Who Owns New York?

The American University. How It Runs, Where It Is Going. JACQUES BARZUN. Harper and Row, New York, 1968. xii + 322 pp. $7.95.

Education and the Barricades. CHARLES FRANKEL. Norton, New York, 1968. ii + 94 pp. $3.95.

In my college days, it was not uncommon to encounter on the streets of New York, in the early hours of Sunday morning, a band of young men singing,

> "Who owns New York?
> Oh, who owns New York?
> Oh, who owns New York?"
> the people say.
> We own New York.
> Oh, we own New York,
> C-O-L-U-M-B-I-A!

The question has, of course, been reopened since then, and a further one posed: Who owns Columbia?

It is at least happy coincidence (and good fortune) that in late 1968 two gentlemen of Columbia joined in the analysis of the ownership and ills of the modern American university. It should be said at the outset that Barzun (for 12 years dean of faculties and provost of Columbia) and Frankel (professor of philosophy and for two years Assistant Secretary of State) reflect great credit upon Columbia and upon academic leadership in general. Each book is a delight to read.

But it is no coincidence that Barzun's book is dedicated to John W. Gardner. For Gardner has, as president of the Carnegie Corporation and as Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, done more than any other man of our times to provoke a rethinking of the nature of the modern American university. It was Gardner who observed a few years ago that

> Sometimes institutions are simply the sum of the historical accidents that have happened to them. Like the sand dunes in the desert, they are shaped by influences but not by purposes. Or, to put the matter more accurately, like our sprawling and ugly metropolitan centers they are the unintended consequences of millions of fragmented purposes.

Here, then, are two academicians who have accepted the Gardner challenge and who seek to restore the American university by illuminating its essential qualities, its limitations, and its goals.

It's hard to know in which sequence these two books are best read. In going to the barricades, Frankel touches lightly but deftly on the issues that most concern Barzun, and in a sense the latter amplifies the civilized assumptions that underlie Frankel's work. On the other hand, Frankel tends to bring into focus for today some of the more general and highly provocative observations of Barzun. My considered advice: read them, as I did, *pari passu*.

Frankel, having chosen to focus on the immediate problem of challenge and response in the crisis of today (though he was not personally involved in the Columbia episodes of 1968), has produced the shorter and more trenchant book. Barzun, having recently escaped the responsibilities of deansmanship, is considerably more expansive as he explores the larger questions of the nature of the modern university, not just for today, but for always.

This is not to say that Frankel does not understand the modern university; on the contrary, he displays between the lines of his economical essay an intelligent devotion to the values embodied in the historic concept of the university. And he delivers himself of an extraordinarily effective criticism of contemporary dissidence. He does not find it difficult at all to comprehend the causes of student hostility, nor does he find it difficult to put them in perspective. He is, above all, eminently sensitive to the "fragility of the understandings on which a university depends" and underscores the threat to such understandings inherent in recent campus disruption. He argues that the university's character is distinctive, perhaps unique—it must "give a place to reason which reason does not have in other domains of human activity"—and adds that "the use of any tactic which substitutes physical pressure or emotional duress for reason is an assault on this basic ethic." Frankel argues in his concluding chapter for a "relevant" university, and urges those who disapprove of the tactics of dissidents not to remain "rigid in the face of this opportunity to bring new coherence and excitement to higher education." But the most forceful thrust of the book is its logical assault upon the tactics of militant dissidents. Beleaguered administrators and faculty members will find comfort as well as strength in it; and they'll find quotable quotes as well:

> To say that impermissible political behavior begins only when outright violence and bloodshed are involved is to reject distinctions that make up a good part of what we know as civilization.

But just as predictably as Frankel's book will sustain the advocates of reasoned reform, it will not be read by those who most need to read it; and those few who do will likely, as Frankel himself predicts, resort to the bankrupt argument that the ethic of reason itself is "myth and facade, a bourgeois illusion." One hopes that Frankel will not be long in arguing this "large proposition" (which he excludes from the compass of this essay), but one takes comfort in the knowledge that in the meantime "reasonable men should know what to think" of a revolution based on such rejection.

The Barzun book is big, in more ways than one. It undertakes ambitiously (and, by and large, successfully) to project a documentary of the modern university—its scope and complexity, its problems of internal governance and external relationships—and how it all came about. It offers, too, in its concluding chapter, no fewer than 68 helpful observations on how to reestablish the integrity of the modern university, most of which are helpful even to those who do not share Barzun's conception of the nature of the university.

Stylistically, the book is outstanding. It sparkles with insights that hit home with university administrators, and it is studded with criticisms that defy rebuttal. It is a scalding yet responsible critique, penetrating, articulate, and urbane. (Though he could hardly have known it was in preparation, Barzun anticipated the less responsible critique of James Ridgeway, in *The Closed Corporation*, by observing that the modern university is "the only target left for the muckracker.")

The book is not without its faults. Henry Wriston once observed that a book of Whitney Griswold's essays might have laundered better with a

little less blue in the wash. And here, too, there's a trifle too much of Columbia blue in both illustration and anecdote, and a rather insistent suggestion that talk of *the* American university should have Columbia and similar institutions at the center. An index that reveals 24 references to Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, 11 to Oxford and Cambridge, and only two to "Big Ten" universities, five references to Robert Hutchins, three to Cardinal Newman, and only one to the Morrill Land-Grant Act, is bound to be suspect in some quarters.

It is an obvious disservice to Barzun to oversimplify a thesis that threads its way through 300 pages. But I think it is fair to say that he is retrying a familiar case. The university is in trouble because outside (non-faculty) forces "feel free to impose their ways, their routines, their notions and expectations" on it in a form of "incessant blackmail." The post-1945 university suffers because it has become "an instrument of the people"; because it is "educating for the twenty-first century instead of just educating"; because the timeless values of liberal learning have been overwhelmed by the timely concerns of professional education and the impatient demands of a society that wants to "use" the university. Barzun puts it succinctly: a university should academically and administratively "be and remain One, not Many, singular not plural, a republic, not an empire." The slogan of reform is "simplify."

Barzun's depiction of the university, torn in several directions and going broke in the process, is telling; his contention that it is, in the process, suffering a "higher bankruptcy" of an intellectual and moral nature is popular but debatable; his remedy is least convincing of all. His appeal, at last, is for "self-reformation," a kind of academic Buchmanism. The vexing problem of university involvement in sponsored research, for example, is to be solved by a "campus committee," whose members must be "intelligent, scrupulous, puritanical and must carry heavy life insurance." Even making allowance for Barzun's wit, it hardly sounds promising. The same faculty that has tangoed into this trouble with agents of government and foundations does not seem a likely candidate for self-reform.

Unless, of course, Barzun has in mind a particular segment of the faculty—those who are not (yet, at least) involved in programs that have "one foot outside the university and one inside."

It may just be that another way of saying what Barzun has said about the deterioration—the "centrifugal skedaddling," as he calls it—of the university is to say that humanists no longer prevail in the councils of our established universities. For the values that Barzun would embrace for the university seem to me to be, essentially, those historically associated with the liberal arts and, even more specifically, with the humanities. Do universities really lack coherence and identity and centrality? Or is it just that the humanities no longer constitute that identity and provide that coherence?

No one can conscientiously deny Barzun's allegation that the "public service" function of the university constitutes a major strain on modern institutions. One can go further and agree with Charles Muscatine, who once observed that he had seen "more educational sins committed in the name of public service than under any other invocation, human or divine." But this is not to deny the legitimacy of public service as a proper function of a university, even of Columbia. The question really is, How much and in what form, and whose sense of educational emphasis and scope is to prevail?

A century ago, the outsiders tried to persuade established institutions of higher education to adapt themselves to time and place and circumstance—to be responsive to people—and the institutions balked. The public, through its Congress, therefore set out to create a whole new class of institution, the land-grant college. It was quite frankly a "college of the people," and it embraced public service as a function, along with teaching and research. That's when the real revolution took place in higher education. In a sense, the only revolution that took place after World War II is that the established universities began to emulate the state universities; they were persuaded, perhaps by the availability of federal funds, to abandon their detachment and join the revolution, however belatedly. The year 1945 was indeed a critical one; it was the year in which established, liberal-arts-oriented universities had to make up their minds either to eschew professional and applied dimensions or to get in the popular swim. Barzun now regrets the decision that was made. He regrets that his institution adopted something of the pattern of its country cousins.

This is not either new or surprising (though it is in a sense ironic that Barzun does not take note of the ascendancy of the liberal arts in institutions that were once the citadels of professionalism and vocationalism. Much of the stress evident on state university campuses is, it seems to me, attributable to the fact that arts-and-sciences spokesmen now loom large on the faculties, looking with disdain upon the honored public service tradition of these people's universities. Oil and water, it seems, don't mix whether ivy is present or not).

Since the First World War at least, humanists have endeavored to reestablish the liberal arts at the center of university affairs and to attract to them "people of like purpose." The liberal arts were in jeopardy long before the federal government entered the picture. But either there are not enough faculty and students to man such an institution, or—more likely—without the "loss leaders" of popular and professional education they can't live in the style to which they've become accustomed. For the fact is that only Hutchins and Griswold, of the long line of militant humanists, could lop off any of the nodules or excrescences of what they termed "Vocationalism" (an older form of public service) from their universities.

The question must seriously be raised whether it is possible in contemporary society for an institution to survive, let alone flourish, if it is not popular at least in the sense that it offers what its patrons or its students desire. In a day when the faculty, in its sackcloth and ashes, heavily subsidized the institution, the legend of the inner-directed institution might persist; but while "Committee T" has increasingly insisted on calling the tune, "Committee Z" has taken care to ensure that someone else pays the piper. It seems hard to imagine that the humanist's dream of the academy can be realized under present economic, social, and political conditions. Historians and philosophers have ridden the economic coattails of short-supply scientists all the way to affluence, and the puritanical self-reformation that Barzun calls for seems highly remote.

If the basis for Barzun's appeal is, as I think, unrealistic, where do we stand in our effort to satisfy John Gardner's legitimate plea for clarity of purpose?

The answer may lie in thinking of universities not as institutions but as communities. It is popular to make fun of Clark Kerr's concept of a multi-

versity, with all his talk about "uses." But (though I have not reread his lectures) he may in fact have been saying that it is no longer possible to think of the comprehensive institution as having "unity"; that while we all lament the phenomenon of "millions of unintended consequences," it may be possible to create a purposeful city of learning in which competing, even conflicting, but nonetheless *intended* purposes coexist with one another. Neighborhood redevelopment, if you will, instead of metropolitan government.

The solution, it would seem, lies not in the kind of purge or withdrawal that Barzun hopes for but in a realistic reconciliation of contending forces which, I strongly suspect, were at play long ago in Bologna and Paris and Cambridge, as they are today at Morningside Heights and Storrs.

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Looking for Remedies

College Curriculum and Student Protest. JOSEPH J. SCHWAB. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969. viii + 304 pp. $4.95.

Experiment at Berkeley. JOSEPH TUSSMAN. Oxford University Press, New York, 1969. xvi + 144 pp. Cloth, $5; paper, $1.75.

The Student in Higher Education. Report of the Committee on the Student in Higher Education, Joseph F. Kauffman, Chairman. The Hazen Foundation, New Haven, Conn., 1968. 66 pp. Paper. Available free for limited distribution.

Overlive. Power, Poverty, and the University. WILLIAM M. BIRENBAUM. Delacorte, New York, 1968. xiv + 210 pp. $4.95.

We are all aware that our universities are in an acute state of crisis. Society is asking them to provide more and more specialized training to meet the needs of a technological society. At the same time they must find a place for minority group students with very different needs from those of the students they have accommodated in the past. While these external demands are increasing, the university is experiencing growing pressures from its present students for democratization, "relevance," and better undergraduate teaching. Even the faculty, usually the last to know, is beginning to realize that mass education is not succeeding and that turning out students is not the same as educating them. However, in spite of the convulsions wracking the campus, and much discussion of how to deal with these manifestations of discontent, there has been remarkably little discussion of the educational issues posed by these many demands. The faculty has been content to allow university administrators to carry the burden, while they continue to teach their conventional courses and carry on their research and outside consulting. The books under review here are some of the few attempts to confront these issues, and their weaknesses show how far we are from dealing successfully with them.

Joseph Schwab, long-time professor of natural sciences and education at the University of Chicago, has written in *College Curriculum and Student Protest* a fascinating, albeit occasionally archaic, account of what an ideal meeting between student and professor could be like. The book has an overstylized "medical" structure, offering first a diagnosis of the ills of the contemporary university and then a set of prescriptions to deal with them. The diagnosis is largely a catalogue of the faults of student activists, and the condescending tone of this section continues through the book, where phrases like "student incompetence" and "irresponsibility" abound. Although Schwab refers briefly to some of the failings of the present university structure—the deadening lecture system, the cryptic catalogue of elective courses, the powerless student government—the student movement is treated as a phenomenon that exposes the inadequacies of students rather than as a reflection upon the university or society. Further, the book is written in an opaque style which makes it difficult to pick out the specific suggestions the author is offering. But, in spite of this, it is rewarding reading for anyone interested in reviving the art of teaching in his university or his classroom.

By college "curriculum" Schwab means not only the traditional structure of courses but, even more important, the aims of teaching and the behavior of the teacher in the classroom. Indeed, this book is more a presentation of a style of teaching than of a curriculum in the conventional sense. The literary problems of the book arise in part from the fact that Schwab is dealing with the nature of the teaching/learning process, a subject which is notoriously difficult to write about and must perhaps be lived to be understood.

Schwab emphasizes (with examples drawn from his encounters with student activists) that he is more concerned with deficiencies of "competence" than with lack of information. His prime objective is the development of a teaching style which will provide students with the experience they now lack of deliberation and analysis. His approach derives from that used at the University of Chicago, relying upon a close analysis of selected readings to provide experience in making informed moral and political choices. He is critical of faculty members who feel they have performed their duty by giving sparkling lectures, while withholding themselves from their students. Instead, he urges a revival of the dialogue between student and teacher and suggests ways in which this dialogue can be shaped to provide the best training ground for the student. Here he puts aside the condescension he shows toward students as protesters, by insisting that there be adult treatment of the material studied and a joint search by the student and teacher for its meaning.

The curriculum, in his view, should have challenging intellectual content, should have a practical component (so that the student can experience the joining of thought and action), should exist within a community of which the students are a part, and should provide a common culture linking students and teachers together in the search for understanding. In a brief reference to the teaching of science, he urges that it be founded on the collection and interpretation of evidence rather than the presentation of facts and theoretical principles. In too many of our science courses, he notes, we present the subject as if it were wrapped up in a neat,