

BOOK REVIEWS

THE COMMUNITY ACTIVIST'S HANDBOOK

by John Huenefeld
Beacon Press: Boston

160 pages

\$6.00

Commendable in many respects, Huenefeld's *Community Activist's Handbook* represents a fresh approach to the fundamentals of organizing, financing, and publicizing community campaigns. By way of introduction, the author makes a solid case for the need for local political organizations to effect desired changes in local governments across the country. In pointing out that these political sub-divisions remain sufficiently small so that political organizations and pressure from small or large groups can result in change, Huenefeld hopes that local pressures exerted on responsive politicians can spell the difference between sameness and uniqueness among local communities.

What emerges in the following sections is not so much a blueprint of how to bring about change or action from local officials as an attempt to cover a broad spectrum of situations where community influence and organization can have an impact on bringing desired results. What is refreshing about Huenefeld's approach is the absolute candor with which he approaches the subject of leadership and influencing people. In his own terms, he considers much of what he says Machiavellian, yet in today's world of increased sophistication among politicians, organizational heads and the general public (youth and students in particular), it is extremely important that such a book be available.

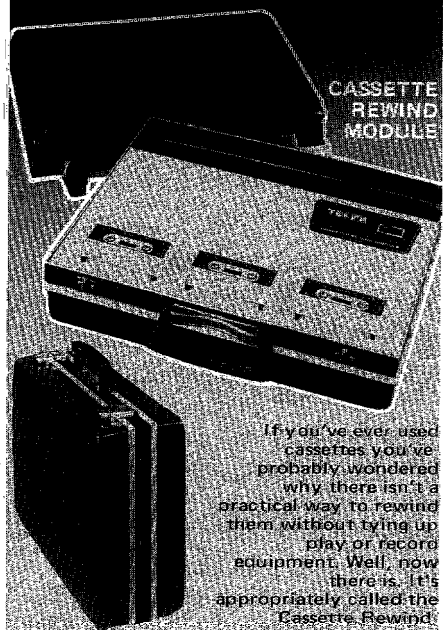
Another striking feature about the book is that it seems to speak to that generation of middle-class Americans who now find themselves ill-equipped to deal with local issues more controversial than the PTA and the Boy Scouts.

Organized in two parts, the first section of the book outlines some of the key issues involved in forming an organization and moving it from the idea stage to the action stage. With a note of refreshing candor, the author discusses the mechanics of keeping the control in the hands of the founding members and suggests diplomatic means of removing nonperformers from the chain of command. The departure from the traditional notions of modesty and fair play is obvious. This is not to imply that the approach set forth by Huenefeld is not a matter of fair play. The "achievement of the goal" and the reduction in wasted time and effort continually emerge as principal themes of Huenefeld's organizational strategy.

He emphasizes the importance of a steering committee and the need to place on it persons who can work together with free exchanges of ideas and a minimum of friction. He also emphasizes, and rightly so, the critical importance of public relations and the need to gather all available evidence in support of a particular claim. And to avoid trouble from the opposition, he suggests that little should be said and done to provide prior warning to the public unless and until all the proper ingredients are in place. These ingredients include: supporting data, association with strategic individuals to convey the kind of impressions most desirable for the cause, and an ability to respond to counter-reactions by the organization, agency or governmental unit which is the target of the group effort.

Perhaps the largest single omission (commission?) is the author's failure to consider the special organizational problems which confront communities composed of disadvantaged and low income persons. Since the inception of the Office of Economic Opportunity, there has been considerable focus on the need for community organization by the CAP agencies. As a consequence of this effort, considerable money, time and resources have been applied to the problem of organizing the poor to bring about more responsive government from local officials. The efforts of the poor and disadvantaged have, needless to say, produced no startling effects in the

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patterns of responsiveness by local community governments.

The process of community organization as outlined in this book would appear to be relatively sophisticated and inappropriate for any group other than an educated middle-class. Yet, some of the more sophisticated of these techniques emerged as a result of efforts of poor and disadvantaged people to obtain some measure of political equality and fairness in this country. The process outlined by the author, however, systematizes some of the experiences of the civil disturbance era and joins them with some of the more traditional concepts of management, personnel supervision and salesmanship. The result is a much stronger product which has as its goal the achievement of specific, well articulated ends with a capacity to deal at all levels of negotiation, from street protests to round table discussions.

Once the basics of community organization have been accomplished and the issues for which the organization was formed have finally been presented to the public, Huenefeld suggests, in Part Two of his book, what must be done to expand an issue and to broaden the base of support. He mentions the problems inherent in recruiting and using assistance as well as the critical issue of publicity and fund-raising.

It is intended that several objectives will be achieved by the publication of this *Handbook*: (a) the encouragement of an underground of community activists who dare translate personal or community aspirations into political enterprise; (b) assisting people who will work on a project to better understand the nature of political action and what will be required of them; (c) bringing some awkward realities into the open where they can be freely discussed and dealt with; (d) instructing people who will work with community leaders; and, (e) helping community organizers to cope with some of the more complex types of volunteer activities.

In the final analysis, it must be said that the author attempted to cover a considerable range of issues. In lumping together the strategies to be employed by public housing tenants to eradicate their problems with techniques for neutralizing the influence of undesirable persons (i.e., making a person honorary chairman of a committee), the author leaves himself open for the charge of being all things to all men. The kinds of issues and the kinds of tactics which must be used by the disadvantaged to secure the benefits which they require would call for an approach far different from that used by middle-class citizens to improve trash pickup services in a suburban community. Experience has shown that each of these tasks is extremely different even though they have common elements.

Overall, however, Huenefeld's book must rate a plus as a serious attempt to provoke discussion and action which can lead to meaningful and responsive change in communities throughout the United States. Given the magnitude of the problems confronting local communities and the need for substantial reconsiderations of the way local political process functions, one can only hope that Huenefeld's book will be read.

Reviewed by: CAROL A. WORD, Graduate Student, George Washington University

THE PURSUIT OF LONELINESS AMERICAN CULTURE AT THE BREAKING POINT

by Philip Slater
Beacon Press, Boston, Mass., 1970

150 pages

Philip Slater's book, a gem of social analysis and commentary, is a collection of six essays on the various elements of change and disorientation that characterize our time. The first, entitled "I Only Work Here," suggests that one of the basic problems of American society is that three important human desires for community (to live in trust and fraternal cooperation), for engagement (the wish to come directly to grips with social and interpersonal problems) and for independence (the wish to

share responsibility for the control of one's impulses and the direction of one's life) are frustrated by our society. American life has so blocked expression of these three secondary human desires that they threaten to become primary. The author traces the frustration to the degree of emphasis that Americans have placed on individualism.

The second essay examines American attitudes toward violence and conflict. His observations regarding American attitudes are informative background for understanding war in Vietnam, riots, and violence. Technology is portrayed as an uncontrollable giant who carries out the acts that are in the service of our own frustration.

Another essay, entitled "Women and Children First," provides insight into the interrelationship between the generational gap and the growing dissatisfaction of American women with their assigned second-class status. Slater's warning to women interested in bringing about change in their situation is not to buy into the male game of seeing themselves as the inferior sex. He urges them to assume a revolutionary stance by saying, "My unwillingness to sacrifice a host of human values to my personal narcissism and self-aggrandizement makes me the superior sex." The last section of this essay suggests that the increased sexual freedom of youth is made possible by displacing the sexual guilt which their parents experienced. Moral absolutes are thus applied to other areas of life, while identifying the "cop-out" as the ultimate lack of morality.

Slater is most clear and prophetic in the two chapters which deal with the scarcity-oriented technological culture which we have created, and the growing new culture which challenges the values and priorities of the former. The old culture tends "to give preference to property rights over personal rights, technological requirements over human needs, competition over cooperation, violence over sexuality, concentration over distribution, the producer over the consumer, means over ends, secrecy over openness, social forms over personal expression, striving over gratification, Oedipal love over communal love, and so on."

The basic value differences between these cultures will not readily be negotiated. A major counterforce to the old culture is a "neotenuous" tendency to retain childlike behavior values and life styles into adulthood. Thus, the idealism of cooperation, sharing and equalitarianism are maintained as youth approach adulthood. Change efforts must deal with this and provide some degree of continuity between the old and the new cultures.

Lastly, Slater examines revolution and change. He offers a degree of hope. Revolution does not occur when things are at their worst but when some improvements are being made. At the same time, backlash to change efforts is always better than the pre-change condition. In effect, the backlash is simply part of the process of learning that change means change.

The book ends with a plea for Americans to begin to commit their efforts toward facilitating the necessary changes in our society while facing up to the reality that planned change will be difficult to achieve. The choice that the author holds out for old-culture and living under a fascist regime. The middle is dropping out of things and choices must be made. If the old culture is rejected, the new must be ushered in as gracefully as possible. If the old culture is not rejected, then its adherents must be prepared to accept a bloodbath."

Although the elements of the book are not always clearly organized, it represents a most provocative and insightful analysis of the current state of our society. It is difficult for this reviewer to believe that any thinking person could relate to American society and his individual responsibilities in the same fashion after reading this book. *The Pursuit of Loneliness* should be placed near the top of your priority reading list.

SHIRLEY McCUNE, Associate Director, American Association for University Women, Washington, D. C.

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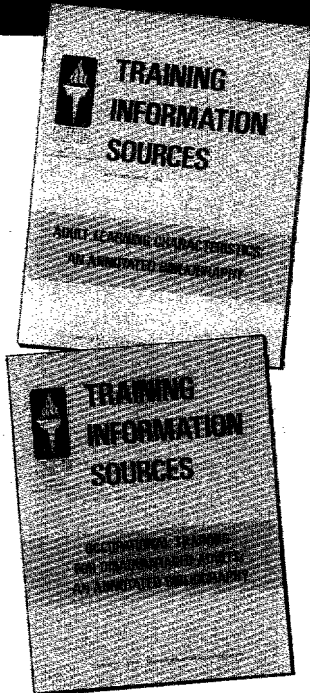
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FUTURE SHOCK

Alvin Toffler

Random House, New York, N.Y. 1970

430 pages

Alvin Toffler has used the term "future shock" to describe a disease of change or "the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time." The manifestations of the psychological disease is seen in both individual behavior and societal disorganization. Toffler contends that the disease has now reached such proportions that its impact has thrust the world into a critical state.

A beginning understanding of future shock begins with a comprehension of the dizzying rate of change in Western society. This change has opened a new era for man, super-industrialism. A critical characteristic of this revolutionary change was described by U Thant as "The central stupendous truth about developed economics today is that they can have — in anything but the shortest run — the kind and scale of resources they decide to have . . . It is no longer resources that limit decisions. It is the decision that makes the resources. This is the fundamental revolutionary change — perhaps the most revolutionary man has ever known."

Primary characteristics of the new society that is being created are transience, novelty and diversity. Toffler describes each of these characteristics and provides numerous examples of their manifestation in individual and societal behavior. Throughout the book one is impressed by the paradox which our society now faces. We can adapt and develop a society that will provide undreamed benefits for all or ignore change and create a planet and social conditions that will not support human life.

A substantial portion of the book is devoted to strategies for survival in this age of change. The author begins with suggestions for personal coping with sensory bombardment, rapid change, and transiency, through personal planning for the future, situational groupings, crisis counseling, half-way houses and many other practical ideas. Next he outlines the implications of change for the educational system. He outlines three objectives for change of educational systems — transformation of organizational structures, radical revision of curriculum, and encouragement of a more future focused orientation. Training personnel will be most interested in Toffler's comments about curriculum and methodology in formal and informal training programs. He relates the expanded interest in "sensitivity training," "T-grouping," "micro-labs," "touchie-feelie games" etc. to the transient nature of our lives. The increased interest in these techniques represent an expression of an underlying sense of loneliness and inability to "open up" with others.

Lastly, the author comments upon techniques for taming technology, improving social planning, and developing responsive systems of anticipatory democracy. Basic to all of these is an inherent need for the development of a sense of social futurism.

The strength of the book is represented by the ambitiousness of the task which Mr. Toffler has undertaken. He has used a multitude of sources in a search for evidence of the implications of future shock. The search, however, is not always apparent to the reader in that numerous assumptions are left unexplained. The semi-novelistic style used by the author makes this book enjoyable reading and the thrust of its basic message is of critical importance to every citizen, but particularly to persons with responsibility for leadership in dealing with the changes of our society.

SHIRLEY McCUNE, *Associate Director, American Assn. of University Women*

THE MODERN PRACTICE OF ADULT EDUCATION ANDRAGOGY VERSUS PEDAGOGY

by Malcolm S. Knowles
Association Press, New York, N.Y.

376 pages hardback

\$12.95

This pragmatic resourceful book can be applied to all phases of adult education programming. It is entirely consistent (as is the author's life) with the new principle of andragogy — the art and science of helping adults learn. Organized as an inquiry into adult education, the book attempts to set up a dialogue between author and reader by asking readers to examine their own educational practices and to evaluate the author's assumptions about the learning and teaching of adults against their own experience.

Dr. Knowles' basic premise is that the definition of education as providing for the continuity of culture through the transmission of knowledge is no longer functional. His new theory of andragogy is based on new assumptions about the ways adults are different from youths as learners. Knowles suggests and I concur that an andrological view of education stands a good chance of eventually augmenting traditional pedagogy as the framework for the education of youth. We are undergoing a rapidity of social change which makes the knowledge a person acquires at 21 virtually obsolete at 40.

Thus, we must create new models for adults (and ultimately for children) which teach not what to learn, but how to learn, how to inquire. The "theological foundation" of adult education, as Knowles states it, is faith in the ability of the individual to learn for himself through a process of lifelong learning and continuing self-development.

Part I of the author's inquiry into adult education defines an adult educator as one who helps individuals to develop an attitude toward learning as a lifelong process and to acquire the skills of self-directed learning. It is the author's most comprehensive statement to date of the principles of andragogy and their technological implications for education.

In Part II, which comprises seven of the eleven chapters, the author applies the principles of andragogy to the process for planning and operating educational programs. This section is actually a how-to-do-it manual for practitioners. Anyone responsible for any part of the planning, organization, administration, or evaluation of an adult education program, no matter how large or small, should find Dr. Knowles' pragmatic, problem-solving approach useful.

Part III is an excellent overview of ways to design and manage learning activities.

The book is well referenced. The reader is encouraged to continue his inquiry through his own experimentation as well as through the exhaustive bibliographies at the end of each chapter. The 71 pages of appendices contain, among other things, two case studies of the author's attempt to apply andrological theory to a Girl Scout leadership training program and his own graduate program in adult education.

The Modern Practice of Adult Education is Dr. Knowles' personal statement of the assumptions and techniques upon which his highly successful practice has been built. It is clearly a significant contribution to the growing field of adult education.

Reviewed by:
JAN MARGOLIS
Associate Director
Center for a Voluntary Society
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Washington, D.C.

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