

*The Unruly School*, Robert J. Rubel. Pp. 195. Lexington, Mass., D. C. Heath, 1977. \$17.

*The Unruly School* is primarily history, with some explanation and a little prophecy as well. Using the available records, Rubel reconstructs as best he can the course of students' misbehavior in American schools from 1950 to 1975. He also tells us briefly about the causes he attributes to the misbehavior that occurred. And, in a page or two, he foretells what the short-term future of students' misbehavior and the schools' responses are likely to be.

Rubel makes two important contributions to the historical study of American education. First, he has assembled and carefully evaluated the primary materials on students' misbehavior: studies done in specific communities; reports by special interest groups, such as teachers' organizations and congressional committees; statistical tables from research institutes, the Census Bureau, and the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports*; and selected articles appearing in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. Rubel impresses on his readers the general weakness of the historical record, but he makes the most of it and draws what reasonable conclusions the information permits.

The second contribution is conceptual. Rubel has categorized the materials on students' misbehavior into *disruptions*, *disorders*, and *crimes*. This was done because his reading of the sources suggested to him that each type had differing causes and courses. For example, Rubel marks the years from 1968 to 1970 as the peak years for *disruptions* in the schools which, he says, were "never very common" but were confused with and affected by the *disorders* that occurred with greater frequency in these and the surrounding years—from 1964 to 1971. These distinctions certainly help us to make sense of the accounts of American students' misbehavior from 1950 to 1975; only their further applications will tell whether they improve the ordering of materials from other times and places.

Readers should not expect to find in this book a theoretical analysis of the causes of students' misbehavior. While Rubel offers some explanations, they are not derived from an explicit set of principles, nor do they cover all the events. Rubel's work is explicitly and primarily descriptive history. But his orientation to explanation is clear enough: What happens in the educational institution results from events in other, more influential institutions. For instance, during the years under study, rulings by the judiciary altered the balance between educational administrators' prerogatives and juveniles' rights, and the federal government waged a war that indirectly affected the kinds of people recruited to teach in the schools. These events, in turn, affected the quality and quantity of students' misbehaviors. Rubel seems to be more confident about his analysis of the causes of the disorders that occurred in the late 1960s; regarding disruptions, he writes that "ignorance of actual causes is enormous"; and he does not essay an explanation for crimes.

Rubel's brief predictions are based on what he believes will result from educators' increasing dependence on police and courts to counteract students'

misbehavior and from the advances being made in America's industrial technology. The picture that Rubel projects for the short term is not a bright one, but he is hopeful that educators and others will eventually learn to deal with these trends effectively, and he intends that the historical perspective offered in this work will contribute to their efforts. Since others have preceded him in this regard, Rubel does not systematically document attempts to avert a doleful future; nor does he make recommendations about what might be done, because he believes that, given the present state of our knowledge, no generalizations can be made with confidence.

I note that the price is high for this relatively brief book. This probably reflects the publisher's anticipation of low sales. It is not the kind of book one would use as a text or even as supplementary reading; it is a research monograph whose major appeal is to specialists in the history of education, educational administration, school security, juvenile delinquency, and related fields. The bibliography and Rubel's evaluations of the materials will be especially valuable to any researcher who wants to pursue this subject. Rubel's conceptualization of the problems of student misbehavior and his discussion of the probable causes will be valuable to those who might otherwise, by remaining ignorant of it, help to repeat this history.

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*New York Cops Talk Back: A Study of a Beleaguered Minority,*  
Nicholas Alex. Pp. 225. New York, John Wiley, 1976. \$12.50.

The title indicates the main thesis of this work: The police, once society's representatives, have become its victims, with the law and institutional mechanisms previously manipulated in their behalf now used to handcuff and harass them. Lest one gather that this book is a law-and-order polemic, rest assured that the author has no great regard for this particular "beleaguered minority." To Alex, though the police function is important, the cops themselves are "unimportant people" who render less service to society than do garbage collectors. Moreover, there is a strong suggestion that they are being justly punished for their earlier criminal activity (albeit some of that activity was at the instigation of society).

From these pages one would draw the conclusion that service in the New York City Police Department is an experience somewhat akin to life in the Foreign Legion, if not in a Siberian prison camp. Alex, a professor at the City University of New York, bases his assessments on interviews which he conducted with forty-two white policemen, selected voluntarily rather than by random sampling. No blacks or women were included, the former having been dealt with in one of the author's previous books. Both the method of