



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Editorial Book Review

The Plea Of A European In Our Midst

EDUCATION AND FREEDOM. By H. G. Rickover, Vice Admiral, U. S. N. Dutton. 256 pp. \$3.50.

VICE Adm Hyman G. Rickover, U. S. N., is not a very nice guy. He will not be invited to join any clubs where you must smile when annoyed, clamp your lips shut when tempted to curse, and hide your contempt for triflers.

This collection of speeches and essays crackles with impudence and impudence. It attempts a hard sell, in the current lingo of Madison Ave. "It is probably going to make a lot of people very angry," warns TV memory, are Charles Van Doren in his preface.

We hope it does, even taking into account that a hard sell always runs the risk of making more enemies than friends for a cause; but Adm Rickover has taken the way of the hard sell, assuming that the Russian technological threat has brought about the hour for American education to snap out of its repose in complacency and mediocrity.

THE hedgehog knows one big thing. Adm Rickover says we can and must surpass the U.S.S.R. in national achievement; and for the reason that our lives and liberty may be at stake.

Of course, less hard-headed people will point out that there are more pleasant starting points for a campaign to overhaul the school system than a hard case of the Sputnik jitters. For instance, in the supposition that Americans should be better educated, intellectually more graceful, and in the arts and sciences more insightful and sophisticated.

Adm Rickover, we are sure, is aware of this fact; but he must know that to make a race, a contest, out of repairing the educational system will appeal to the indelible utilitarian spirit of this country, even if, ironically, it is the same utilitarian spirit which may have put us in the "progressive" educational plight.

To this essay in educational criticism, Adm Rickover brings his trailblazing experience in developing the first nuclear-powered submarine. In that pursuit he ran afoul of "the Soviet man" in an inflexibility that may have put its roots in an educational system which does not prepare young people for life in a constantly changing world, subject to recurrent revolutions which rapidly make old attitudes and procedures obsolete.

And demand that all our leaders have flexible and versatile minds. The irony will be apparent here. Too the pursuit of "progress," not a stupid adherence to outmoded standards, created this peculiar "crisis."

The resulting problem might be called the "supervisory gap."

Adm Rickover was forced, as we know, to jeopardize his tenure in the Navy to cope with his many "supervisors." To him, it was a "supervisory imperative"—a mandate—that the U. S. must have a startling new weapon. He was not even content, as some supervisors wished, to try to put nuclear power in a surface vessel, but proposed an infinitely more drastic, even nuclear submarine. In itself, this was a trademark of the Rickover mind, as it is so apparent in EDUCATION AND FREEDOM—whoring after unimagined fates.

Rickover complains that at every turn his venture, he had to wrestle with the caution of the supervisor who moved in a world bounded by protocol, budgets, payrolls, and such prosaic matters as do not, and ideally cannot, intrude on the visions of the technicians.

RICKOVER does not clarify just how this "supervisory gap" relates to the maladies of American education, much less how one might have bred the other. Only if like him we conceive of education as an international race to see who can get where fastest with the mostest weapons, can we understand. But the book stands to be judged as a series of somewhat disjointed essays, united by the theme that American education is now too late with too little in a crucial era.

Few informed readers will be unfamiliar with Adm Rickover's general line of educational argument: The schools are sunk down in progressive theory; bright children are neglected and when it comes time for the examinations he is trained there is little alternative, since the basic disciplines, particularly mathematics, have often been neglected. The schools of education, now more on the defensive than ever, lash out against their critics with all the savagery of those who partially see but fear to admit their culpability and heresy.

The key, in short, is motivation. Nor does the admiral let us—the public—off the book. The public has given the schools and the "educationalists" no mandate to veer so sharply as they have done from all that was classical and purely academic; but the public has acquiesced, and betraying its own taste has let mediocrity be prized in the face of brilliant enrollments, we have given the old gray mare a carrot or two when what we needed was a new horse. In the period, 1940-54, during which we upped educational expenditures 78 per cent, we benefited from an increase in



Adm. Rickover

the gross national product of 192 per cent, in constant 1947 dollars. We preferred to spend the lion's share of this windfall on ourselves rather than on the education of our children."

"The elementary and high schools would have to enlarge their teaching staffs by at least 500 thousand in the next 10 years merely to maintain the present pupil-teacher ratio." (Item: "We spend 5.3 per cent of disposable income for maintenance of our cars, and this is one and a half times what we spend for maintenance of our public elementary and high schools.")

But lest anyone be led astray by statistics, Adm Rickover is far from the phillistine illusion that a nation can merely buy education as we buy Cadillacs. We could painlessly pay much more, largely to gain superior teachers, but the real answer to the admiral's way of thinking is a drastic change of scheme.

HERE, it might be speculated that the "great debate" over American education has been mislabeled. It is not really a debate between classicists and educationalists, nor between the old-fashioned "horries" and the progressives, nor yet between the technicians and the supervisors.

It is between the Europeans, EDUCATION AND FREEDOM indicates, and the non-Europeans. Adm Rickover is the European per excellence in our midst, frankly daring to hail the superiority of the European system, in general, over our own. Urging a pedagogical crash program to change our own in the general direction of European standards, he notes that the Russians, now running such elaborate dividends, really did the same thing years ago. Russian education began its upgrade some three decades ago when its cars realized they must throw over the proletarian-centered schools where the "Soviet man" was to be molded and adopt the individualistic system of Europe. Similarly, the malady of our schools, as Rickover sees it, is our dream of molding the "American man," kindly, democratic, helpful, even on guard against "insects and vermin which carry disease." The trouble is education was lost along the way.

For other rapid changeovers, Rickover cites the Prussian example after their defeat by Napoleon—when public, universal, free schools, built on rigid standards, were installed. Rapid victories in the wars of unification then European supremacy, were, he supposes, Prussia's benefits from this change. One victim was France—whose for her own elementary schools, patterned after the Prussians; the wheel had come full circle.

Rickover wisely leaves the English educational system alone. As de Tocqueville observed long ago, English education, like the whole tenor of English life, defies single categories. In schools, where everyone often wears the same uniform, as in the "club," there is such a strange mixture of conformity and anarchy, individualism and collectivism, classicism and character-building that the British system is better as a curio than an example.

THUS Adm. Rickover's answer is, generally, to hold up the European example and urge us to copy it, as the Russians are doing. Certainly for the young Russian, distance to the school is often the only alternative to a bleak burial in obscurity. For the Frenchman, winning the *Croix de Travail*, the "head" of the class is a national dream; the alternative is the humiliation of being mediocre.

The question, in sum, is whether Americans have it.

If it weren't for men who stay downtown late after work to avoid the traffic, the streets would be more crowded and the divorce courts emptier.—JACKSONVILLE TIMES-UNION.

A neighbor of ours has a step ladder he has used for 35 years. Much too late to use it back now.—MATTHEW (LIL) JOURNAL-GAZETTE.

Arms Races On Whether Eisenhower Likes It Or Not

By WALTER LIPPMANN

WASHINGTON

IN THE swirling controversy over the Eisenhower administration's policy toward the arms race, the question of whether the President likes it or not is a most lamentable way to prepare for the impending negotiations which Secretary Dulles is now dealing with in Europe.

What should be done about it? It should be said in no uncertain terms that defense has the first priority. If the President will not say it, perhaps Congress itself should say it by resolutions. There should then be a substantial increase in the military appropriations, and increase sufficient to put us back into the missiles race.

UNCONVINCING. It makes suspect all the military estimates in the budget. For it is not part of the law of the land, or of that moral law which the President frequently invokes, that the existing tax structure cannot be raised and should be lowered. To insist on such a dogma about taxes is to tell the people and the world that national defense is not the first but only the secondary consideration in this government.

From this it follows inevitably that Secretary McElroy's assurances about our overall strength are quite unconvincing. For nobody is prepared to believe that he would not have taken every possible step to increase the money needed for national defense is just the amount of money that should be raised if the budget is to be balanced without raising taxes.

HORRIBLE PROSPECT. This initial error about the budget has forced Mr. McElroy into making the disastrous announcement that the United States has withdrawn from the missiles race. He may well be right that with fewer missiles there will still be an overall balance of power. But it is not good for the Russians and it is not for our allies to be told that the United States has withdrawn from the missiles race. It costs to stand in that part of the race of armaments which has the most horrible prospect.

People's Platform

Attendance Law Changed In 1956

Editors: The News—Hamlet

NOTICED in my paper yesterday that the State of Virginia had repealed its state law that said, in effect, that all children of a certain age must attend a school.

Now the law reads in effect, that a child does not have to attend any school unless his parents choose to send their child.

It is very interesting that the State of North Carolina has a law that says, in effect, that a child must attend a school, regardless of what his parents have to say.

Some of us have been saying since the decision of the U. S. Supreme Court in 1954 said, in effect, that we must segregate our schools, that the decision was unconstitutional.

Now we ask it constitutional for a state to say that parents must send their children to school?—ROBERT CAMP BOYD SR.

Editors: Note: An amendment to North Carolina's compulsory school attendance laws was passed by the 1956 special session of the legislature. The amendment provides that when a child assigned against the wishes of his parent to a public school attended by a child of another race and is not reasonable and practical to transfer such a child to a non-public school, and it is not reasonable and practical for the child to attend an approved private school, then the child shall not be forced to attend a school. This was done to make provision for the granting of "education expense grants" under the Praxial Plan.

Unsanitary Conditions In Charlotte Hospitals

Editors: The News—Rt. 1, Charlotte

WHOEVER composed the article on "staph" disease not having invaded the Charlotte hospitals was all wet or badly misinformed. Last year at this time, my sister just having had a baby in December was suffering the tortures of hell with that disease, and the hospital bill was hers. Yet it was not her fault that she contracted it. Her mother and the hospital staff, and they both are now constantly under doctor's care for having had

Kenya Revisted

Editors: The News—Nairobi

IT IS coming on nine years since I first hit this town, and, of course, the faces are more familiar now—more of them, many grown older, young bloods now fathers and men of property.

But the face of the town has lifted, since I was here two years ago, since I was here three, four, six years ago. There is a magnificent new airport at Eastleigh now, new hotels a-building, vast new office buildings, slum clearances.

You no longer get the striking impact of the smell and feel of Africa, as you did when I first drove wide-eyed down Race Course Road, coming through the native slums, the howling, reeking bazaars, in which every small known to the East mingled in one magnificent heads stench—a blend compounded of rotting fruit and dust and curry powder and wet plaster and ancient living.

The misses were as exciting as the sights and smells. Flye shrill dialects mingled with the blaze of Indian and Arabic radio broadcasts and the clatter of hand-drank phonographs. Women shouted and dogs barked and children played in between the plodding legs of the adults.

Then you could see the bush native come to town, and occasional haughty Masai, wearing nothing but a spear, war ornaments, red-day make-up and a gaudy cloak wrapped around his body. A young boy with a no-nonsense Kikuyu with a enormous carved wood plugs in the distended lobes of his ears, women clad only in a one-piece wrap-around kiko, with the invariable baby slung on their backs, a tiny woolly head peeping from under an arm.

The men mostly wore appalling tatters, with patchwork pants, and all the words seemed to have been left out in the rain.

—MRS. LOUISE WOOD
 Rt. 5, Box 364
 Martinsville, Ind.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

THIS is the unold story of how a great man stepped down from power and

Lyndon Says No. The senator from Texas who is about one half Green's age, did not hesitate.

Advice Sought. "I want to ask the advice of the majority leader," he told Johnson. "I make the speech nominating you for majority leader. And now I want your advice."

He handed Johnson an editorial from the "Presidence" Journal, arguing that Green resign as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, because of age, faultily hearing, and falling eyesight.

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Then an increase of taxes should be voted in order to balance this larger budget.

I am aware that the extra money invested in making more of the existing missiles may be "wasted" in the sense that these missiles will soon be obsolete. But the race of armaments is in the same sense inherently wasteful since the objective is to make weapons which will never be used and will soon be obsolete.

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Nevertheless we are in a race of armaments. It would be a great day for mankind if it could be ended. But if the race is to be ended, this will be done only if and when we are able to reach general political settlements with the Communist powers. The race of armaments cannot be ended or suspended merely because we wish to balance the budget without raising taxes, or because it would be good politics to reduce taxes before the next election.

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NEZLOCK

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A 'New Africa' Is Emerging

By ROBERT C. RUARK

THE bazaar reeked of rotting meat and gooey sweets and swarmed with flies. The colors of the people ranged from shining plumb back to the lighter Swahili from the coast, the ivory-skinned Arabs in djellabas and caftans, the swarthy Greeks and the bearded Sikhs in brilliant turbans, the hawk-faced Somalis from the northern deserts. Shining black faces under bright red tar-

WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY

That was colonial Kenya—white man's country, it was called—fifty or sixty thousand whites and six million blacks. That was the country in which every native, regardless of age, was called "boy." And less than ten years ago

Now it has changed. The slums and the old bazaar quarters have been razed—burnt down during the "emergency," which is what the Mau Mau terror still is called. You do not see so many knives clustered in the streets any more, nor in the scarring knots of yesterday, because the history of the bitter Mau Mau conflict has made mobs unpopular.

DISTANT THUNDER

The natives in town seem better dressed than before, and almost all of them wear European clothing—shirts, shorts, slacks, dresses. They no longer seem to stare at the African in the white masked gale, but look more obliquely more shy. And less, considerably, respectfully at the white tourist and memsahib.

Mau Mau has come and has been put down, and a new secret order, the K.K.M., seems to have been effectively dispersed. But isolated attacks on people and persons persist, and have increased, and the paper is full of politics hovering on violence. Somehow you hear a low mutter of distant thunder in today's Africa, thunder which will not be followed by the usual every second—except the relative brief squall that was Mau Mau, which at the time was described as an ugly indication of the state of the restless world of color.

Tear-Filled Eyes

Johnson, whose eyes had filled with tears, argued with the old man. But Green pulled out a letter and handed it to him.

"You're my majority leader," he said. "So I've written you my letter of resignation. I'm sorry to ignore your advice." When Green's letter of resignation was read to the committee, tears came to the eyes of almost every senator—except the little old man from Rhode Island. A resolution not to accept Green's resignation was passed, 14 to 0.

"I appreciate your confidence, but it isn't your decision. I have made my decision and my resignation is hereby accepted."