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Circuses without Bread

Blowing the Whistle on Intercollegiate Sports by J. Robert Evans; An Inquiry into the Need for and Feasibility of a National Study of Intercollegiate Athletics by George H. Hanford

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Marcuse has called the 'desublimation of reason' and to affirm the goodness of the body and play over against the 'higher values' of economic productivity." Nor does the book explain how the campus is to help establish this goal.

Hettlinger takes us on a tour of recently studied sexual attitudes on campus and off, and includes an appendix answering any questions students or professors might have concerning birth control and venereal disease. Students, he finds, despite the "revolutionary" attitude toward sex today are still a bit hung-up on the subject. Premarital sex is practiced, but not as licentiously as some would imagine. And for most students the main preoccupation is not simply intercourse, but a "relationship" of some depth and duration.

Recreational sex is not dismissed outright, but its dangers—that of an inability to feel for the other person—are explained by means of a short discussion of Wilhelm Reich and recent pornographic films like "Deep Throat" and "Last Tango in Paris." Hettlinger concludes that the value of experimental sex is limited only to short excursions but is not a viable pastime for life.

The new and valid sexuality, according to Hettlinger, is one that is liberated from intercourse as the "focus of sexual achievement." We should "distinguish sexuality from sex, integrate sexual relationships with interpersonal encounters as a whole and learn to be together with warmth and openness." To do this, we must learn to appreciate such movements as gay and women's lib—some of whose dicta Hettlinger seems to accept with a suspension of critical awareness. And finally, the aim of sexuality should be the open marriage model proposed by the O'Neills' popular work.

All this is laudable. But Hettlinger neglects to tell us how the campus should go about helping students achieve these ends. Nor does he explain to young heterosexual or homosexual couples how they are to live in a society where close relationships are not a high priority. The basic problem with Hettlinger's book, along with many others on the topic, is that it divorces sex from society: it places the couple alone against the world. In consequence, whether we have open marriages or closed ones, we still have

more of the same—the couple as enclave against the ills of the world outside.

—Suzanne Gordon

SUZANNE GORDON is writing a book about loneliness in America.

Circuses Without Bread

Blowing the Whistle on Intercollegiate Sports by J. Robert Evans. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 163 pages, \$6.95.

An Inquiry into the Need for and Feasibility of a National Study of Intercollegiate Athletics by George H. Hanford. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 150 pages, free.

If, as Wellington thought, the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, then where was the "battle" of My Lai "won"? In the stadia of Princeton, Notre Dame, and UCLA? Don't scoff. If Americans had learned how not to win gracefully, we would have been out of Vietnam long before My Lai. As J. Robert Evans quaintly observes,

"The mighty pressure of winning...has removed the character-developing aspect from athletics." And George H. Hanford, in an otherwise cautious report, suggests an equation between excesses in the recruitment of college athletes and the criminal lunacies of Watergate, both being "symptoms of the 'win-at-any-cost' philosophy." (Is it fate or coincidence that has sent us a former Big Ten football star to fumigate the White House?)

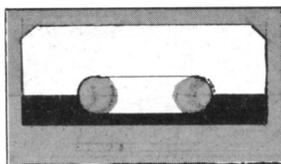
We are, to judge from these two books, suffering through an ethical emergency on the gridiron and basketball court. The players barter their talents in exchange for "full rides" (four-year scholarships), flashy sports-cars, cooperative coeds, and other tangible emoluments. The coaches, if Evans can be believed, flatter their unsigned prospects and persecute their indentured charges. The fans and alumni yell for blood (anybody's will do). And the faculty turns its back on the whole sorry scene.

None of this is new—it has been this way since the 1920s—but now the perpetual moral crisis has been exacerbated by a *financial* crisis as well. Big-time college football is no longer paying its way. Since 1965, more than 50 colleges have shut down their high-priced sports programs, suggesting that insolvency is the single sin trustees do not forgive.

And so, because this is America, experts are starting to write books about The Situation. The two before us may not be the best (one *hopes* not), but they are near the front of what promises to be a very long parade. To change the metaphor, these are preseason books.

Evans' is the more entertaining, though his writing has all the wit and style of a half-time ceremony conducted in a drizzle. Evans is chairman of the athletic department at the United States International University in San Diego; his father held a similar position for 39 years at Northern Illinois University. Much of what he tells us, therefore, is anecdotal—stories he has picked up from friends and colleagues. The sources are thin, but the many quotations are clear enough. (The athletic director of the University of Michigan: "My job is poorly described as an Athletic Director. What I am is a sports promoter. Either I promote our sports program solidly into the black or I am out of a job.")

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The picture that finally emerges is one of circular futility: athletic departments require big gate receipts to finance their programs, but they cannot attract crowds without winning games, and they cannot win games without spending a lot of money recruiting and promoting, which means they need more gate receipts....In other words, it is fourth down and Catch 22 to go.

Evans blames just about everybody. "Athletic machines," he says, "...don't develop by accident—they are the products of overzealous coaches' and athletic directors' dreams of grandeur. And they are spoon-fed...by an overabundance of publicity, eager beaver boosters, and devious alumni." The only solution, he insists, is to dismantle the entire apparatus and give the game back to the students. It is not at all clear, however, what the students would do with it—maybe build a stadium and sell tickets.

Hanford's work is altogether different in tone and substance. He faults no one for the present muddle. Early on he inserts "A Demurrer": "...while there is much that may at first glance appear to be bad or dishonest or hypocritical or unethical that goes on in the name of intercollegiate sports, one discovers that the people connected with them are for the most part individuals of good will and good intention." So much for accusations.

He is less polemicist than administrator—he is executive vice president of the College Entrance Examination Board—which may be one reason why he presents us with a "balanced" analysis that never flies. Other reasons also come to mind. The study was proposed by the American Association of Universities, organized by the American Council on Education, made green by the Carnegie and Ford foundations, and assembled—under Hanford's tutelage—by a battalion of distinguished consultants whose names are listed alphabetically near the front of the book. Given such disparate "inputs," it is hardly surprising that the book's sole major recommendation, as the title implies, is to launch another, still more ambitious study.

Hanford is thorough. He goes far beyond Evans' themes of shoddy recruitment and big-time finances, grappling with such dilemmas as racism in sports, women's liberation, and the impact of television on college athletics.

Ultimately, though, all we learn is that there remains much to be learned. The prose seems to glide dreamily atop smooth, artificial ice with nary a bump or an opinion to alter its course.

The question at the root of all the problems besetting intercollegiate athletics, he writes, "is their relationship to higher education, their place in the educational process." Of course. And finding answers to that critical question should have been what this study was all about. Instead we get page upon page of pros and cons, all equally weighted. No maladies are isolated or deplored; no remedies are prescribed. Despite the writer's rounded and sometimes gifted prose he has not given us a study—merely an extensive outline for one.

Who can doubt that the next study, bigger and costlier than the first, is even now incubating in some Washington womb without a view? And who among us can feel encouraged by such an unpromising prospect?

—Richard J. Margolis

RICHARD J. MARGOLIS is book reviews editor of *Change*.

Dubious Battles

The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805-1973 by Diane Ravitch. New York: Basic Books, 406 pages, \$12.95.

Diane Ravitch's lengthy but interesting history of the New York City public school system provides a carefully documented reminder that the issues revolving around public education in the last decade are neither clear-cut nor new. While the book is essentially about public schools, it has broader implications. First, as the author rightly points out, the issues at stake in New York's "Great School Wars" were not purely local questions, but questions confronting most American cities. Second, Ravitch's central message—that the issues facing the schools are recurrent and therefore need to be examined in historical perspective—can be applied as well to higher education.

One of Ravitch's major contributions is to present the recent school controversy over community control against a 150-year historical backdrop. The last third of the book centers upon attempts to reform New York City schools in the

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