

Alexander Israel Wittenberg, THE PRIME IMPERATIVES: PRIORITIES IN EDUCATION. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd., 1968. 178 pp. \$2.90, paper.

The volume under review is based on a series of talks entitled "Education: the Unfulfilled Promise" given by Alexander Wittenburg for C.B.C. Toronto during 1965. Dr. Wittenberg, Professor at Mathematics at York University, adapted the broadcasts for publication shortly before his death that same year, but he was not able to revise and approve the final text.

As its chapter headings readily indicate, this book deals with some fundamental issues in educational policy-making and practice, for example, "Education in a Free Society," "The Knowledge Needed for Action," "General Education as a Challenge for Creative Scholarship," "Teacher Training." Throughout, Dr. Wittenberg maintains the thesis:

"There are two different kinds of priorities in education. At one level, there are the difficult, and necessarily contentious, priorities concerning the framing of specific educational policies — the relative priorities of the various goals and proposals that compete for the available means, from the development of nursery education to that of scientific research. But in

addition there are priorities of a much more fundamental kind — and, I hope, of a much less contentious nature, once they are clearly realized. Let me call them MASTER PRIORITIES.

"All master-priorities revolve around a single focus: KNOWLEDGE." (p. 31)

Dr. Wittenberg's European heritage may be apparent in this point of view, yet his book draws upon a broad range of educational literature, including a number of Canadian research studies. It attempts to place Canadian education in the perspective of world educational developments.

The writing is at times sententious and dull and one may not entirely agree with the publisher's estimate that "Teachers and concerned parents will find Dr. Wittenberg's observations and recommendations both disturbing and illuminating." However, there is little doubt that **The Prime Imperatives** makes a worthwhile contribution to ideas on Canadian education and that it can "serve the general public and the expert as "the intelligent taxpayer's guide to education'."



Charles Frankel. EDUCATION AND THE BARRICADES. N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968, 90 pp. \$1.25.

Charles Frankel, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia and former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, has written a short analysis of what ails our universities. He begins on a hopeful note by observing that since the strongest criticisms of universities come from the students themselves, at least some

critical thinking is being promoted there. Indeed, one of the reasons for student dissent is the fact that "all lively and well-informed professors cast doubt, simply in the normal course of their teaching, on things that the conventional pieties take for granted" (p. 15). Besides, students are at a difficult age where they are try-

ing to find their identities and our "liberal culture" encourages them to question and protest. Finally, the objective realities of today at home and abroad provoke, if not demand, conflict.

Frankel's reasons for student dissent seem equally applicable to the faculty. How many not so lively nor well-informed professors accept only the conventional pieties when it comes to educational questions? Does finding one's academic identity involve submitting to unreasonable demands and extended periods of bureaucratic puzzlement? How do professors react to the objective realities of today? Frankel doesn't really say; and one of the flaws of his book is that he isolates student problems from the larger "people" problems at universities.

Well, what about the students? Again Frankel is a bit too optimistic and somewhat naive. Students are not the objects of education, he tells us; they are its principal instruments. They have a large say in the determination of what courses will be offered (though not how or by whom), on the specific "style" of the university, and, most importantly, on what other students think. The last point is well-taken. Many students forget that a university education involves lounges, dormitories, bull sessions, dates and all kinds of student activities, as well as classes. Some may learn more from discussion outside the classroom than they do in it. Who is to say precisely where education is to take place? So long as some thinking goes on the structure provided, it cannot be condemned as a complete failure.

There still remains the problem of the student's role in the university. Frankel is not sure what this role is: the student is no longer the "protected son" in the university family;

nor is he an apprentice to a master scholar; nor is he his professor's peer. Frankel makes it clear that the university community is "a hierarchical human organization, based on the premise that some people know more than other people, and that the community cannot perform its tasks effectively unless these gradations in knowledge are recognized in its form of government" (p. 50).

Such a view cuts both ways. Students have argued that they know more about housing and discipline problems, that they can most effectively run the orientation program, that they can best judge the quality of teaching. Frankel, like most of his colleagues, would grant some of these claims and not others. Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut means of determining "gradations of knowledge" in certain crucial areas of university operations. The long loud cry of irrelevance shows that students have definite ideas on curriculum, learning environment, and the objective realities of today. What should be the response in terms of the form of university government? It may be ridiculous to solicit student opinion about a professor's published research; it is not ridiculous to ask students what they got out of a course and what they didn't and why. Too many professors like to develop discussion in their courses, but fear discussion of their courses.

Frankel has no solutions to the problem of communication in the university. He does argue that "education" and "barricades" have nothing in common. He deplures, and rightly so, the growing violence on our campuses. Reason is the best tool man has for improvement and lasting change and the universities are what we hope are the best places to foster and protect the use of reason. As Frankel

puts it, universities represent an act of faith by society that "such things as intellectual discipline, mastery of fact, and refinement of taste are social instruments, resources that can be used to improve the human condition" (p. 88).

What Frankel's book gives us are not solutions but clarifications of the problems. He raises some of the questions that must be asked by students and faculty and members of the outside community. His asking of the questions is itself a faith in reason, a commitment to rational inquiry as a means to lift us all out of the morass into which we are sinking. Student ac-

tivists have dramatically raised some of the same issues. What is needed now is for all of us to look at what we are doing and try to figure out what we should be doing. Universities began as guilds of masters and students banded together by certain goals and ideals. The partnership is beginning to split. The way to save it, for those of us who think it worth saving, is through a mutual re-examination of these goals and ideals. Frankel has taken a first step toward such a re-examination. I hope there will be more.

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Patrick Seale et Maureen Conville. FRENCH REVOLUTION 1968. Penguin Books, 1968, 238 pp.

THE FRENCH STUDENT REVOLT: THE LEADERS SPEAK, presented by Hervé Bourges. New York: Hill & Wang, 1968, 112 pp. (original in French, Editions du Seuil, 1968).

Gerald McGuigan. STUDENT PROTEST. Toronto: Methuen, 1968, 285 pp.

Les deux premiers livres appartiennent à la littérature journalistique et traitent des actualités socio-politiques. En effet, les auteurs du premier livre étaient reporters de *l'Observer* à Paris durant les événements de mai-juin 1968. Le deuxième livre étudié émet les idées des leaders de la révolte des étudiants français. Ils expliquent sous forme d'entrevues leurs attitudes et leur engagement envers leurs pairs et envers la société en général. Le troisième livre est plutôt un travail d'édition. Il contient, en partie, des articles des professeurs libéraux et des étudiants contestataires parus auparavant dans d'autres publications. L'ouvrage traite de la contestation des étudiants au Canada. Les trois textes rapportent l'enthousiasme du fait, de l'actualité, sans le recul nécessaire pour assimiler et percevoir les choses dans leur propre perspective.

Du point de vue du style, le premier livre cherche à faire et à maintenir la sensation; les événements bien sûr s'y prêtent. Dans le deuxième ouvrage, les entretiens avec les leaders des étudiants, enregistrés entre le 20 mai et le 1er juin 1968, sont émis, pour plus de fidélité, sous leur forme originale avec toute l'émotion de la spontanéité. Le style du troisième texte laisse beaucoup à désirer. Pour prouver qu'il est écrit par des contestataires, les slogans tels qu'on pouvait lire sur les murs des universités, sont notés tout le long du livre, rabaisant sa valeur littéraire et esthétique. L'auditeur-éditeur se plaint de l'abysse entre les générations. Ce n'est pas par le style de brochure de certains articles ou par l'inclusion délibérée des slogans qu'on arrive au dialogue.

Quant à la "révolution française 1968," elle essaya de copier celle de