

ARTICLE 2

RAVITCH REVERSED

Ideology and the History of American Education Reform

John Laukaitis
North Park University

Diane Ravitch's *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (2010) and *Reign of Error* (2013) represent a significant shift in the contemporary political dialogue on education reform. The once staunch supporter of national academic standards and market-based reforms, Ravitch reversed nearly every position she supported through her past scholarship and policy work. Once largely vilified by the Left, she has now become one of its go-to voices of dissent. The National Education Association (NEA) awarded Ravitch its "Friend of Education" award during its 2010 annual convention. Jonathan Kozol, a longtime critic of Ravitch, applauded Ravitch's *Reign of Error* in the *New York Times* calling it a "cri de coeur—a fearless book, a manifesto and a call to battle" (Kozol 2014). From scores of keynote addresses to interviews on the *Jon Stewart Show* and *Bill Moyers and Company*, Ravitch has received attention essentially unknown to historians of education after her abrupt volte-face.

Ravitch's recent acclaim—both in academic and popular arenas—illustrates that school reform remains an ideological battleground where the scholar's positions garner more merit than his or her research and analysis.

After a four-decade tenure spanning academia, government service, and think tanks, Ravitch has deservedly been depicted as a polemicist. While her position as a polemicist has not changed, her positions on education reform, however, have changed significantly. The extent to which Ravitch has been transformed from a villain to a hero in the eyes of scholars and the public alike speaks to the contentious nature her writing on education reform and the pressures of ultimately reaching conclusions acceptable to a rather well-established scholarly community. If the scholar's pursuit—at its best—remains an objective pursuit of truth based on evidence and reason, Ravitch demonstrates that the ideal can be too easily sacrificed for the favor of ideological position. Likewise, scholars have disparaged or praised her work based on their own ideological positions rather than the merits of her work, the soundness of her arguments, and the depth of her evidence.

Diane Ravitch's central and prominent place as a historian of education remains essentially unparalleled. Her work has often crossed the great chasm that exists between scholarly works and national bestsellers. The extent to which this has become possible lies in Ravitch's sharp and often divisive positions that buttress already existent ideological positions on education reform. Those whose preconceived notions of the source and continuation of failing schools either attack her work or embrace it. Reception of Ravitch tends to lie in the extremes and mirror the ideological poles extant in American society. An analysis of responses to Ravitch's scholarship offers needed insights not only into the ideological battles behind education reform in the United States but also the allure of writing to a given readership that seeks to have its positions validated in the sphere of both academic and national discourse. The politics of writing on education reform, past or present, bring with it the power of influence—the influence to shape future policy and, in effect, the nation's largest public institution: schools. For Ravitch, this power has been all too tempting. For Ravitch's critics and supporters, the conclusions that she forms mean more than the integrity of the scholarship.

RAVITCH AGAINST THE REVISIONISTS

Prior to earning her PhD, Ravitch began her scholarly pursuits with the publication of *The Great School Wars* in 1974. Early drafts of her work impressed the prominent educational historian Lawrence Cremin who soon became a mentor to her at Columbia University. In an unorthodox way, Ravitch completed her coursework, presented her book as her dissertation, and received her PhD in 1975 (Ravitch 2011). *The Great School Wars* came not so much as a product of her doctoral work at Columbia as much as it was evidence that her abilities as a historian were well deserving of the

credential. With a book already published and a newly earned PhD, Ravitch quickly became a significant name in the field of history of education.

The Great School Wars is considered a seminal work in the field of educational history. In analyzing the history of New York City's public schools, Ravitch demonstrated how the public schools served as a battleground "where the aspirations of the newcomers and the fears of the native population met and clashed" (Ravitch 1974, xiii). Furthermore, she put forward the argument that community control taken to an extreme opposed the very concept of the common school (Ibid., 397). Ultimately, Ravitch presented a balanced account and fair-minded analysis of what she labeled New York City's four great school wars and how each coincided with the social and political tensions brought on by the city's changing demographics.

The Great School Wars received favorable reviews from a wide range of historians. In *Reviews in American History*, Gerald Grob's assessment provides some context to understand the field of educational history from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s. In his review he stated, "Historians, like social and behavioral scientists, often find it difficult to avoid imposing their personal vision of what *should* have happened over what *actually* happened. Consequently, they sometimes phrase their analysis in the form of a critical or celebratory homily" (Grob 1975, 169). Grob called attention to the threat ideology presented to standards of historical analysis. To be sure, Ravitch entered a field in the midst of its own ideological battles. The history of education was becoming a battlefield. For some historians, the school remained a symbol of progress; for others, the school became a symbol of systematic oppression. Ravitch's work, however, avoided putting ideology ahead of her historical examination. Grob pointed to this when he wrote,

Cognizant and appreciative of the contributions of her frequently contentious predecessors, Diane Ravitch nevertheless rejects both the critical and the celebratory approaches. The first, she points out, mistakenly assumes that proving a desire for social control proves the existence of social control; the second idealizes education. In their place she substitutes a sensitive and intelligent analysis that future historians of education will have to take into account (Ibid., 169–170).

For Grob, the movement toward ideologically-driven history already spread throughout academia. Ravitch's *The Great School Wars*, for him, represented the careful research and analysis necessary to put forward the given arguments and conclusions. Ravitch understood the contentiousness permeating the field at the time. For her, ideology was a threat to the legitimacy of the field. Instead of being absorbed into the fray, Ravitch presented a work that aligned with accepted standards within the discipline

of history and, at the time, presented an alternative to the revisionism that pervaded the field.

Ravitch forwarded what can be considered an evenhanded approach to writing about the history of educational reform. Dorothy K. Jessup's review of *The Great School Wars* in the journal *Change*, for instance, moved beyond a review of the content of Ravitch's work and referred directly to its strength within a growingly ideologically driven discipline. "Her book," Jessup wrote, "is a powerful argument for the moderation of historical perspective" (Jessup 1974, 60). Some historians of education were losing the moderation of historical perspective. Many of the revisionists had turned the history of education largely into a platform for their own ideological positions and brought theory and presentism into the field in a way that made it a substitute for historical evidence (Herbst 1980, 132).

A flood of works by the so-called radical revisionists came into the field during the late 1960s through the mid-1970s. They forwarded common arguments that schooling's purpose was to "reproduce the existing social order" and "inhibit working class achievement" (Donato and Lazerson 2000, 6). For the radical revisionists, schooling was a rigged, unjust, and oppressive system established to preserve inequities and limit social mobility. Some like Michael Katz's *The Irony of Early School Reform* presented new methods for analyzing the history of American schooling and were generally well received for presenting sound and important challenges to earlier educational histories (See, for example, Borrowman 1969; Cohen 1969). Others such as Colin Greer's *The Great School Legend* and Clarence Karier's *Shaping the American Educational State* received widespread criticism for their radical generalizations and weak methodologies (On *The Great School Legend*, see, for example, Horlick 1974; On *Shaping the American Educational State*, see, for example, Shapiro 1977; Hammack 1976). The work of the radical revisionists received its fair share of criticism, but their influence proved to be significant as the countercultural movement entered the academy (Rury 2006, 587–589). Where educational historians heretofore posited various interpretations and positions, the radical revisionists oftentimes shifted the discipline to the realm of rhetoric.

Diane Ravitch chose to take the radical revisionists head on with her second work *The Revisionists Revised: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools*. In doing so, Ravitch entered the battleground where radical ideologies now held a central position. The history of the democratic-liberal tradition in American education, according to Ravitch, was under assault by those who intended to prove that schools were no more than "oppressive institutions, which regiment, indoctrinate, and sort children, either brutally or subtly crushing their individuality and processing them to take their place in an unjust social order" (Ravitch 1978, 3). Her criticism of the revisionists received many accolades from those who understood that she was

defending not a single interpretation of the history of American schooling and educational reform but the accepted standards and methods of historical inquiry (See, for example, Shaw 1978; Duane 1979). Her criticism, however, made her a target for those who were convinced, on one hand, that social theory's role in interpreting educational history was warranted and, on the other hand, that Ravitch was an apologist for the traditional narratives on American schooling (Berube 2002). In writing *The Revisionists Revised*, Ravitch must have known that she was opening herself to sharp criticism from the revisionists and—at least to revisionists—engaging in an ideological battle. Her positions set her apart from revisionists who grew in number and force within the field in the mid- to late 1970s.

The seeds for *The Revisionists Revised* were originally planted through a commission from the National Academy of Education. First appearing in the journal *The American Scholar* and then becoming a full-length work, Ravitch's critique did not sit well with the revisionists who expected the National Academy of Education to be impartial. Still under the leadership of Patrick Suppes, the National Academy of Education welcomed a response to Ravitch's work. In 1980, historians Walter Feinberg, Harvey Kanto, Michael Katz, and Paul Violas answered the call of the new Academy president, Stephen K. Bailey (Bailey 1980, 1–2). In response to Ravitch's criticism, *Revisionists Respond to Ravitch* argued that she distorted their scholarship and could not see past her own ideological positions (Feinberg et al. 1980, 48, 55). On Ravitch's work, Michael Katz wrote, "Much of her apologist case for American social institutions is cast in windy terms and resembles nothing so much as a ninth-grade civics textbook" (Ibid., 71). On Ravitch's tone, Violas wrote,

More than simply strident and polemic, it is often vicious and demeaning. Through both publications one finds phrases like "slipshod research," "outrageous fabrication," "extreme distortion," and implied as well as explicit suggestions that an author has deliberately distorted meanings by abusing the contextual character of selected quotes. Such charged are not normally part of a scholarly dialogue, even when they could be substantiated (Ibid., 101).

The response to Ravitch and what some historians also considered by proxy a response to Lawrence Cremin made it clear that the revisionists would not back down. They refused to accept that the history of American education written to this point did not work within an ideology of its own, one that promoted a romantic view of the school as progressive and democratic. The power of Ravitch to halt the turn of historiography from depicting the nineteenth and twentieth century public school as a beneficial societal institution to an oppressive scheme of capitalists provided what Sol Cohen described as "space to think." This, however, did not mean that one ideol-

ogy would prevail, but it would mean that ideologically driven work would be called into question (Cohen 1999, 48-49).

Ravitch's third book, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980*, published in 1983, added to her prominence as a historian of American education. In reflecting on the importance of the work, Michael Berube wrote,

Written with insight and an inordinate amount of fairness towards proponents with conflicting ideas, *The Troubled Crusade* garnered Ravitch the most critical scholarly and public support of any of her books. It was a major achievement at redefining American educational history ... (Berube 2002, 52).

The revisionists, however, went beyond stating the work had little value. To them, it represented a historian who was morally flawed. In addition to commenting on Ravitch's content and method, Michael Katz stated, "She is no friend of affirmative action, efforts to enhance community control, or (with the exception of the early Civil Rights Movement) of attempts to stimulate educational or social change through protests or direct action" (Katz 1985, 178). Katz painted Ravitch as a counter-revolutionary, someone who sought to turn back the critical progress made by the revisionists in their efforts to reveal American education as oppressive and change the system. Others, however, had a bit more evenhanded critique of *The Troubled Crusade*. "It is so evenly balanced," wrote William Lowe Boyd, "that at times it is not very clear what the author's interpretations of events is" (Boyd 1986, 1265). What remains clear through Ravitch's *The Troubled Crusade*, however, is her faith in schools providing opportunities to generations of students, a long-held point of disagreement with the revisionist historians (Edson 1984, 169).

HISTORIAN TO POLICY REFORMER

Where the revisionists were activists in their own right, Ravitch remained largely removed from integrating policy recommendations into her work. If an activist, her influence early in her career remained subtle. In his review of *The Troubled Crusade* in *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Paul Woodring wrote, "Because she sees her role as that of a historian, Ravitch makes no recommendations and offers no solutions to the problems besetting the schools" (Woodring 1984, 72). This role, however, was short lived. After the publication of *The Troubled Crusade*, Ravitch became involved with educational policy reform. As one of the editors of *Against Mediocrity: The Humanities in America's High Schools*, published in 1984, Ravitch shifted from historian to reformer. As a reformer, Ravitch would have a much more

difficult time claiming that she was impartial to a political agenda and that her historical work possessed a disinterested or objective approach. The publication of *Against Mediocrity* came at a time when the educational excellence movement gained momentum with the publication of the Reagan administration's *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. Within a short span of time, Ravitch took on two distinct professional identities: the academic historian of education and educational reformer. The two professional identities began to meld, and it became increasingly difficult to see where the voice of the academic historian and educational reformer remained distinct.

After the publication of *Against Mediocrity* in 1984, Ravitch wrote more works directed towards educational reform including *The Schools We Deserve* in 1985, *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know* in 1987, and *National Standards in American Education* in 1996. In focusing more of her attention on educational reform, Ravitch gained attention as a policymaker, and charges came forth that Ravitch too easily distorted history to push her policy initiatives. In a review of *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know*, Dale Whittington charged that "Advocates for reform of education and excellence in public schooling should refrain from harkening to a halcyon past (or allowing the perception of a halcyon past) to garner support for their views. Such action, or inaction, is dishonest and unnecessary" (Whittington 1991, 778). While Ravitch had many battles with the revisionists, a broader criticism mounted that Ravitch was now interpreting history to support then current policy initiatives, an accusation that would become stronger after President George H.W. Bush appointed her Assistant Secretary of Education and Counselor to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander from 1991 through 1993. Critics understood her policy work as an extension of a politically conservative attack upon schools and she became even more strongly connected to the conservative movement in politics.

Ravitch's next major work on the history of education reform came with the publication of *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* in 2000. After nearly two decades being pegged as a conservative scholar, Ravitch would face intense scrutiny in how she wrote about the history of school reform. It is not unreasonable to suspect that scholars examined her work with a heightened level of scrutiny. William Wraga in *Educational Researcher* wrote, "Ravitch omits material from documents that contradict the thesis of *Left Back*" (Wraga 2001, 34). Accusations of omissions and selective citations appeared in many reviews. In the *History of Education Quarterly*, Catherine Lugg wrote, "Far too many objections can be raised to the evidence presented" (Lugg 2001, 551). For many reviewers, Ravitch had purposely written a narrative tale of what one reviewer called "The Villainization of Progressive Education" to support her policy agenda (Wraga 2001, 34). "[T]he reader," Alan Sadovkik wrote on the work, "gets a simple moral tale: school reformers opposing the traditional academic curriculum are

villains; those who favor it are heroes” (Sadovnik 2004, 36). Ultimately, the reputation as an even-handed and adept historian writing about educational reform earned from her works *The Great School Wars* and *The Troubled Crusade* came to an end. *Left Back*, to critics, rested too much on “ideological spin” and not substantive evidence and analysis (Cutler 2001, 1115).

VOLTE-FACE

In 2010, Ravitch made a significant shift in her policy perspective with the publication of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*. In the work, she wrote, “I was going through an intellectual crisis. I was aware that I had undergone a wrenching transformation in my perspective on school reform” (Ravitch 2010, 1). With this change of perspective, the formerly labeled conservative ideologue, in short, became an endearing figure to the Left including those who had criticized her earlier work. In a review for the journal *Dissent*, Joanne Barkan wrote,

... If you believe, as leftists do, that democracy depends on the availability of a good public education for everyone ... *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* is a warning cry, but one that’s embedded in historical narrative, data that includes the studies used by the “other side” ... and detailed analysis of policies (Barkan 2010, 89).

Suddenly, reviewers praised Ravitch’s methods of inquiry, her analytical accuracy, and her construction of the historical narrative. In the *History of Education Quarterly*, Arnold Mitchem proclaimed that “She digs deeply into the reports and rhetoric surrounding top-down education reform.... It is a cautionary analysis because it demonstrates how ideology and marketing trump ‘data’ at every turn” (Mitchem 2010, 424). The favorable reviews—for the most part—forget the Ravitch whose acts of omission, selective citations, and distortions of the historical narrative once provided so much fodder for earlier critiques of her work. Some reviewers recognized the Left’s attraction to a conservative turncoat and criticized Ravitch for substituting one ideology for another. In her review titled “Apostasy Sells,” Mary McConnell directed attention to how the lifelong critic of public schools suddenly “finds faith that this time public schools will get it right” (McConnell 2010, 73). For McConnell, Ravitch took a rather condescending position. “As waiting lists for voucher lotteries and a 55 percent increase in charter school students since 2004 attest,” wrote McConnell, “many parents, and disproportionately poor and minority parents appear more than willing to should this lamentable burden” (Ibid). In short, Ravitch’s attack on school choice failed to recognize that in a landscape of failing

public schools poor and minority parents do not have the privilege of putting stock in rhetoric.

Considered to be a sequel to *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, Ravitch's latest work *Reign of Error* also enjoyed widespread praise. In the work, Ravitch claims that school choice has led to the decline of public education. From the early twentieth century to 1983, Ravitch argues that reform after reform occurred without Americans losing their gratitude for public schools (Ravitch 2013, 322–323). After 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, however, the public began viewing public education in decline; a belief that Ravitch argues is unfounded (Ibid 38–39). In *Debating the Future of American Education*, Ravitch wrote,

School reform in the United States has been a century-long preoccupation, and cynics might have discounted the state-level reforms of the 1980s as another go-round in a perennial exercise. But educational improvement in the late twentieth century became a necessity, not a luxury, in view of changes in the national economy that narrowed economic opportunity for poorly educated workers (Ravitch 1995, 2).

The once necessary educational reform measures for improving the economic livelihood of a nation, from standards to school choice, become, for Ravitch, the single greatest threat to public education. Similarly, Ravitch put forth in *Reign of Error* the claim that “Test scores are at their highest point ever recorded” (Ravitch 2013, 44). After a long career of presenting the decline in test scores from the mid-1960s, the data mysteriously now states the opposite in an ironically titled chapter “The Facts About Test Scores” in *Reign of Error* (Ibid, 44; Ravitch 1985, 48). In the end, perspectives on school reform, historical and contemporary, can be shaped and reshaped so easily that Ravitch puts into question any possible objectivity in her work. As Sara Mosle wrote in her review of *Reign of Error*, “I hope I’m not alone in searching her new book for traces of the writer who, as recently as 2010, could still see beyond a politicized landscape to understand what draws many hard-pressed parents to charters” (Mosle 2013, 41). Indeed, the once admirable historian now seems fixated on given positions, regardless of what the actual evidence shows.

The recognition of the history of education reform as an ideological battleground gives emphasis to the shortcomings of supporting or criticizing ideological positions in the history of education rather than evaluating a scholar’s ability to reveal and analyze the complexity of what the historical record shows. The history of school reform is highly malleable and too easily contorted to fit ideological positions. Ideology, gone unchecked and ignored, on the Left or Right, influences accounts of the past too easily and weakens the discipline of history. Preconceived conclusions lead the historian to bend the historical record to meet the desired ends, often with

the public and even the academy caring more about the claim than the evidence. For those concerned about history providing insights into and informing current directions of education reform, the stakes are too great to not approach the past with a vigorous attempt at discerning the truth and moving forward with an informed purpose.

WORKS CITED

- Bailey, Stephen K. 1980. Introduction to *Revisionists Respond to Ravitch*, by Walter Feinberg, Harvey Kantor, Michael Katz, and Paul Violas. Washington, DC: National Academy of Education.
- Barkan, Joanne. 2010. "About-face: A Conservative Rethinks Education Policy." Review of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* by Diane Ravitch, *Dissent* 57 (Spring): 85–90.
- Berube, Maurice R. 2002. *Beyond Modernism and Postmodernism: Essays on Politics and Culture*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Borrowman, Merle L. 1969. Review of *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* by Michael B. Katz, *The American Historical Review* 74 (3): (Feb.): 1088–1089.
- Boyd, William Lowe. 1986. Review of *The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945–1980* by Diane Ravitch, *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (5): (March): 1265–1267.
- Cohen, Sheldon S. 1969. Review of *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* by Michael B. Katz, *The New England Quarterly* 42 (2): (Jun.): 291–292.
- Cohen, Sol. 1999. *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Donato, Rubén and Marvin Lazerson. 2000. "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Researcher* 29 (8): (Nov.): 4–15.
- Duane, Edward. 1979. Review of *The Revisionists Revised: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools* by Diane Ravitch, *Political Science Quarterly* 94 (1): (Spring): 165–166.
- Edson, C.H. 1984. Review of *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945–1980* by Diane Ravitch, *The Journal of American History* 71 (1): (June): 168–169.
- Grob, Gerald N. "The Illusion of Educational Omnipotence." Review of *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805–1973* by Diane Ravitch, *Reviews in American History* 3 (2): (Jun.): 169–173.
- Hammack, Floyd Morgan. 1976. "Rethinking Revisionism." Review of *The Shaping of the American Educational State* by Clarence Karier and *Reason and Rhetoric: The Intellectual Foundations of 20th Century Liberal Educational Policy* by Walter Feinberg, *History of Education Quarterly* 16 (1): (Spring): 53–61.
- Herbst, Jurgen. 1980. "Beyond the Debate over Revisionism: Three Educational Pasts Writ Large." *History of Education Quarterly* 20 (20): (Summer): 131–145.
- Horlick, Allan Stanley. 1974. Review of *The Great School Legend: A Revisionists Interpretation of American Public Education* by Colin Greer, *History of Education Quarterly* 14 (20): (Summer): 251–258.

- Jessup, Dorothy K. 1974. "Dubious Battles." Review of *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805–1973* by Diane Ravitch, *Change* 6 (9): (Nov.): 59–60.
- Katz, Michael B. 1985. "Not the Whole Story." Review of *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945–1980* by Diane Ravitch, *History of Education Quarterly* 25, no 1/2 (Spring-Summer): 175–180.
- Kozol, Jonathan. 2013. "This Is Only a Test." Review of *Reign of Error* by Diane Ravitch, Sunday Book Review, *New York Times*, September 26. Accessed May 20, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/29/books/review/reign-of-error-by-diane-ravitch.html?_r=0.
- Lugg, Catherine. 2001. Review of *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* by Diane Ravitch, *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (Winter): 550–553.
- Mosle, Sara. 2013. "The Counterrevolutionary: How Diane Ravitch Has Upended the School-Reform Movement." *The Atlantic* (September): 38–41.
- Ravitch, Diane. 2010. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. New York: Basic Books.
- , ed. 1995. *Debating the Future of American Education: Do We Need National Standards and Assessments?* Washington: The Brookings Institution.
- . 1974. *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805–1973*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 2011. Interview by A. Amrein-Beardsley. Transcript. *Inside the Academy* Video Interviews. Accessed September 12, 2014. <http://insidetheacademy.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Transcript-Ravitch.pdf>
- . 2013. *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- . 1978. *The Revisionists Revised: A Critique of The Radical Attack on the Schools*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 1995. *The Schools We Deserve: Reflections on the Educational Crisis of Our Time*. New York: Basic Books.
- Rury, John L. 2006. "The Curious Status of the History of Education: A Parallel Perspective." *History of Education Quarterly* 46 (40): (Winter): 571–598.
- Sadovnik, Alan R. 2004. Review of *Left Back: A Century of Battles Over School Reform* by Diane Ravitch, *The Radical Teacher* 69 (May): 36–37.
- Shapiro, Victor W. 1977. Review of *Shaping the American Educational State: 1900 to the Present* by Clarence J. Karier, *The History Teacher* 10 (3): (May): 496–497.
- Shaw, Frederick. 1978. Review of *The Revisionists Revised: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools* by Diane Ravitch, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 440 (Nov.): 208–209.
- Whittington, Dale. 1991. "What Have 17-Year-Olds Known in the Past?" *American Educational Research Journal* 28 (4): (Winter): 759–780.
- Woodring, Paul. 1984. "For Those Who Remember and for Those Who Don't, This Book Documents a Crusade against Ignorance." Review of *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945–1980* by Diane Ravitch, *The Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (1): (Sep.): 71–72.
- Wraga, William G. 2001. "Left Out: The Villainization of Progressive Education in the United States." Review of *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* by Diane Ravitch, *Educational Researcher* 30 (7): (Oct.): 34–39.