not?—obsessed with the enormous implications of man's new powers to destroy himself at such a very much more satisfactory rate than ever before. He deplores "the strange alliance between destruction and education" of recent years. Also he is alarmed at the increasingly strident nationalism of America, now invading even education, and repudiates it, if for no other reason, as a breach with tradition: "For Thomas Jefferson it was sufficient that teachers should possess rationality and virtue; he did not envision the teachers' oath law now common among the States of the American Union." He shrewdly points out too the moral inconsistencies of the victors in the late war in their treatment of the vanquished: "Is perfervid nationalism right in the United States and wrong in Japan?"

Though he himself appears to be a humanist, Mr. Mumford Jones sums up most equitably in the old quarrel between scientists and the "liberal arts" teachers. He is fair to the scientists: "The notion that the scientist is professionally incapable of value judgments is one of the quaintest and most ignorant assumptions that so-called humanists can make." But his strongest criticisms are aimed at the humanists whose function is, or was, to teach men how to live. However, he just avoids regarding them as trustees who have muddled away our inheritance, because he realises that the fault is not theirs alone, but shared with the whole community, that we have in western civilisation lost unity of purpose and effectively emptied our own lives of any really compelling reason for going on living. Mumford Jones believes in democracy as a talisman which can still save us from annihilation in a third world war. Yet, however urgent the need, the remedial measures, being educational, are going to be slow. He commits himself to a broad programme for higher education which attempts to harmonise the need for vocational training with the advisability of knowing something about what science is doing and the equal desirability of studying the world's civilisation as a whole. He groups the last study ("The proper study of mankind is man") under four heads: the workings of representative government "particularly in the United States and in the British Commonwealth of Nations," the study of Russia, of the Orient (he is keenly aware of the achievement of Eastern civilisation in spheres other than the material), and "the study of personal relationships in modern society."

Some may object to Mr. Jones that he is, though peevish, not precise, and a better diagnostician of the disease than propounder of the cure for it. He does in fact tell us what a sad place the world is and what fools he thinks most

American university professors are (our own would hardly escape censure). But at least he sketches an interesting practical proposal.

The "graduate schools," which in the United States are filled with graduates feverishly researching in the hope of securing a doctorate and enough reputation to gain a permanent university appointment, could, he feels, be reformed to become training colleges for a wiser generation of university professors and lecturers. (His proposal goes further than that of a simple training college for university teachers.) The existing graduate schools could go on producing their etiolated specialists (there is not space to reproduce the vigour of his destructive attack on these institutions) for all he cares. But the small, autonomous graduate colleges he advocates would also train "broadly educated men and women able to administer general education maturely, richly and with a high sense of its import." How far indeed can the intelligent and the mature be produced by training? This anyway is his chosen weapon for thwarting the notorious "bent of Americans towards the highest technological culture and the most inefficient social engineering in the world." (Nearly all the stones he casts at his fellow-Americans would also break a pane or two in our own glasshouse.)

Howard Mumford Jones is attractively pungent and pugnacious, and successfully escapes from the atmosphere of "uplift," the polysyllabic Nicholas-Murray-Butler academic flatulence, of the public phases of American university life. But his sanity and good sense do not entirely make up for his being (like most of us) rudderless in a choppy strait. It is difficult to give any purpose to education when society is without one.

CO-OPERATIVES

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AT HOME AND ABROAD. By Hebe Spaul and D. H. Kay. Macmillan.

THIS is a well-illustrated school textbook on every form of trading co-operation throughout the world, suited to Forms II or III. It is a good book for teaching social studies, but might have been better. The authors' decision to treat their topic geographically has obliged them to lump together both consumers' and producers' co-operatives and with these the third type of co-operative which may best be defined as "living together" (the Swiss settlements in Palestine), creating a higgledy-piggledy effect that gives an impression of less discrimination than they actually possess.

I wonder at their inclusion of Soviet collective farms among co-operatives, as to me the essence of co-operation is that it is entered into voluntarily. The "middle way" in commercial life, it has rarely flourished in a paternalistic state and seems to have arisen most often either as a bulwark against exploitation or—as in the Chinese artisans' co-operatives—to fill a vacuum in a backward and unlucky country. But the authors are fully alive to the strong educational impulses which have been associated with the co-operative movement nearly everywhere and make it even more socially important than its successes in the economic field. —David Hall



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