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U.S. mathematics and the New Math movement.

Bjarnadóttir, Kristín (ed.) et al., “Dig where you stand” 2. Proceedings of the second “International conference on the history of mathematics education”, New University of Lisbon, Portugal, October 2–5, 2011. Lisbon: UIED, Unidade de Investigação Educação e Desenvolvimento; Caparica: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciência e Tecnologia (ISBN 978-989-97487-2-9/pbk). 251-261 (2012).

Summary: In conventional accounts, the new math movement in the United States, which lasted from the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s, was initiated and led by prominent research mathematicians largely supported by their colleagues. Recently, revisionists have claimed that the mathematicians were “a small band,” “not highly respected,” and the “wrong mathematicians.” Further, the accomplishments of those mathematicians are said to have been undermined by the “professional education bureaucracy.” The mathematics community was indeed divided over the new math. But the fault line dividing U.S. mathematicians was not so much a product of the number, quality, or influence of those leading the movement as it was a reflection of the community’s divergent views on the nature of mathematics and how it should be taught and learned.

Classification: A30 D30

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