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FORWARD MOTION is a magazine of socialist opinion and advocacy. We say socialist opinion because each FM presents analyses of important organizing work and reviews of political and cultural trends. We say socialist advocacy because FM is dedicated to a new left-wing presence in U.S. politics and to making Marxism an essential component of that presence. We share these purposes with other journals, but we seek for FM a practical vantage point from within the unions, the Black and other freedom struggles, the women's movement, the student, anti-war, and gay liberation movements, and other struggles. We also emphasize building working people's unity as a political force for social change, particularly through challenging the historical pattern of white supremacy and national oppression in the capitalist domination of this country.

In This Issue

Education and Empowerment

One thing agreed upon by conservatives and radicals, corporate executives and community activists alike is that much of our public school system is in ruin. Our children aren't learning. Urban schools in particular have become a symbol of the unravelling fabric of our society: violence, drugs, illiteracy, jobless futures. But the problems aren't confined to the inner cities. Some estimate that one out of every four people in the US can't read enough to get along in everyday life. A statistic like this makes it obvious that education in the world's most powerful capitalist country simply isn't working.

This issue of *Forward Motion* is largely dedicated to exploring the current debate around educational reform. We have interviewed and solicited articles from people on the front lines of this struggle. The good news is the emergence of a nationwide organizational network to coordinate and promote progressive educational reform. The people we talked to not only have elements of a clear and persuasive critique of the establishment's agenda and some alternatives of their own (see Harold Berlak, Sara Freedman), they also have some solid, long-term community-based work and even some inspiring successes to share (see Wilbur Haddock, Bob Peterson, Tony Baez). We encourage our readers interested in education to check out the conference coming up in August, 1989 in Cincinnati. (See announcement on page 43.)

Like debates in any area, the debate around education has its own issues and lingo. As we immersed ourselves in the materials for this issue we found that we had to learn terms like "master teacher," "assertive discipline," "site-based management," "basal readers," "whole language approach," etc. in order to appreciate what was at stake. And while we chose to follow our own activist bent and emphasize the hands-on approach of community and educator activists, we would like to outline some of how we, as lay people, made sense of what the professionals and the activists alike are debating.

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In this issue...

If we had to sum up in a couple of sentences what's at stake in the current controversy around education, we'd put it something like this: The progressives and radicals see education as an integral element of community empowerment. For the more establishment types, the objective is: "restructuring American education and making the country's workforce more competitive with foreign workers." (quoted from *The New York Times*, 1/6/88, in an announcement of the formation of a national research center on education, headed by Marc Tucker—key participant in producing the Carnegie Report on Education: "A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-first Century.")

It's not surprising that now, as the competitiveness of U.S. enterprises and their dominance on the world scene begin to unravel, corporate leaders have decided that US workers, ignorant and poorly motivated, need to be brought up to competitive standards through the cure-all of education. It reminds us of the old Sputnik days when the US establishment, startled by Russian technological advances, also rushed to invest in education to reassert US supremacy.

But these aren't the sixties. The problems are much more deeply entrenched, symptomatic of the society's declining economic infrastructure. The enormous deficit and the current zeal for cutting social programs has produced a series of reforms that may be no reforms at all, but a further entrenchment of bureaucratic organization and a mean-spirited reassertion of conformity, control, and harsh disciplinary actions. It is a vision of educational reform both punitive and alienating to the people on the front lines: students and teachers, and the families and communities to which they belong.

Take the proposal to "professionalize" the school system by introducing "master teachers," super-teachers who spend their time supervising other people. The idea isn't all bad, but the danger is that it will only add another rung to the public school hierarchy and encourage effective teachers to get out of the classroom and into a more authoritative and prestigious position. Already bloated public school bureaucracies will expand even more, while students and classroom teachers will be robbed and disempowered further by reassigning resources and authority upward. (In New York City's disastrous school system, there is already one external administrator for each 150 kids.) And as Sara Freedman points out, such a proposal also further devalues the front-line teacher's complex, often practically-gained (and traditionally female) knowledge and skills.A great classroom teacher wouldn't necessarily make the best Master Teacher, nor may she *want* to spend her time doing the more bureaucratic, abstract work which the job would probably require. But does that make her less valuable to children? Should she therefore be paid and respected less? Will a plan that forces a teacher to leave the classroom if she wants to gain respect and financial reward really improve the schools?

What about the idea of going "back to basics?" Here we get caught in a Catch 22 of conformity and reaction. We establish a whole barrage of tests (SAT, multiple choice), based on obsolete, unimaginative and discriminatory standards, and then we develop an educational curriculum whose main goal is to score higher on these tests. We were lectured by Reagan's Secretary of Education William Bennett that our children are hopelessly ignorant because they're not better indoctrinated in the "civilizing" classics of Western tradition, and that the culprit is the liberalism of the 60's, when African-American and women's studies brought down the standards. So we eliminate anything in the curriculum designed to affirm and draw from the heritage and experience of the less privileged sectors of society. We impose the bland, conformity-inducing (and not coincidentally cost-cutting) basal reader on the classroom teacher—the same book for each kid throughout the system—further curtailing opportunities for creativity and student participation in deciding curriculum.

ing racism of the treat-the-kids-like-the-animals-they-are approach becomes blatant. A recent study of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students reports that blacks are twice as likely as whites to be suspended or physically punished by school authorities. "Teachers often overreact to blacks, especially black males" the study found. When a black man like Joe Clark overreacts, it only helps make such racism acceptable.

Professionalizing and adding to the bureaucracy, increasing competition and conformity, resegregating, imposing "tough love" discipline—these things just aren't going to revitalize our schools. So, what are the alternatives?

We think the people who have contributed here and the thousands of other progressive educational activists around the country have some excellent ideas. Although they're concerned about jobs, they don't make reversing the decline in US capitalist competitiveness in the world market their objective. For them, the goal of education is real democracy and empowerment in working class and

The enormous deficit and the current zeal for cutting social programs has produced a series of reforms that may be no reforms at all, but a further entrenchment of bureaucratic organization and a mean-spirited reassertion of conformity, control, and harsh disciplinary actions.

What about the idea of so-called "educational choice" or voucher systems, in which parents get to send their children to the school of their limited choice (often extending into the suburbs), provided the schools agree to take them? This is always presented as a good supply and demand way of upgrading the decaying inner city schools. If no one chooses a particular school, the advocates of this proposal assert, then the school administrators will just have to work harder and market their product. What this plan ignores is the severe inequality in resources. What it avoids is putting more money into the most impoverished sections of the school system. What it helps create is an alternative way to resegregate, to deepen a two-class system of education in which the most "talented" or privileged can escape the crumbling inner-city schools.

And finally, what about the new crack-the-whip model of leadership in inner city schools, someone like Joe Clark, the Rambo principal of Paterson, New Jersey who stalks the halls of his high school with a baseball bat? When someone like this becomes the darling of the media and the educational policy makers, the demeanoppressed nationality communities. In fact, you could say, for these activists, the essence of real education *is* empowerment.

The policies they fight for reflect this goal as do their methods of organizing. When the bureaucrats ask for more resources and control for the centralized hierarchy, they endorse "site-based management" which puts power and resources directly in the hands of the school's principal and teachers. And they push to go further than that—extending school "management" further out still to involve the community. They believe that education must be addressed within the context of the fight for control of the whole community, against drugs, for jobs, for all the resources a community needs to thrive. On issues of discipline, they advocate involving students in self-discipline through democratic student participation.

When it comes to the more philosophical discussions of curriculum and pedagogy, these radical educator/activists adopt many of the ideas of the revolutionary Brazilian educator Paolo Freire and other grass roots educators who showed that the most direct approach to literacy is to make language serve the needs of those

who are learning, to put the striving for language in the context of people's struggle to survive, make meaning out of and ultimately change their lives. So when school boards talk about buying basal readers, the activists argue instead for the "whole language" approach, in which teachers and students can choose from a whole variety of reading material. Joan Sheldon-Conan, in her article about adult literacy, gives us an idea of how this method of teaching works. She explains how written language can be made available to people by exploring material that relates to students' own interests and concerns.

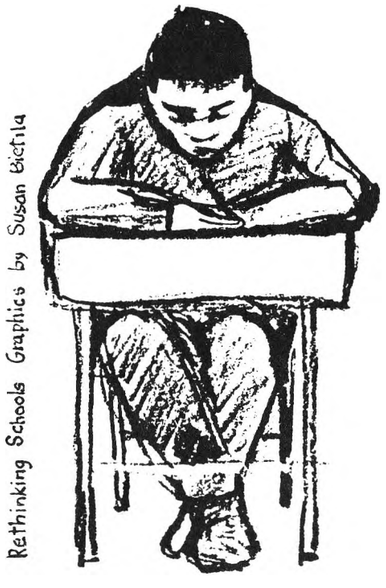
Of course, radical educational reformers must often work with and sometimes within the establishment since the establishment—almost by definition—controls most of the dollars and jobs and political power essential to community survival. The activists here acknowledge this. Wilbur Haddock talks about putting corporate money to work in inner city schools. Tony Baez discusses the importance of vocational education, of preparing people to compete within the capitalist economy. He has become a dean of a community college because they are closer to the working class communities. And Donald Stone joins an important debate among Black scholars and activists, defending the mass vocational approach of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Program as opposed to DuBois and the Niagara Movement's emphasis on the intellectual training of the "talented tenth." Certainly there is validity to the argument that, whether it boosts US capitalist competitiveness or not, gaining access to money and jobs is a crucial element in the struggle for community survival and control, particularly in oppressed nationality communities. Community-based vocational programs therefore become an important ingredient in the national movements' educational agendas.

But negotiate or not, work in the "system" or not, the truth is—as Wilbur Haddock says and all these activists would probably agree: "You've got to see education as a political battle—a struggle—all the way." It is a political battle over the enormous resources in the public education system, a fight for control and empowerment, entwined with all the other struggles of the community.

The reality is that those with too great a stake in the present exploitative system can only have a partial and distorted vision of educational reform. If, as Harold Berlak asserts, the real goal of democratic education is empowerment—opening up for everyone the opportunity to become a critical and active member of society—then democratic education has to be threatening to the minority who benefit from the unequal status quo. If the aim of real democratic educational reform is to engage and empower the majority in transforming the realities of their own lives, not indoctrinate them in an ideology and culture that dismisses their value and their existence, then yes, it makes sense: education *is* a political battle—a struggle—all the way.

Besides these articles and interviews on education, we also have in this issue, an on-the-scene report from Palestine and an update on the case of the Puerto Rican activists known as the Hartford 15.

—Forward Motion Collective



Rethinking Schools Graphics by Susan Eichla

Our Responsibility as Educators and Citizens

Literacy in a Democracy

by Harold Berlak

...Democracy requires the highest standard of literacy for all citizens. Without genuine literacy—the capacity to think, read, speak, observe, and listen critically—we are dependent on the experts and those who currently hold political and economic power...

Democracy rests on the belief in the dignity of all men and women and in their capacity to govern themselves. If democracy is to survive and thrive, all must be educated equally—not to *minimum* competency but to the highest standards of excellence. In a society committed to human dignity and self-governance, there can be no excellence without equality; and there can be no equality without excellence.[1]

Public schools are essential for creating a literate citizenry because they are the only public institutions that carry a legal responsibility to educate all people, regardless of station, race, gender, or national origin, to become intelligent voters, decision makers, and active members of a democratic community.

School and Work

The reality of society today is that only a limited number of men and women realize their hopes and talents. Many—the poor, those who live in economically depressed areas, urban and rural, *including* the well-educated—cannot find meaningful work. Some lack even the most rudimentary skills in the three Rs and live so close to the margin of existence that it is virtually impossible for them to become contributing members of their own communities...Thus no agenda for educational renewal can ignore the job market. Nor is it likely that any popular movement for democratic public education and for a more inclusive and broader meaning of literacy will gain public and political support unless the job/school connection is squarely and satisfactorily addressed...In today's society, such satisfactions as decent pay and in-

Harold Berlak is a long-time educational activist, educational worker and curriculum and evaluation consultant. He is also the organizer and editorial coordinator of Democratic Schools, *a magazine by and for grassroots educational activists. He is the co-author of* Dilemmas of Schooling: Teaching and Social Change *(Methuen, 1981).*

teresting work are not readily available to many people, and this trend is continuing...

The persistent problem of the most widely publicized reports[2] is their failure to examine the educational implications of the striking changes in the U.S. and world economy, and in the ways the new electronic technology is being used to reshape jobs in virtually every sector of the economy, from farming to manufacturing and finance. They ignore the trends toward a two-tier labor market: one tier composed of a relatively small number of highly technical and high-level managerial positions, and the second tier composed of low-skill jobs that are increasingly routinized and repetitive.

Educating for community involvement and for critical thinking are not adjuncts to the basics but are at their core...

If, as appears to be the case, the new technologies continue to be used primarily to further fragment work tasks while computers perform increasingly complex tasks, then educational requirements for paid employment will continue to decline instead of increase, as the Carnegie Task Force Report assumes. This, coupled with "normal" unemployment rates of 6-8 percent (and much higher in many areas and among minorities, particularly, Hispanic, Native American and black youth), suggests a future where most new jobs require very limited skills, and where underemployment, part-time work, and several occupation changes over a person's lifetime become norms rather than exceptions.[3]

Even if this whole line of analysis is flawed, a full examination of this scenario is crucial because of its profound implications for school reform. If it is in fact true that the skills and knowledge for a job can be learned in several hours—or, at most, in several months—there is no need for schools to become job training sites. Therefore, except for a minority of the population, the historic connection between school and preparation for a paid job is virtually severed.

While vocational or "career" educations at public expense may serve the immediate needs of employers and save them the costs of training employees, such an education cannot prepare individuals to cope with the job situation they will likely confront over the 40 or so years of their work lives. This suggests the need for fundamental changes in the way we think about and organize the curriculum, and the entire administrative and decision making structure in public education. It suggests also that educating for community involvement and for critical thinking are not adjuncts to the basics but are at their core if we expect citizens to be able to participate in shaping—not merely adapting to—the current job market, and if we expect people to find fulfillment in other areas of their lives besides the job they are paid to do. Thus, the basics for both preparation and for active participation in the social, cultural, and political life of our community should include humanities, fine and performing arts, the crafts, the study of politics, and the histories of local communities and their peoples at the center of the curriculum, not the periphery. Vocational or career education would change its emphasis from teaching specific job skills or developing computer literacy to teaching *technological literacy*—a broad understanding of how technology along with other social, cultural, and political factors shape our everyday lives, including our employment options.[4]

How Top-Down Reforms Create Illiteracy

Since publication of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983, public education has been in the public eye. This report was followed by dozens of others from a wide spectrum of educational and political perspectives.[5] Several have identified significant educational issues and problems that threaten children, particularly those who are poor, handicapped, female, or speak English as their second language.[6] However, at the core of many efforts aimed at raising literacy standards is a familiar set of mechanisms: mandating minimum competency tests for students; imposing state or system-wide teacher-monitoring systems; requiring the use of basals, or textbooks, in every subject area taken from a list authorized by the state, school district, or principal; and instituting universal standardized testing of teachers for certification, promotion, and advancement. While these reform efforts are intended to increase standards of literacy, it is my contention that they can and often do have the opposite effect—that is, they may actually contribute to illiteracy.

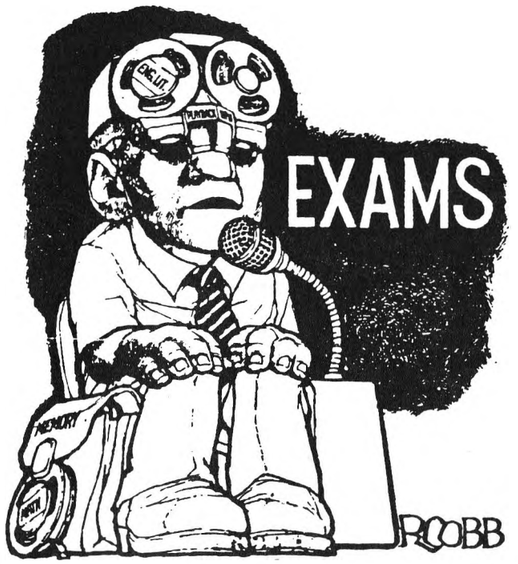
Teachers and principals and other school officials, who are keenly aware of the pressures to improve test performance, stress preparing students for the tests. Because standardized or minimum-competency tests are used as the measure of student achievement, school effectiveness, and professional competence, they become the engine that drives the curriculum and sets teachers' and administrators' everyday priorities. As teachers spend more and more class time teaching for tests, it becomes the tests that shape curriculum and pedagogy. Teachers, principals, and school specialists become mere functionaries in a bureaucratic system. Test-makers and publishers, in effect, are choosing the aspects of literacy schools should emphasize, making curricular and pedagogical decisions that more properly belong to teachers, principals, other school professionals, and communities.

Student Testing

Virtually all tests widely used to assess student competence in the basics measure only one aspect of literacy: decoding and understanding the written word. The reason is that the current form of test technology (paper and pencil multiple choice items—a form now more than a half century old) can assess literacy only in the most limited sense. And this test technology is largely useless for assessing writing. The fact that these tests are often used as the "bottom line"—*the* quantitative criterion for judging the effectiveness of schools and teachers and the educational achievement of students—squeezes out of the curriculum writing and two other aspects of literacy: critical reading and the motivation to read and question.

Most teachers and educational researchers readily acknowledge that such tests are deeply flawed. Yet they continue to be used because many educators are convinced they are the most objective means we have of measuring student and school performance. They are objective, however, only in the very limited sense of being able to generate relatively stable numerical scores through the administration of several versions of the same test.

Using these tests, in spite of their inherent validity problems and technical limitations, presents particularly troublesome problems in schools where large numbers of children enter with limited proficiency in the conventions of standard English—low socio-economic groups and cultural groups where English is a second language. Because time, staff, and resources are so limited, particularly for these groups, virtually all available time and resources are devoted to drill in skills that fulfill only a narrowed aspect of literacy. Thus, the lower socio-economic and English-as-a-second-language groups may



learn to decode and perhaps understand the printed word but most likely receive little assistance in developing their writing or their capacity and interest in being critical of the written and spoken word. The preoccupation with test scores by the public, the press, many administrators, and others distorts the school's curriculum and reduces pedagogy to the lowest common denominator of drilling for tests. The effect is a monotonous sameness that drives out creative and thoughtful teachers, principals, and other school-based professional staff. It also breeds a form of school-sanctioned illiteracy—the illiterate-but-successful test-taker. These pressures affect all students, but particularly those who are already at greatest risk.

Testing is a lever to make previously unaccountable schools—and even whole systems—accountable, especially to the children of minorities. It is one of the primary ways school systems try to restore good faith and a measure of order in what may have been chaotic and irresponsible schools. However, proficiency in all aspects of literacy can be more adequately assessed in other ways. There are, for example, usable alternatives to simple multiple-choice measures.[7] Money currently spent on centrally written and administered tests could be diverted to school-based efforts to evaluate student and school progress that do not define literacy in such lim-

ited terms.

As educators we must be committed to educating the public about the limitations of test-driven curriculum. We also must work diligently with parents, teachers and other professionals, scholars, writers, testing and evaluation specialists, and others in our communities to devise more dependable, sensitive, and reasonable ways of assessing literacy.

Monitoring Teachers' Classroom Behavior

Various packaged programs intended to help teachers learn basic teaching skills have been introduced as a part of district- or school-wide staff development programs. In some cases they are used to determine staff promotion and advancement. Virtually all these systems—probably the one by Madeline Hunter is most widely known—are introduced by administrators to insure that teachers can perform some elementary teaching skills. When systems based on a reinforcement behavioral model are implemented, teaching styles that require class discussion, higher-level thinking and analysis, or use of imagination become the casualties...

I visited one school where a system-wide mandate had been introduced that requires every teacher to write on the chalkboard every day a Madeline Hunter-style objective for every class or lesson they teach. In addition, they were required to formulate these objectives in a way that tied them directly to the state-mandated basic skills test. Whatever the advantages of these instructional systems, the costs can be enormous. Our best teachers often feel caught in the contradiction between what is mandated and what they believe student need to become genuinely literate. So these teachers learn how to quietly "sneak enrichment in," as one put it. Though many teachers who are practiced in the art of circumventing bureaucracy discover various means to overcome the limitations of such a system, what our schools and children lose are the energies of the public school's greatest resource, its most creative, committed, and knowledgeable teachers.

Centralized Textbook Adoptions

Another obstruction to efforts to teach genuine literacy is the increasing use of state-, district-, or school-wide textbook adoptions in virtually all subjects. Again, this policy may be backed by good intentions—to ensure that each child has covered a basic set of skills and knowledge, and that there is some consistency within and among schools. Access to good tests and books of all kinds is, of course, important. But while many in this country would be appalled at the idea of a nationally mandated curriculum, this, in fact, is what is occurring—first, because of the changing nature of the publishing industry; and second, because of the way testing is influencing the content and structure of textbooks.

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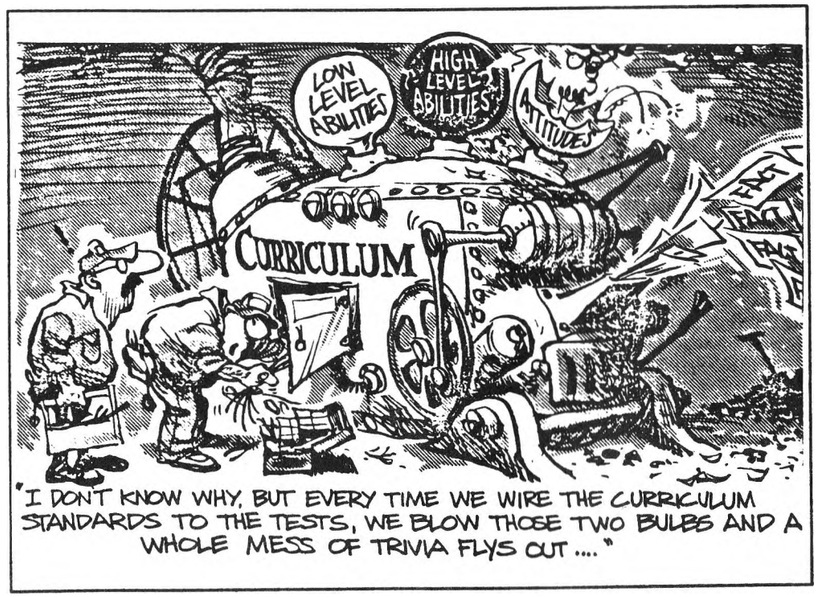
In recent years, the textbook industry has become increasingly dominated by a small number of producers. Textbook and test publishing are big business. In the education industry, as in other areas of the economy, differences between mass-marketed products, in this case texts and tests, are relatively small. Large companies with a large share of the market have little incentive to innovate. Not only are we moving toward a national curriculum because of these changes in textbook publishing and marketing, but the problem of increased standardization is exacerbated by the fact that more and more publishers are responding to public pressures for higher test scores by structuring texts to conform to the objectives and content of the three or four most widely used achievement tests. This is particularly true for math and readings basals and workbooks, which are probably the largest and most lucrative piece of the textbook market. The increasing tendency to remove the choice of books from teachers and individual schools constitutes a further erosion of teachers' autonomy. It also infringes on their responsibility for developing their own pedagogy and creating their own teaching materials and approaches to teaching literacy. Once again, these developments, if unchecked, will contribute to the deterioration of standards of literacy, except perhaps in the most narrow sense.

Several recent reports have argued for greater autonomy and responsibility for teachers, principals, and individual schools.[8] They suggest that top-down changes will not achieve what is necessary and that power must shift



significantly from the bureaucracy at the local and state levels to the individual school, and to teachers and principals.

What Can Educators Do?

I don't know any bureaucracy that willingly transfers power. The Carnegie Task Force is only the latest calling for a bold rebuilding of our public schools, restructuring them so that teachers, principals, and other school-based staff have far more to say about the curriculum, testing, pedagogy, and a variety of other matters, including teacher training. What is missing in this report and in others is an agenda—a clear image of the directions and the specific legislative, administrative, and organizational changes that are necessary at all levels if a dramatic shift in decision-making and school structure is to be achieved.

While I agree with most of the Task Force proposals, they do not get to the heart of the matter—who will provide the political pressure necessary to oppose those with vested interests in maintaining the existing decision-making structure. Only if teachers, school administrators, and citizens exercise their collective political strength will there by a redistribution of power. It is possible, but highly unlikely, that state departments of education, test-producers and publishers, and central office administrators will transfer power, particularly if this means dismantling programs, reducing their authority, or losing a lucrative market. Bottom-up responsibility cannot be mandated top-down; it must be asserted by professionals and citizens, working in concert.

If we are to fulfill our responsibility to create a future guided by a literate and critical citizenry, we as educators and citizens committed to public education must work together politically to resist intrusions on hard-won gains for access and equality of opportunity. We must use our influence to remove obstructions and to foster legislative, administrative, and judicial actions that extend these gains.

While there are good reasons to celebrate the achievements of public education over the last three-quarters of a century, we must bring new life to the commitment to public education. Teachers and educators, as well as elected and appointed officials (including foundation and union officers), must be among the first to examine critically many of our taken-for-granted practices and organizational arrangements—ones that are familiar and appear to work well. We must be prepared to question our *own* institutions and their deci-

sion-making processes for determining priorities and programs. A significant shift in power and responsibility from state and district offices to teachers, principals, and the local school community will require concerted and organized political action at every level.

...The role of government and the educational bureaucracy must be significantly different than in the past. Rebuilding means we must reconstitute the way schools are organized, financed, and run, and how decisions are being made. We must look at the curriculum and the nature of knowledge that has been enshrined in that curriculum, including assumptions about the relationship of schools to work. We must look critically and carefully at current testing and evaluation practices and be prepared to abandon and replace those that are pushing us in the wrong direction. We must look also at the dilemmas our children and families experience in a precarious world.[9]

Finally, educators must recognize that greater professional autonomy for teachers and school-based administrators and staff is not sufficient for building democratic public schools. To fulfill our commitment and to succeed politically we must make common cause with those who share our commitments in our communities—parents, student advocates, government officials, writers, artists, intellectuals, and ordinary working men and women—all who want a better future for our children.

Notes and Further Reading

1. For a lucid discussion of the meaning of human dignity and its implications for equality of education and educational reform, see Fred M. Newman and Thomas E. Kelley, *Human Dignity and Excellence in Education,* Final Report to the National Institute of Education, Grant No. NIE 6-81-0009, December 1983. Available from the Public Education Information Network and from ERIC.

2. *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986). *A Nation at Risk;* National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, D.C.: 1983), U.S. Department of Education; *Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive for Educational Reform,* report of the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1983); *America's Competitive Challenge: The Need for a National Response,* report of the Business-Higher Education Forum (Washington, D.C., 1983); *Making the Grade,* report of the Twentieth Century Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1983); John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983); Theodore Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: the Dilemma of the American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984); Ernest Boyer, *High School, A Report of Secondary Education in America* (Princeton: Carnegie Foundation on Teaching, 1983).

3. For discussion of these issues and documentation of these trends, see Arthur G. Wirth, *Productive Work--In Industry and Schools* (University Press of America, 1983); Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin, *Schooling and Work in the Democratic State* (Stanford University Press, 1985); Russell W. Rumberger and Henry W. Levin, *Forecasting the Impact of New Technologies on the Future Job Market* (Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University, 1984).

4. See Henry M. Levin and Russell W. Rumberger, "Education for the High Tech Future," *The Public Education Networker 2* (1985/86); Henry Levin, "Low Skill Future of High Tech," *Technology Review 6,* (1986): 18-21.

5. For a rich compendium of the arguments and counter arguments and an excellent bibliography of these reports, see Beatrice and Ronald Gross, *The Great School Debate* (Simon & Schuster, 1985). For analysis of the shifts in educational policies over the last two decades, see Ira Schor, *Culture Wars* (Routlege & Kegan Paul, 1986); and Ann and Harold Berlak, *Dilemmas of Schooling* (Methuen, 1981). For an analysis of the political, ideological, and educational assumptions underlying the conservative, liberal, and progressive-democratic views of educational reform, see Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, *Education Under Siege* (Bergin and Garvey, 1985).

6. Among the reports and books focusing on the equality and excellence questions are: *Equity and Excellence: Toward an Agenda for School Reform,* a report of the Public Education Information Network, a Committee of Correspondence for Democratic Schools, (St. Louis, 1985); *Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk,* a report of the National Board of Inquiry of the National Coalition of Student Advocates (Boston: NCAS, 1985); *Equality and Excellence, The Educational Status of Black Americans* (New York: The College Board, New York, 1985); Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track* (Yale University Press, 1985); *A Declaration of the Educational Rights of Women,* a report of the Project on Equal Educational Rights of the NOW Legal Defense Fund (Washington, D.C., 1985); Marvin Lazerson, Judith McLaughlin, and Stephen Bailey, *An Education of Value* (New York; Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ann Bastian, Norm Fruchter, Marilyn Gittell, Colin Greer, and Kenneth Haskins, *Choosing Equality: The Case For Democratic Schooling,* a report of the New World Foundation (New York, 1985).

7. The literature on testing alternatives is vast. See the monograph series on evaluation published by the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, Grand Fork. Also see "The Search for Solutions to the Testing Problem," *Educational Leadership* 43:2 (October 1985).

8. Among these are *A Nation Prepared,* the Carnegie Task Force Report; *Equity and Excellence: Toward an Agenda for School Reform* by the Public Education Information Network; *Choosing Equality,* a report of the New World Foundation; John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School;* Ernest Boyer, *High School, A Report of Secondary Education in America;* Theodore Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School;* Carl W. Marberger, *One School at a Time: School Based Management, A Process of Change* (Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1985).

9. For a more complete discussion of policy alternatives, see *Equity and Excellence: Toward an Agenda for School Reform,* a report of the Public Education Information Network.

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A Critical Look at Professionalizing Teaching

Weeding Women out of "Woman's True Profession"

by Sara Freedman

In the past few years, a rash of Presidential and/or blue ribbon commissions-on-excellence have reported their findings on the current state of our educational system.* These reports have influenced legislatures throughout the country to revamp the public school system. One common stance of all the reports is that the right people are not teaching, and as a consequence, the American educational system has seriously deteriorated.

The first wave of these reports was primarily concerned with establishing a cause and effect relationship between America's economic decline—defined in the report as the inability of America to control the world marketplace as effectively as in the past—and the poor quality of the nation's educational system. The chief report, entitled "A Nation at Risk," perceived a "rising tide of mediocrity" within education, a tide so strong it had apparently brought America to the shores of economic ruin. The two key proposals of the Commissions on Excellence—the creation of a "master teacher" slot and the allocation of merit pay—reflected attempts to "professionalize" teaching.

Within a few years, a second wave of reports heralded a new direction for the reforms. While the first wave of reports covered a broad range of issues, the second wave concentrated on teacher selection and preparation and reflected the rising influence of a group which now saw itself as leading the educational reform movement. This new interest group, composed of administrators and professors of education from major research universities, accepted the economic orientation of the first group of reports, as well as their general perspective concerning the kinds of educational changes needed, particularly in teacher training.

Women—as teachers and as parents—need to question the recommendations of those reports, especially their emphasis on remodeling teaching (or more precisely the work and orientation of a se-

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Sara Freedman was an elementary school teacher in Massachusetts public schools for many years until she was laid off. She now teaches at the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS) of U. Mass, Boston and is on the board of **Radical Teacher**. *This is an excerpt from a longer article.*

lected group of teachers) along the lines of professions traditionally dominated by white men.

Will encouraging women (as men have always been encouraged) to leave the classroom behind enhance the self-esteem of most teachers, better educate students, and provide increased incentives for parent involvement in their children's education? Or will it instead rid the classroom of experienced teachers while discouraging newcomers from gaining valuable years of classroom training? What will happen to those teachers who want to remain in the classroom, if those who continue to care for children are by definition considered "less professional" and therefore inferior teachers? How many still working in classrooms will be women, particularly minority and working-class women, and will they be equally represented in the ranks of the "career professionals"? And finally, will anyone *be there* to care for children within the classroom, to provide the daily nurturance, encouragement and individual attention that make successful learning possible, once a successful teaching career means leaving the life of the classroom as soon as possible to oversee other teachers who are also striving to leave the classroom as swiftly as their predecessor?

The "promise" of granting teachers the reward of removal from the classroom to place them in positions of authority over other teachers strikingly illustrates the lack of regard the reformers have for the work of teachers within classrooms.

Even the healthiest and most well adjusted of us are dependent on a network of people, seen and unseen, who do the mundane, everyday work of the world, whether it be "emotional" labor, physical labor, or more often a combination of the two. In our own society, professionals are especially dependent upon these workers, because without them their day to day existence, at work and at home, is not possible. Indeed, much of the lives of professionals assumes that such necessary work will be done by others, generally women, frequently minority women and/or immigrants either out of love, money, or a combination of the two. Many of us have gotten used to several people rearing our children, each with a different status, role and rate of pay. The patch work quilt of family and institutional day care, and the division of labor and love between the day care program and the home has prepared many parents, as well as teachers, for the differential staffing proposed by these reports.

Ironically, it is just those professions (such as teaching) historically rooted in nurturing that have the potential to further devalue mothering, or at least provide a powerful ideological push to its social degradation. By forcefully attempting to distance teaching from its roots in female-identified nurturance, and by positing the idea that one can take care of children in a "professional" (i.e., detached, objective) manner, professionalized teaching would become one more career undermining those jobs and people who do perform a caregiving role.

Acknowledging the centrality of caregiving—women's work—in our (or any) society raises a number of issues not mentioned in the reports. This is especially so if one is willing to acknowledge the possibility that effective caregiving cannot be divorced from thought, nor productive thought divorced from caretaking. It is important to recognize that the neglect of these issues, and the connection between them in the reforms planned for teacher education are part of the devaluing of women's labor—and within the workforce, working-class women's labor—in general.

Today American society aggressively encourages all women to leave their homes and the work of caring for dependents to pursue "real work," work in the marketplace, work based on a male model that emphasizes rationality, order, detachment and the pursuit of the profit/power motive above personal and emotional attachment. The role of woman primarily as caretaker and nurturer is seen as a relic of a best forgotten past. A woman may act that way in the privacy of her own home for a limited amount of time, but the very fact such time is called "quality" time implies that those who do it, those who spend most of their day with children for an extended period of time in or outside the home are somehow not functioning in the adult world. It does not fit into the code of normal middle-class business behavior.

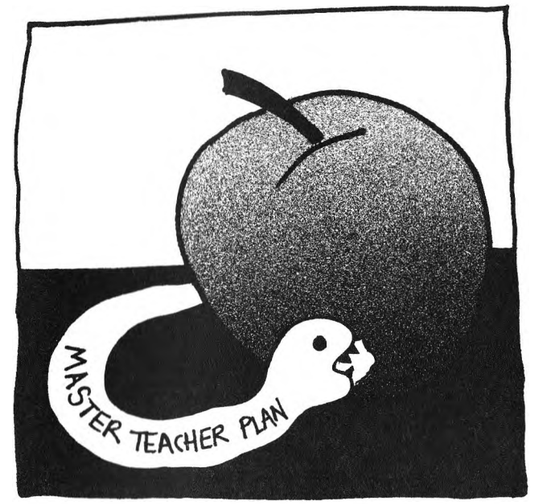
Defining caregiving as an essential component of teaching, these commission reports suggest, would scare away those women who accept this hierarchy of values,

and who are now encouraged to compartmentalize their emotional and work lives, much as many professional men have had the "luxury" of doing since the rise of modern professions. Underlying these assumptions is the knowledge that someone else will always be available to perform the essential caregiving and physical labor that buttresses middle-class life.

In order to woo middle-class women back into teaching and possibly counter their replacement by working-class and/or minority candidates, reports such as that issued by the Holmes Group ("Tomorrow's Teachers") consciously use terms and models based on professions with impeccable claims to being professions, going so far as to refer to new teachers as "interns," more experienced teachers as "residents," and the schools in which they begin their careers and/or receive their training as "research" institutions. The report proposes a three-tiered system of teachers with vastly different levels of responsibility, salaries, and job security for each level. It also holds out to new teachers the promise of leaving direct contact with children, creating the position of master teacher or "career professional" for the elite teachers who will supervise and oversee those who may not be called teachers but who will actually be doing the job we now think of as teaching children.

The Carnegie Report suggests a similar hierarchical structure for teachers, replacing the Career Professional with the term "Lead Teacher." A critical analysis of the ideology that underpins the medical model of professionalism leads easily to questioning whether the Holmes Group and Carnegie reports are really attempts to change teaching into nursing, a very different "semi-profession" within medicine, rather than efforts to upgrade teachers to what the reports imagine is the position of doctors today. There has long been a recognition that medicine requires both direct care and scientific intervention. The solution has been to split the two functions: nurses would provide the day to day, moment by moment care while doctors would come in once or twice a day to prescribe the treatment for the nurse to follow.

The "promise" of granting teachers the reward of removal from the classroom to place them in positions of authority over other teachers strikingly illustrates the lack of regard the reformers have for the work of teachers within classrooms, while also implicitly acknowledging the isolation and powerlessness most classroom teachers experience. The panacea, however, is not to separate out the role of caregiver and nurturer from the role of



teacher/educator and policy-maker. That reflects more the belief that nurturing, and anything associated with motherhood, is inherently mindless, unskilled, and inconsequential. Rather than fighting the trend within American society that devalues work traditionally done by women, these new policies uncritically embrace the assumptions about the significance and difficulty of performing "emotional labor."

Teaching, for all of its drawbacks and its demeaning and petty restrictions, did allow some people to combine caregiving with intellectual labor. That is not to say the ability and even the necessity to combine the two was generally recognized or rewarded as part of successful teaching. It has always been difficult to combine nurturing pupils, seen as essentially an idiosyncratic, personalized role, with the abstract analytic skills considered crucial to the development of curriculum. When the role of the teacher is acknowledged as crucial to learning, teachers—the successful as well as the failed—are defined primarily as the emotional component, the heart if you will, that is pivotal to learning. The curriculum and those who develop it are the mind, contributing the intellect, the abstract concepts and clearly delineated sequences. To use the language of schools, teachers provide the "affect"—the personal, the emotional, the spontaneous, the instinctual, the private, and therefore the secretive. Those who work outside the classroom provide the curricula, the "cognitive"—the intellectual, the abstract, the public, the rational.

Furthermore, the division between affect (what is considered intrinsically rooted in classroom life) and cognition (what is imported into the classroom) is structurally embodied in schools in a very clear cut way: the principal adult actors inside the classroom are women, while the principal actors outside the classroom are men. This arrangement has been true since the beginning of the common school movement. The belief that the proper roles of men and women are both different and separate is not an anomaly of the educational system. The way women and men are viewed outside schools, and the way they negotiate their different roles, is of fundamental importance to the roles they are assigned inside schools, particularly because schools replicate and publicly sanction the division of labor and power structure that distinguish men's and women's spheres of influence outside schools. The oft-heard remark, intended as a compliment, "What are you still doing in the classroom? You're so bright," indicates the degree of popular contempt for the majority of teachers, and the general unwillingness to believe that a large number of teachers (when given honest and sustained encouragement) can and prefer to create exciting curricula within their own classrooms, and share their insights with other teachers.

Without analyzing the implications and implicit assumptions about gender differences in the way women's "semi-professions" have been defined, particularly in opposition to the definitions of the "real professions"—all of which are male-dominated—we stand to replicate those same differences in the proposed restructuring of schools along supposed gender-blind, or more accurately gender-oblivious lines.

Those who will do best in these new schema—who will be most attracted to the role of Career Professional or Lead Teacher—will be those who have never had a sense of the workplace culture of teachers, who entered teaching, as many men have done, in order to become principals or superintendents, who emphasize professional codes of rationality and emotional distance and who see their reference groups as other professionals rather than those working with them in the particular world of a specific school.

Furthermore, there is nothing to ensure that all such Lead Teachers will not be those teaching the 'gifted and talented,' or those willing to produce quantifiable results, or those who teach subjects such as mathematics or science (a large percentage of whom are men), whose efforts these reports assume are most closely linked to improving the nation's competitive edge.

Indeed, many women who are talented and experienced teachers are not suited to the managerial and supervisory role of Career Professional or Lead Teacher. Many, even those who are recognized informally in the school as excellent teachers, will choose to remain in the classroom, but they will suffer a loss of status and control over even classroom life once others are elevated over them and officially designated Career Professional. Indeed, the schemes suggested in these reports will institutionalize the belief that those teachers who are demonstrably good teachers inside the classroom should leave the classroom and that all those who remain are by definition not Career Professionals. Many others will not do well in their new jobs because the orientation and skills that made them so successful as teachers children will work against the new system in which they are expected to rank teachers, to control resources and promotions, and to spend their time not in sympathetic nurturing but in overseeing.

Many will choose to remain in the classroom, but they will suffer a loss of status and control over even classroom life once others are elevated over them and officially designated Career Professional.

As long as direct care of dependents is denigrated in our society as a whole, as long as the work of the heart—emotion and empathy—and the work of the head—rationality and intellect—are seen as two separate functions, then what we now consider teaching (that is, working with children as a main part of the teacher's job) will never be given status in our society. Improving the status of teachers will not be possible as long as one of the most important jobs of a teacher—that of understanding, working with, and emotionally supporting children—has little status outside of schools. One place to begin the battle is inside schools, by acknowledging the importance of this role of teachers rather than ignoring or disparaging it as these reports do. Perhaps if education took the lead in this area, the rest of society would be jolted into changing. Schools alone cannot perform this miracle, but they cannot begin to improve conditions within their own sphere without seriously challenging the way our society views this issue.

Note

* National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk, (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1983); The Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy, Making the Grade, (New York, The Twentieth Century Fund, 1983); The National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, Action for Excellence, a Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools, (Washington, D.C., the National Task Force on Eduction for Economic Growth, 1983); The Business Higher Education Forum, America's Competitive Challenge, (Washington, D.C., The Business Higher Education Forum, 1983); Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, (New York, The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986); The Holmes Group, Tomorrow's Teachers, (E. Lansing, MI, Holmes Group, 1986).

Newspapers and Magazines on School Reform

ALTARG Newsletter, publication of the All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism, Panther House, Room 216, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X OAP. An anti-racist teachers group active in many social struggles in England. Write for subscription information and list of other publications.

ChalkDust, newsletter of a rank-and-file teachers group in New York City. Address: 409 Park Place, Brooklyn, NY 11238.

Children's Advocate, published by the Action Alliance for Children, 1700 Broadway, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612. This bi-monthly periodical deals with children's advocacy issues with a focus on the Bay Area. Subs: $18; organizational, $24.

Democratic Schools Magazine, includes analysis, interviews and reports on educational reform around the country. Each issue includes a listing of resources, reviews and summaries of organizing. Subscriptions, $8.50. Contact: Democratic Schools News Office, 438 N. Skinker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63130.

Democracy and Education, quarterly journal of the Institute for Democracy in Education, 1241 McCracken Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701-2979. Deals with a wide range of educational issues from a classroom teacher perspective.

EPIC Events. English Plus Information Clearinghouse, 227 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 120, Washington, DC 20002. $12/year. Deals with the anti-English only struggle and other issues that affect language minorities.

FairTest, Newsletter of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing, PO Box 1272, Harvard Sq Station, Cambridge, MA 02238. 617-864-4810. $15/year. National, non-profit research and advocacy organization working to eliminate the abuses and misuse of millions of standardized tests.

Forum, Newsletter of Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138, 617-492-1764. Quarterly newsletter dealing with peace and nuclear issues.

Hands On: A Journal for Teachers, published by the Foxfire Fund, Inc., Fabun Gap, GA 30568. $5/year for four issues. A journal which is particularly useful to classroom teachers.

La Raza Education Network News, National Council of La Raza, Twenty F Street NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20001. 202-628-9600.

New Youth Connection, The Newsmagazine Written by and for New York Youth. Youth Connection, 135 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011. Monthly, $12/year. Write for bulk rates.

NECCA News, Network of Educators' Committees on Central America, PO Box 43509, Washington, DC 20010.

Radical Teacher, a socialist and feminist journal on the theory and practice of teaching. Published three times a year by the Boston Women's Teachers' Group, Inc. Subs: $8/year; $11/institutional; $4 retired or unemployed. Contact: PO Box 102, Kendall Sq Post Office, Cambridge, MA 02142.

Rethinking Schools. Quarterly, $5/student; $10/regular; $25/institutional. Deals with educational policy and is linked directly to organizing in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Contact: PO Box 93371, Milwaukee, WI 53202. 414-265-6217.

Substance, published monthly by Substance, Inc., a rank-and-file group of teachers in the Chicago Teachers Union. Includes investigative reporting on the Chicago schools, education reform and school issues. Subscriptions: $15. Substance, 161 W. Harrison St., 7th Floor, Chicago, IL 60605. 312-341-0977.

Urban Parents Education Institute Newsletter, 200 Georgia King Village, Suite 13C, Newark, NJ 07107. (Described in interview with Wilbur Haddock.)

The Newark Experience

Education and Community Empowerment

Interview with Wilbur Haddock

Forward Motion: Why don't you start by telling us how you came to be involved in community organizing around educational issues?

Wilbur Haddock: My background has always been in organizing and working with people. It started back in the 1960s when I worked at the Ford Motor Company in Mahwah, New Jersey. I got involved in organizing the United Black Workers there because of working conditions at the plant.

Little did we know that similar kinds of movements and organizing were going on around the country. We thought our struggle was just basic to Mahwah. But in 1969, we had a big walkout that hit the national headlines. From that experience we linked up with brothers and sisters from Detroit and California and across the country.

I was at Mahwah for fifteen years. From my experiences at Ford Motor Company and with the UAW, I think I learned quite a bit about how to deal with bureaucracies. I learned about the system. I was also involved with SNCC and CORE and other aspects of the Black Liberation struggle, and I was fired about three times because of this involvement.

The last time I was fired, in 1973, I was out for a long time—eighteen months. I was blacklisted, and I couldn't get a job anywhere. A friend of mine who taught in the Labor Studies Department at Essex County College asked me to come in and speak to his class about my experiences at Ford. Then I was asked to come back and to teach the class. That's how I got into teaching and education. When I finally won my suit at Ford, I decided to take a leave of absence. I went back to the community to devote more time to trying to educate the community about workers' struggles and working conditions. Many people just didn't understand what was happening in the factory at that time.

Then, I began to help develop classes and courses for activists and community people. I saw that a lot of people were working in jobs where they couldn't move up because they had no degree. And people who were trying to organize tenants' associations, block associations, and so on lacked certain skills. Some friends of mine—Norm Fruchter, Michelle Cahill and Jeff Armstead—came together to develop a course for parents and community activists called "Public Policy" at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, New Jersey. That was back in 1975.

Since that day I've been here at St. Peter's. The program has grown from just a one-year program to a four-year degree program. We have graduated over 500 people who probably would not have gotten their degrees any other way. Many people have gone on to start their own educational programs for senior citizens and youth. I would say we've been very successful in carrying out our initial concept.

I have also been very involved with the educational struggles in Newark, New Jersey. The skills I learned from on-the-job organizing and from participating in the Black liberation struggle have helped me in my work with parents, dealing with Boards of Education and with the bu-

To keep students in school requires a curriculum relevant to students' lives. These students attend the Central Park East Secondary School, an alternative public school in New York City's East Harlem.

reaucracy of City Hall. Many of the people that we tried to organize didn't have that factory or union background. They may have had good intentions, but some of the discipline and skills were not there. So I think that I learned a lot from my involvement at Ford.

FM: Trying to organize in factories among women and among Black and Latino workers as well, I've found that it was very hard to do labor organizing focussed solely on union issues. In order to really do the shop floor organizing, it was necessary to think about organizing people in their lives outside of the job—paying attention to issues of education, housing and health care.

WH: I agree with that. During the '70s, there was a struggle within the Left about whether or not the focus should be at the point of production—at the shop—or in the community. We didn't want to get into that argument. In communities like Newark and Harlem and Bedford Stuyvesant, there was no way in the world that you could ignore the crime, the police brutality, the drugs. When our organization, the United Black Workers, would have meetings, people would come in with problems: someone got busted, someone needed a lawyer, somebody needed an apartment, somebody got burned out. Seeing the needs of the workers, there was no question of debating or theorizing that our efforts should go exclusively to one or another focus.

Our organizing reflected this perspective. For example, most of the Black workers came from New York City and the metropolitan area. Most of the white workers came from upstate New York—farm areas. Because they were small farmers, many of them could not sell their goods and products. So we worked out a deal where they would bring down bags of tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, whatever. Because prices were so high in the city, workers were ready to buy at a discount baskets of fruits and vegetables. We built a relationship between the workers who lived on the farms and those in the cities and thereby provided a service to both groups of workers. The union, of course, did not like it. And the company did not like it either—too revolutionary or whatever.

We tried to explain to people that the history of the labor movement has been full of examples of workers' cooperatives. But the UAW did not see this as something they should be doing. They left it to us to do it.

FM: How do you get people involved and keep them involved in the work that you are now doing among parents around educational issues?

WH: There's no one answer. There are different methods. We helped form a coalition called People United for Better Schools—PUBS. We tried to come together and work with the teachers' unions, with the clergy, with the politicians in the community, to make the Newark, New Jersey school system better.

We went and asked people, "What issues are you concerned about in your school? What do you want to see happen?" And we took those kind of concerns to people running for the Board of Education and said: "To

get our support, you have to endorse this educational program and agenda." Then we went around to the four wards in Newark to let the community meet the Board members and discuss their problems at town hall-type meetings.

We developed a whole education plan that addressed every aspect of curriculum: testing, dropouts, hiring, the whole bit. For three years the Coalition pushed this plan. We elected three members to the Board the first year, three the second year, and three the third year, and finally we had the whole board.

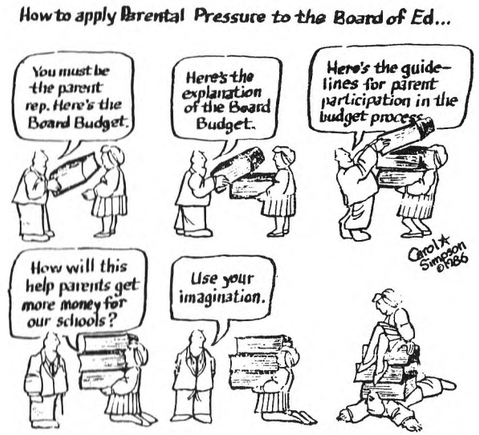
Once we had control, however, some of the groups which had participated in the campaign and had supported our educational plan started talking about how "we don't need PUBS anymore." They weren't showing up for meetings; they were doing their own thing. If you called them, you couldn't get through.

We in the community were pushing for educational issues; the other interest groups were pushing for the jobs: Who was going to head the contracts office? Who was going to be involved in the Public Information Office? Who was going to fill the key job positions? Where was the money going? It turned out many of these people weren't at all concerned about educational issues.

We had been thinking that it would take the community two years to get control of the Board. We won control in our first year. We initially elected three people to the Board. Then one person came over to our side. Then, unbeknownst to the community, a deal was cut to get a fifth Board member to come over to our side. That was the beginning of the downfall. Now we had five votes but we weren't prepared to take charge. We didn't know what to do. Meanwhile the Board members were already busy making deals for so many jobs, so many this, so many that.

What became clear was that their issues all along were not issues of education—issues of kids.They just were interested in taking power from Mayor Gibson and putting it in their own hands. We, the community, had not thought far ahead enough. If you don't do your homework, if you don't educate yourselves about the whole picture and what you're getting into, then by the time you wake up and see what's happening, it's too late. We continue to make the mistake that once we win, we go back to sleep. We didn't hold folks accountable; we didn't stay on top of them. Even those of us who should have known better could not stop that from happening.

On paper we did all the right things, but once the



slate got elected, we were not powerful enough to make them follow through. They would say, "You don't understand. This job is so difficult, and so complicated. Just trust us; we'll do the right thing." And some community people would say, "Just give them a chance. They haven't been there long and it's a difficult job." We would say, "No, they agreed. They said they're gonna do x, y and z, and we've got to hold them accountable." But people wanted to give the new Board a chance. And the more we gave them a chance, the further and further they got away from the community and what they had sworn to do.

Community Power Brokers

FM: It sounds like the community had two goals. One focussed on political empowerment and the other on educational reform. And not everyone shared that second goal. Without putting anybody on the spot, can you describe a little bit more some of the different groups and their interests?

WH: We're talking about the teachers' union. We're talking about the cafeteria workers and the security guards who work for the school system. We're talking about major politicians and city council people; we're talking about Democratic and Republican party officials. And we're talking about some ministers. The corporations stayed out of it, but every other aspect of the community was involved.

Now the power brokers and leaders of these groups

have all kinds of resources—money, organizers, and so on. When we would discuss a campaign, automatically the teachers' union might say, "We'll provide the phone banks," and another group would say, "We'll provide trucks and cars." Once somebody volunteered to do a job, we would just let them do it. We didn't say, "No, let's divide this up. We'll get some cars too." We'd just let them handle those kinds of logistics. Had we said, "No," or had we done our own organizing through coffee klatches and fundraisers, then we would probably have been strong enough to say to them, "Let's divide the work in half," or "We'll do our share." That way, we would have built up our own resources, our own war chest, so if we were cut off, we could still survive. That was a mistake that we made.

Of course, we were doing a lot of the leg work. But when it came down to presenting bodies, the union could present two hundred people, the politicians could present one hundred people and the churches could present fifty people. If the community could only present ten, we looked weak, and these other groups would just go ahead and do what they wanted to do. But when the community leadership was strong enough to back up its positions with people, then the clergy and even the politicians respected us. To deal with a coalition, community forces have to be able to build upon a position of strength.

Another problem was that the Left got caught up in debating for hours at a meeting. The community people would leave. They didn't want to sit there and have a theoretical debate over issues of education. They came to do some concrete stuff. A lot of times, the four or five different Left political groups would end up speaking for the community without really having a base or being able to bring out more than one or two people.

FM: It's interesting because until you actually spelled it out, I never considered the heavy politicization of education. When I think about education, I tend to think, on the one hand, about what kids are learning in the classroom. Or, on the other hand, I think of dramatic community control struggles like IS-201 in New York where the Black community took on recalcitrant, white supremacists leaders and the teachers' union. I see from what you are saying that there are many less dramatic but very pervasive political issues that revolve around education: who is going to build a school? who is going to get a big job? who is going to become principal? who is going to get the contracts and the subcontracts? And these kinds of issues are at the heart of many politicians' interest in education, because that is how many of them stay in power, through the patronage system.

WH: Right. In Newark, the school budget is $280 million. That's a lot of money for education. The politicians and other folks saw it as money to further their own interests.

FM: Could you comment about the role of Black women in the education struggle?

WH: Black women are playing a crucial role in the struggle and have been for some time. In the '60s, most of the leadership you saw in the media was Black men. But Black women were playing a major role in the '60s, they just weren't getting any recognition behind it. Today, as I'm out here dealing with parents, the majority of the people I meet who are dealing with tenants' rights, education, housing, are Black women, or women in general.

In education specifically, with all the new changes in testing and teacher certification coming down the pike, some of the people that are going to be hit the hardest are Black and Latino women teachers. This gives us a basis for organizing and working with Black and Latino teachers. Whether the unions are prepared to deal with these issues or not, we can deal with them from the community and progressive standpoint. They will be coming under the gun. Their jobs are at risk.

Even Black women that have seen themselves as middle class or as having made it are now beginning to wake up to the fact that they cannot just stand over on the side. Maybe they have children now, and their children are turning school-age, and they can't afford to pay exorbitant prices for private or parochial schools. I am seeing more interest in getting back into the struggle.

Historically, the struggle of Black women and the leadership of Black women has been consistent. They need to flex their political muscles more. For the most part it is still Black men who are in the leadership and some of the old guard are not ready to just stand aside. But most of the voters are probably Black women in our communities.They have got to stop being nice and demand and fight for equal representation. I think that the more that happens, the more effective the overall movement will be.

FM: Are there counterparts to PUBS in the white community in Newark? What do you see as the tasks of those in the educational reform movement who are progressive and who are white?

WH: There's a small white student population in our schools. Perhaps that is the reason that the white community is not actively involved in public school issues in Newark (and probably in some other cities as well). The other thing is that they do have access to a community school—an alternative school. They may feel left out of educational issues because most of the involvement and leadership is primarily Black and Latino. When we organized PUBS, there were two strong white, progressive organizations that had people involved in it. They never brought their whole organization in, but they represented their organization, and when there were meetings and issues, they came.

What most white progressive organizers in Newark and in other areas close by seem to be involved in are toxic waste and environmental issues. These are important issues and most white organizers seem to be going in that direction, into issues that they feel more comfortable with. I don't want to sell short the environmental issues, particularly in Newark. One of the strongest progressive organizations is based in the Irontown section of Newark, which has a lot of dioxin and toxic waste in it. So there is a legitimate reason for them to be concerned about that issue because it's right in their neighborhood and it is a good organizing issue for them.

There are many ways that the white Left and white progressives can be helpful. If they have information, or if they have expertise, or if they need help to do some work in their community, then they can turn to those of us that are doing organizing already.

The Reform Agenda

FM: What educational programs and issues do you think are most important?

WH: We want to have some control over our schools and some say in what's happening in the school system. We want "quality education." We want parental involvement. We want access to the schools. We want to reinstitute programs that we lost because of cutbacks: recreational programs, after-school programs, cultural and arts programs. Our kids haven't been exposed very much to cultural programs—music and the arts and so forth. We are trying to get back into the budget what we consider basic programs that help to make the schools more interesting. We want the kids to learn about their history and their culture, to do more plays and drama and painting, and things of that nature. We also want to provide them with something meaningful to do after-

Cultural and arts programs should be part of the basic curriculum to help make the schools more interesting.

school—recreational activity with tutorial help hooked up to it.

We pushed for these things before and during the campaign. Now, though I still want the same things, I realize that control comes first, and the programs second. I'm for empowerment. I'm for the power to sit down at the table and be part of the decision-making. Once we're there, then by negotiations, by whatever pressure, we can get our programs in. I've changed my thinking based on frustration from trying to do it the other way round. The "right" way, so to speak, just doesn't work. You've got to see education as a political battle—a struggle—all the way.

FM: Do you see the struggle for empowerment of the community over the Newark schools tied up to other kinds of community struggles?

WH: When I say "empowerment," I am talking in the context of other struggles. Education does not sit out there, and the other issues of the community over here. I think it is all intertwined. As an example, consider the Newark school budget of $280 million. With foundation grants and other monies that come in, we are talking about $400 million. That money has to go into a bank somewhere. Our position was, and still is, if we're going to give a major bank here $2 million, then it should be with the stipulation that this bank should give low-interest loans or some sort of small business loans to the

community, to help build homes or establish businesses, or something like that.

The whole question of crime and drugs is tied in with education. If we really make our schools interesting and relevant and something that the kids can feel good about, then that's a stronger hold on the kids than just saying, "Say No to Drugs." The kids are bored. If we can strengthen our schools, that would go a long way to stem drug problems.

Or take the job situation. Corporations are crying because the workers who are coming in can't read, can't write, can't file. We can have the power to put pressure on the major corporations in urban cities for an equal partnership. The community can demand guaranteed jobs at the end of graduation if the corporations support us in cleaning up our schools.

Jobs, housing, money, crime, drugs, all stem from education, and we, the community, don't control any of it. If we could control our school system, then that would be a political base to work from, to put us on an even footing with other political forces. In Newark, it is not the local politicians who control the school system; it is the county politicians, and they're all white. The Democratic and Republican parties moved their base out of the cities to the suburbs. But they skillfully used some Black leaders to keep their foot in the door. They still run the cities and they are still calling the shots. We're losing. We're losing the city and we're losing our school system.

FM: In the Urban Parents Educational Institute Newsletter, you talk about empowerment. An editorial describes councils composed of parents, teachers and principals in South Carolina. I'm interested in your thinking about establishing an equal partnership in education and particularly about the community side of that partnership. Who would be involved? Do you see a role for students? What is the role for the parents, teachers, and other people that are now active in the schools?

WH: Right now, it is difficult for us to compete with businesses and other interest groups because we don't have the resources. You're not going to get the kind of involvement of parents, or students, or concerned citizens, for the most part, if you don't have any means of helping with child care, transportation, and other basic needs they have. At one time, you could pay a stipend to a community person or parent to come to meetings. We don't have that now, and we're at a disadvantage.

I think that in some type of school-site management, or some type of partnership program, you need to hire some parents to help out with the organizing. You need funds from the corporations to train parents, to educate and to get students involved, to guarantee jobs to students. This type of educational coalition is designed to use those forces that have the resources to our advantage. In South Carolina, the state legislature put money into a pot to help train parents. New Jersey hasn't done that. What New Jersey is talking about is 'parents in learning,' where parents commit to helping their children do their homework. New Jersey doesn't want real parent involvement.

There's definitely a place for students as well. Students have no say, they don't really have any rights. By offering them some kind of hook—job possibilities, scholarships, or whatever—you get them involved. During the campaign, we had a separate group called SUBS—Students United for Better Schools which was doing all kinds of work within the organization. We would talk to students at their assemblies about what was wrong with their schools, what changes they wanted, what they wanted to be involved in. It was successful because they felt when we won, they won too.

Of course, that too was sabotaged much later on. The only thing students got out of the deal was that we were able to get students appointed to the Board of Education for the first time. But the Board didn't really deal with those issues that the students were interested in. Because there are so many problems facing our young people in our communities, there is greater acceptance today of the idea of working with students. At one time, those involved from the community did not want to deal with young people.

Aggressive student organization needs to be put together again. The campus and citywide student organizations that existed in the '60s and '70s don't exist anymore. But with all the racism that's resurfacing on the college campuses, the kids need this organizational support more than ever. Right now they are going off to college naked, in a sense. We could be preparing and training them in our organizations now if we had the resources. It has to come from us. The corporations are just interested in educating productive workers. They don't want to politicize them.

Discipline and Creativity

FM: A lot of people say they would send their kids to Catholic schools or a private school if they could afford

it. The Catholic schools are sometimes seen as synonymous with two things—discipline and teaching basic skills. Yet some parts of the educational reform movement have downplayed discipline issues and have played up the need for more creativity in contrast to the need to master more basic skills. Given what goes on in the public schools, what's the relative importance of those issues?

WH: They're important. The open classroom for the most part was not good for our students. I think the young people need to have a form of discipline; they need to have built-in structure to deal with their time.

One of the things we have going for us in New Jersey is that this state has been going through a reform movement since Governor Kean came into office. He has been pushing numerous changes—new high school equivalency tests, graduation requirements, you name it. Now they are talking about instituting an educational choice system. Within the last eight years or so, there has been a litany of issues dealing with teacher certification, testing, and dropouts.

All this helps those of us who are organizing and educating parents. We don't have to go looking for issues; they are there. For example, the state introduced an equivalency test (really a basic skills test). Parents were told that their child had to pass it. Students had three chances to pass this test; if they failed it three times, they could graduate with a certificate, but not with a diploma. When young people began to pass the test, they decided they wanted to change it from a ninth grade test to an eleventh grade test and make it tougher. We are in a position to explain to parents what is happening, what the state is trying to do, and who will benefit.

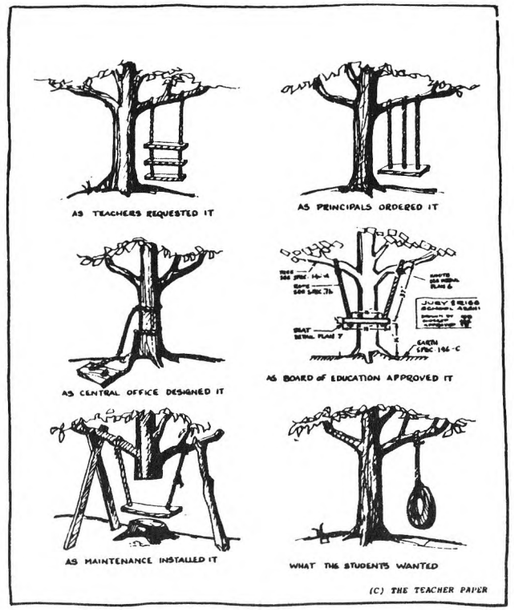
State takeovers is another big issue here. The state finally got a law passed under which it can come in and take over an ailing school district. All of the districts that have failed the monitoring process so far have been urban school districts—*all* of them. The only districts that are going to be taken over are urban districts with predominantly Black and Hispanic populations. The first take-over target is Jersey City. Many people don't understand what all this means. The people are divided on whether it's good or bad. Many people feel that the state couldn't do any worse than what the Jersey City Board of Education has done. This has become a good organizing tool for us.

Another issue that Reagan and [former Education Secretary William] Bennett gave us is discipline in the person of Joe Clark. Joe Clark is the principal of East Side High School. He's the guy who carries a baseball bat and bullhorn around the hall. He's been there about six years, and he's thrown out over 2,000 students. He says that they were malingerers; that they didn't belong in school; that they were just occupying space. So he just throws them out. There aren't any alternative schools in Paterson for these kids to go to. If they don't pick up another high school, they're on the street corner, and they're back into drugs and so forth. Joe Clark doesn't care about that. His position is they don't belong there. It's his school. Not the community's school; not the people's school. It is his school, and he decides on who stays, who goes.

Reagan thinks Clark is a good principal. Secretary Bennett thinks he is a good principal. Now he's the darling of the conservatives of the Republican party. In this past election, they even had him running for freeholder [an elected office—ed.] in Essex County, but he lost, thank goodness. That is an example of how discipline is seen by the conservatives, through the eyes of a Joe Clark. They think that by beating up on, intimidating and threatening kids, you get them to be educated. There is no proof that it works. The test scores are still bad in East Side High School; the kids are not learning anything. A new media hype person has been created, but education is still not going on.

We reject the idea that intimidation is the way you deal with discipline. We think disciple is a serious problem, but it's a problem because the schools are now boring, and there's nothing there to keep the kids in school. Channel 9 here in New Jersey has been highlighting the problems in the schools for the past few months and has a program called "A plus for Kids." Recently, they decided they were going to adopt a school in Jersey City. They got together with the Mets baseball team, and the plan was for the freshman class of this particular high school to sign a contract with Channel 9 and the Mets. The students would agree to stay in school, come to class every day, and pass certain tests. And what would they get at the end of each year? Some people would be selected to go to see a Mets game! Well, the freshman class said no. They rejected it. There are other programs where people are given either money or guaranteed college tuitions as encouragement to stay in school. But two tickets to a Mets game? The kids were not buying it.

There are many ways to deal with discipline, but again, you have got to have more parties involved in the process. Channel 9 and the Mets should have come to



the community and said, "What do you think is the best way that we can work together in keeping these kids in school?" The pacifying approach they did come up with was insulting to the kids and insulting to their parents.

Bigger Picture

FM: What is the importance of education struggles in the broad political picture?

WH: I think education is now a major battleground. It's hard to get people involved today. The only issue that we really have been able to motivate people around in the last four years has been Jesse Jackson's campaign. Unless there's a crisis somewhere—some kid gets shot—there's no issue that has motivated the people in any kind of sustained way. I think education is an issue that can motivate people. As community people and as parents, we have to see that our children and their schools are our special interest. It's up to us, the political activists, to make that message clear.

Parents and citizens know something is wrong, but they are bewildered about how to deal with the situation. The most common problem I have organizing parents is explaining what their rights are. Most don't know. They don't think they have rights. If they had bad educational experiences, they're reluctant to get involved unless there's a crisis.

And there are many levels or areas to it: there is testing, there is curriculum, there is the whole area of sports and athletics; there are issues of racism and sexism. These are all part of what goes into providing quality education for our children.

Unfortunately many of the people who talk about education have not done their homework. They don't know anything about budgets, testing or curriculum; they don't understand who the players are, what role the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education have or the function of the Chancellor of Education. We have got to educate ourselves. Activists might support some sort of overall picture of the struggle—they might say they want self-determination or they might be talking about community control—but underneath those phrases, what does that mean concretely? What I do is to talk to parents and the community and activists and explain this kind of stuff to them.

FM: Tell us about your work on the Urban Parent Education Institute and how *Forward Motion* readers can get in touch with you.

WH: I helped to create a course for parents about public education, called "Public Policy in Public Schools." We were able to get some college credits tied to this course as a hook to get parents to take it and hopefully get back into school and get their degrees. The course is a one-year course, and we cover the gamut of what public education is, who the players are, and every aspect and facet of public education in New Jersey and nationally. I've been teaching the course for four years; the course has been around for five years.

Once you have parents and concerned citizens together, you don't want to lose them after the year's up and they graduate. I helped form the Urban Parents Educational Institute as a vehicle to continue to educate people on the issues and to keep in touch with people who are knowledgeable about education. It's not an organization where you sit down and have meetings. But it's an organization where you can come, have workshops and seminars, bring people in to talk about what's happening nationally, what's happening in curriculum, what's happening in school improvement. We talk about issues in other parts of the country. The newsletter is another means to share with people various changes, struggles, and issues in education that might be helpful in

their community or their schools.

We welcome ideas and information about things that are happening around the country that might be helpful to our parents. It's mainly a New Jersey organization, but it's not limited to New Jersey, because the urban problems in Jersey are the same problems that they're having in Chicago and California and Baltimore, whatever. So we think that people would benefit from it wherever they are.

FM: I want to take advantage of your history in the struggle to ask how things have changed since IS-201.
WH: IS-201 and Oceanville-Brownsville were two major struggles back in the 1960s in the Black and Latino communities of New York for community control. The community rose up to take control over their school systems, and then these struggles spread around the country to other communities. Many communities won some form of community control or simply got more involved in their school system.

There were pluses and minuses. New York never really got complete community control. What came out of the boycotts and demonstrations was a compromise—a watered down version of community control. On the one hand, people today are able to vote for the school boards and officers who run the schools. But the city Board of Education still really controls the schools and can overrule and overturn anything they don't want to see happen.

The other part of that struggle was the role of the AFT—the American Federation of Teachers. Albert Shanker was the head of the New York Teachers union, and he became very prominent in the early years by his resistance to the community control concept. He said a lot of very, very negative things about the communities of color and their struggles, and that legacy is still with us today.

During that period of the 1960s and the 1970s, there were a lot of aggressive parent and community organizations. Many of the people who were active in these groups were given jobs within the system. They became teachers' aides, crossing guards, you name it. We lost a lot of organizers that way. Once people went to work for the Board of Education, they were more limited in how forceful they could be, how much of an organizer they could be. Now they were working for the schools, and they had a job, they had responsibilities, they had families. Some became Board members. The community people that they had been working with side by side were now on the other side of the table. They were into a little power and these same people now held back the community in its growth and development.

That whole movement was sabotaged because we lost so many leaders when they were given jobs and positions. We have not had a chance to develop new leadership to the level we had before. Now we're back to square one in our community, trying to develop and create new leadership, trying to hold on to those who haven't burnt out.

I've been trying to work with younger parents, parents with kids in Head Start, kids who have not been caught up into the system, who have not been bought off or disillusioned. There's a lot of them out there. I haven't completely written off the ones that have been a part of the system for a long time. Hopefully, if I can get a stronger base with new fresh blood, then maybe those people who are pessimistic and don't want to get involved, will get rejuvenated from this new blood.

FM: You said when we started that the Black liberation movement was a strong influence on you and that you applied lessons from your experiences in that movement to education struggles. How would you sum up the influence of the Black Liberation movement on education.
WH: I think that it had a profound affect on not only education but every facet of society. There are so many examples of other things that sprung from it: the rebirth of the women's movement, the Latino movement, the senior citizens' movement. I think that the Black liberation movement had a profound affect on the country and people that were fighting for change.

Looking back on what went on in the area of education, our thinking was sometimes narrow or limited. We wanted to get Blacks into the system. We did not see the whole picture correctly. We got Black Studies, we got Black professors, we got a whole bunch of programs. But many of the professors were not the kind of professionals that identified with our struggles. They were hired by the administration and they were not what we were fighting for. Once the struggles were over, there was no monitoring or follow-up. Once things quieted down, the system began to take back those programs, kick out many of those professors. Or they shifted money from Black studies to Latino studies to women's studies to minority studies.

FM: And now there's no studies.
WH: Right. And there's nobody to step in and say to the individuals, "Whoa, what are you doing here?" We did not pass on the lessons from that liberation struggle. As a result, the young people today have little or no knowledge of what happened at that time. All we have is individual parents and individual people who are passing on that history to their own children. Our writers, our thinkers, our theoreticians have for the most part not put down the information and passed it on. So we are bringing up a generation of young people that don't know what the effects of the Black liberation movement have been on education, or why we have Black superintendents of schools.

We now have the opportunity to mobilize and develop a movement around education. I don't think the issue should be bussing or integration, but the quality of education. We already see the corporations gearing up, the foundations gearing up, the national government gearing up, the governors gearing up to tackle the educational system. We have got to make sure that we parents and community people are equal partners in this planning.

We know what they did in the 1960s, after the whole Sputnik thing: the powers that be decided that they wanted to improve the U.S. school system so that the Russians would not leave us in the dust in the race for space. The system has proven that it can improve the schools when it's to their advantage. They are talking about 'a nation at risk,' and promoting 'back to basics' as the way forward. What role will we play? We need to educate ourselves and our community to become a major player in determining in what direction our children's education is heading.

FM: Is there anything you would like to add?
WH: I just want to end by emphasizing the importance of education as a vehicle for change and for organizing and involving people. The Governor and Commissioner of Education have been going around the country saying New Jersey has it together. And it's not true. These forces who want to take the schools back to basics, who want to create robots for their factories for the 1990s and the year 2000 are way ahead of us. We need all the help we can get across the country to make sure that we understand what's happening in education. Then we need to get involved and participate in this process. People United for Better Schools was a good effort. It only lasted from 1983 to 1986 but I hope that at some point in time we come back to finish the job we started.

Some of us are talking about maybe trying to develop some kind of national organization. Something needs to happen to wake folks up, to see that the time is now to get involved. I hope this interview will help to get people moving.

Wilbur Haddock is an adjunct instructor at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, New Jersey. He is a long-time community activist and director of the Urban Parents Educational Institute of New Jersey. For information on the Institute and its newsletter, write Urban Parents Educational Institute, 200 Georgia King Village, Apartment 13C, Newark, New Jersey 07107.

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A Success Story in Milwaukee

The Struggle for a Decent School

by Bob Peterson

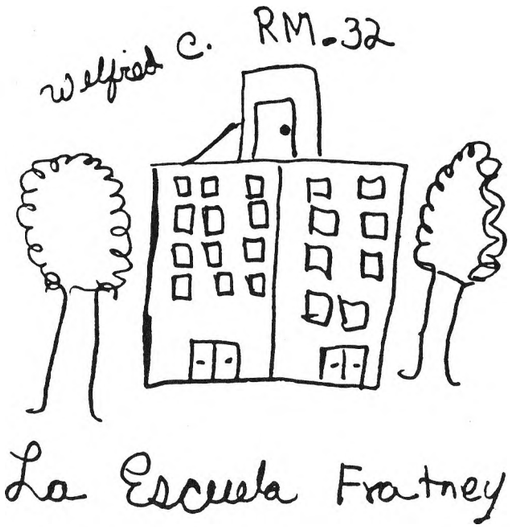
A parent's dream: A decent school that children want to attend, based in an integrated neighborhood, teaching children to be bilingual in Spanish and English, using cooperative and innovative methods, governed by a council of parents and teachers. This was the goal of Neighbors for a New Fratney as 1988 began.

This small, multiracial neighborhood organization was based in one of the few integrated neighborhoods of Milwaukee, wedged between the nearly all black inner city and the more affluent nearly all white east side. In the space of just a few months the group mobilized the immediate community and built city wide support. The objective was to take control of an elementary school in the neighborhood and create for the school both its own educational program and structure of governance. The success of the project took much of the Left in the city by surprise. To understand the reason for the success of this campaign we need to look at the political context in which the organizing took place.

Nationally, the city of Milwaukee and its educational leaders had gained a reputation as an outstanding district: praised for its peaceful court-ordered desegregation and its allegedly effective schools. But with about 150 schools and a total student population of 96,000 (67% of whom are students of color), Milwaukee faces problems similar to those of other large metropolitan districts. In the 1986-87 school year, grade point averages were equivalent to 1.46 ("C" = 2.0) for black high school students and 1.67 for Hispanic students. The completion rate for entering 9th graders hovers at a dismal 46% for blacks, 49% for Hispanics and 62% for whites. And many of those graduating are functionally illiterate.

Education has been a focus of struggle by both African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. Thousands of people were involved in massive anti-school segregation boycotts in 1963 and 1964, walk-outs by

Bob Peterson is a teacher at La Escuela Fratney and Associate Editor of **Rethinking Schools**. *More information about La Escuela Fratney can be obtained by writing to Bob Peterson at La Escuela Fratney, 3255 N. Fratney St., Milwaukee, WI 53212.*



Mexican and Puerto Rican students in 1973 to demand bilingual education, a movement to build new high schools in minority communities, efforts to secure the rights of exceptional children, a movement to institute equitable desegregation after the court order in 1976, a successful campaign to save the new high school in the black community as a neighborhood school, and the recent effort to create an independent school district in the central city.

The latter Mandela-like proposal [referring to the proposal to carve out of Boston's Black community a new city of Mandela—ed.] by members of the African-American community to form a separate school district in the heart of the city made its way through the state assembly but was stopped in the state senate. The demand for an independent school district set a positive political climate for the Fratney effort. One of the main arguments the School Board used against the independent district proposal was that the school system already was responsive to parent involvement. They pointed to their promotion of a "site-based management" approach to governance. Though this commitment was mainly in words, when we put together a proposal to *implement* a site-based managed school, the School Board was in an awkward position to say "no."

The one-hundred-year-old Fratney Street School had at first been slated to be razed. The old staff and student body of Fratney was to move in April of 1988 to a newly built school designed to house a combined population of disabled and able-bodied students. But due to classroom shortage, the administration decided to reopen the old school with new students bussed in from around the city with a new program and staff.

New Educational Model

When a few teachers and parents who live in the Riverwest neighborhood caught wind of the administration's plans, they began meeting to discuss how the soon to be vacated Fratney could become the home of a program which capitalized on the unique features of the neighborhood. As Marty Horning, a Riverwest parent and Milwaukee public school teacher put it, "We started to dream about a school that would provide the highest quality education for all of our children, black, white and Hispanic."

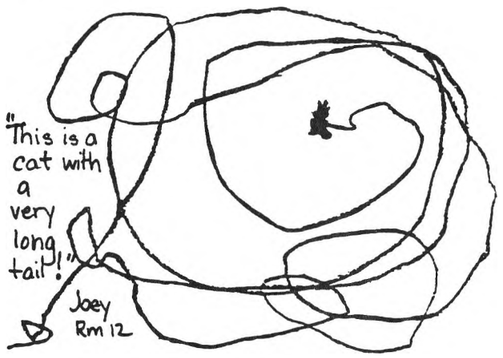
The school administration had other dreams, however, which came to be viewed as nightmares by some of the community activists. The administration wanted to turn the empty building into what they call an Exemplary Teaching Center. The staff at this center was to be comprised of "master teachers" with Masters degrees and at least ten years teaching experience. Their job would have been to work with Milwaukee public school teachers who were having classroom difficulties and were brought in for two and-a-half week long training sessions. Many of the parents questioned whether they wanted their kids taught by a series of bad teachers, and argued that such a center could be established anywhere while the new Fratney proposal could only unfold as envisioned at its present site.

Posters went out on New Years Day 1988 and several community meetings were called. On the night of January 19, seventy-five parents, teachers, and community activists braved sleet and freezing rain to show the School Board's Community Relations and Instruction Committee meeting their support of the proposal. After listening to seventeen people testify in favor of the plan, School Board president David Cullen said, "I appreciate everyone coming out here this evening. I was surprised, with the bad weather. I thought we'd come out and see a near empty auditorium as we usually do. I think it's a tribute to that neighborhood and the people involved in this proposal."

The proposal called for the creation of a kindergarten through 5th grade school that was a two-way bilingual,

multicultural, whole language, site-based managed school. For those of you not familiar with the lingo of educational reform, the **two way bilingual** program is one in which instruction is in both English and Spanish. While each student learns to read first in their mother language, they are also learning a second language. The goal is that by the end of fifth grade the children will be bilingual and biliterate.

Whole language means an emphasis will be placed on using language skills—reading, writing, speaking and listening—as the means to learn and acquire language as well as a way to learn about the real world. This real use will be valued over drills and practice exercises, not only because such use provides integrated practice in phonics, spelling, semantics, etc., but also because it shows children that language is for making meaning, for accomplishing something.



The **multicultural curriculum** stresses the history and culture of several nationalities and ethnic groups. The curriculum is organized around school-wide themes: Our Roots in the Community; Native American Experience; Peace Education and Global Awareness; African-American Experience; Hispanic-American Experience; Asian-American, Pacific Island Experience; We Are a Multicultural Nation. The school plans on drawing on the cultural diversity of the Fratney neighborhood and the city as a whole. The plan called for the school to be explicitly anti-racist and anti-sexist, teaching children that racism is unscientific, unhealthy and something to be fought against.

Cooperative learning and democratic discipline are two other aspects of the curriculum. Children are to be taught and encouraged to cooperate and learn from one another. Discipline is to be conducted in a way that is humane and places responsibility onto the student and class.

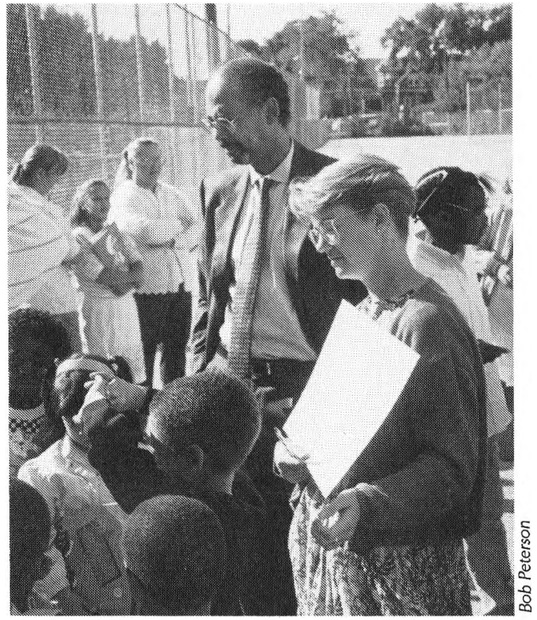
The School Board ordered the central administration to work with the new group, but the administration did what it could to stall, ignore and even sabotage the efforts of the group. For example, in order to deal with the fact that union seniority might permit teachers who were not in agreement with the concept to teach at the school, Neighbors for a New Fratney proposed that all teachers be given a one page explanation of the program when staff openings were announced. The Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association agreed as did lower level administrators, but someone in power decided against it and it was never done.

The community had called for a nation-wide search for a principal. The administration refused, and then proceeded to stall in hiring anyone. Finally, only a month before the school was to open and in opposition to what a parent interview committee had recommended, the administration recommended the appointment of a woman with only suburban experience. This administration candidate was bilingual—but in English and German, not Spanish. The recommendation was seen as a direct affront to the community and once again the community mobilized in opposition to the appointment.

Holding picket signs reading slogans such as "Remember Gallaudet" in reference to a not dissimilar struggle at the College for the Deaf in Washington, DC, dozens of parents came to School Board personnel meetings. Bowing to pressure and publicity, a newly hired Superintendent Robert S. Peterkin from Cambridge, Massachusetts recognized the inanity of the Central Offices action and rejected the recommendation. He hired an interim principal acceptable to the community and promised that a national search would take place in the ensuing year.

On issues of budget, staffing, and renovation, Peterkin played a supportive role, saying to the press that the Fratney project was a "prototype and model" for the schools of the future. The daily press picked up on it and the *Milwaukee Journal* ran an article entitled "Fratney Project: A Glimpse of the Future."

Superintendent Peterkin visited the school on opening day and called the effort a model that he hoped could be duplicated. The school currently has nearly three hundred children, 42% black, 37% Hispanic and 21% other. Nearly 90% of the children at the school


Bob Peterson

Superintendent Peterkin and a Fratney teacher greet students on opening day at the Fratney St. School.

qualify for the federal free lunch program.

Part of the success of the project has been due to the progressive trend in educational circles in Milwaukee centered on an innovative quarterly newspaper called *Rethinking Schools*. Started in the fall of 1986 by a group of progressive teachers and area educators, the newspaper has grown in circulation from 6,000 to 20,000 with 600 paid subscriptions. The newspaper/journal, which is linked to a number of organizing projects, deals with both the theory and practice of educational reform and has had a major impact on several key curriculum policy questions at the local level.

The winning of the school and the continued success of *Rethinking Schools* has raised many more questions for activist educators in Milwaukee. For the school, the first question was what kind of governing structure should be established. After much debate, a council was established with five parents, five teachers, one community representative, the principal and a representative from other school staff. The key issue in the debate was the relative importance of the workers at the school versus the community it serves. Three functioning parent/teacher committees exist: a curriculum committee, an outreach/newsletter committee and a finance committee.

A key issue is how to sustain parental involvement. Another key question is how to train the staff to teach. A final question is how to deal with the children, many of whom have spent years in traditional schools and classrooms, influenced by peers and television. As one of the children put it in a letter to a local peace education center prior to a community visit, "I want you to explain why I should give up my war toys!" Despite our boldest dreams, the realities of society profoundly limit what can be done at a school.

But perhaps the largest dilemma of all, particularly for the organizers, is how to build a progressive, popularly governed, anti-racist institution, while at the same time carrying on the broad city-wide and national organizing that needs to be done. ■

Schools in Milwaukee

Organizing Strategy for Urban Education

by Tony Baez

The following article was the keynote speech at the National Gathering of Educational Activists at Illinois Benedictine College, Lisle, Illinois, July 23, 1988.

I thought I would share with you a couple of stories. One thing we haven't done enough of is share our stories of success: we need to find a mechanism to share what we're doing out there that makes sense. We also need to look critically at what we're doing and expose contradictions so we can apply the lessons to our own circumstances. We need to do a lot more of that, in written form, on an ongoing basis, so it gets all over the place. So, I think that what I should do today is share at least some of my story with you, which is a story of change in a community in the Midwest, in Milwaukee, from a Hispanic perspective.

Whenever I have a forum, anywhere, I try to share that Hispanic context. Because when I look around me (with all due respect for all you progressives) all of you folks are not like me. And it's unfortunate, because more Hispanics should be involved in this, more Blacks should be involved in these kinds of encounters. But for some reason it is not happening yet, perhaps because they're too busy out there dealing with another reality and dealing with other kinds of change that also need to be addressed.

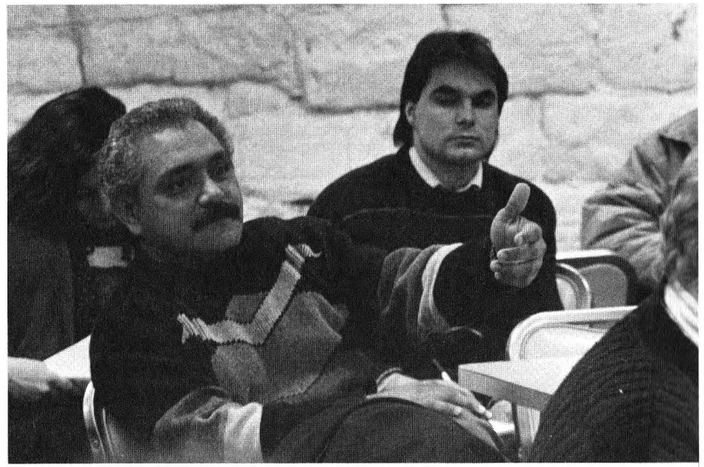
Dealing with the contradictions we find while engaged in urban educational change is a good way to take a look at issues of race, ethnicity, class. Because when we try to connect, in a holistic approach, all the dilemmas we encounter there, the contradictions clearly point to how difficult it really is to accomplish urban educational change within the context of capitalist America.

It doesn't matter how much we do individually with our own little projects, in isolation. Those projects are not going to bring about a substantive transformation of urban America. They're not. They're nice. They make us feel good. And we go around and we talk about how good we feel about what we accomplished in school "x," but we need to break out of our isolation and form a strategy that goes way beyond that.

To do this, you are going to have to sit down across the table from people you don't particularly like but you're going to have to live with. And you're going to have to negotiate with folks whose ideology you may question at times, and maybe you *should* question all the time. Real change will involve much more than just you or me or any individual in isolation with his or her particular world view.

Talking about race, ethnicity, and class, I'm of Puerto Rican descent. I come from the island of Puerto Rico. I grew up there, and I solidified my educational involvement as a student at the University of Puerto Rico. I had to get the hell out of there in 1970, because it got really hot. And those of you who know what was happening at the University of Puerto Rico know it was *very* hot. So my parents bought me a ticket and said: "get the hell out of Puerto Rico!" And they sent me to Chicago!

So there I was—this Puerto Rican trying to figure out how to speak in English, with some university training



Al Stergar

Tony Baez speaks at a community meeting

but basically a country kid. I had had enough trouble in Puerto Rico trying to get urban kids to accept me!

I arrived in Chicago at the very moment of the takeover of People's Church, over by the Armitage and Hofstead area. Cha Cha Jimenez, the leader of the "Lords," was from my neighborhood in Puerto Rico. And here he was—this blond blue-eyed Puerto Rican kid—can you imagine?—taking over this church! And he's speaking Spanish to the media!

That was my first contact with Chicago, three days after I arrived. Walking into the police lines, trying to talk to this guy I hadn't seen in years. And asking: "Do you remember me?"

He looked at me strange, like "What?" And we dealt, and we survived that particular experience, and—all of a sudden, right from Puerto Rico—I ended up involved with the Young Lords. Then when things got hot with the Young Lords, somebody said, "Get to Milwaukee—it's safer." So I went to Milwaukee, which was not all that safe!

In my early years in Milwaukee, 1971 to about 1976, we spent a lot of time addressing public schools in the Hispanic community. When you're an activist—you know—wherever you go, you find an issue. It doesn't matter what; you get into it.

In Milwaukee, the issue for Hispanics was student suspensions. All of a sudden I was going down and talking to kids, getting them to march out of their schools. We got to a point where we could actually go and tell school administration people: "Tomorrow morning at 10:30 in the morning, in five high schools, students will walk out." And they would look at us: "No, you can't do that!" And we said: "Yeah, we can!"

Next day we had a group of parents in each school, and busses to pick them up and take them out to a park where we threw a party for the kids and told them: "You're going to learn more here today than you're learning inside that school."

We spent several years doing that. Creating alternative schools, negotiating for certain kinds of school reforms such as bilingual education. I recall locking ourselves up with school administration and board members for two or three nights, negotiating on a program, and saying, "No, we don't want *transitional* bilingual education, we want a *maintenance* bilingualism program," and actually getting that from the "system."

Then we moved on to the next task—school desegregation. It's 1976, and Milwaukee is in the headlines because it was ordered by the federal courts to desegregate its schools. And Hispanics are concerned about what it means and how we should address it.

Now, I'm not doing this alone. There's a whole mess of people involved in these kinds of processes. Like in your communities, I would assume, we too dealt with all kinds of contradictions, the dilemma of ethnic group contradictions.

Because I am of Puerto Rican descent in a predominantly Hispanic community where the largest group is Mexican-Americans, this creates hassles. It is not that easy. Because we come from different historical per-

spectives, we have different experiences. At times, Mexican leadership would look at me and say: "What's your agenda?" Everyone in our communities wants to know what your agenda is and where you are coming from. When you're dealing with ethnic politics, that happens a lot.

You cannot implement a real, significant transformation of our educational institutions without continuously having to address...issues of race, class and gender.

Being of Puerto Rican descent is interesting, because you come from a culture that has a Black experience. But when you try to negotiate with people of Mexican descent—who didn't have a Black experience per se—and you try to get them to connect to the reality and actions of Black folks in some of our urban centers—at times its not easy. because there is not that commonality of experience.

Even among Puerto Ricans it's not that cool. Many Puerto Ricans still come to this country, hoping that because of their lighter skin they will be identified with the "good guys." Because it's not too cool to be Black in America. Hispanics need to deal with those kinds of dilemmas all the time.

When desegregation began in Milwaukee, after three or four years of struggle for a quality bilingual program, for many Hispanics the big issue was: "Oh, gosh, look what Black folks are doing to us!" "Look what's going to happen now: they will disperse our kids all over the place and our bilingual programs will go!"

When we met with Black leadership, there was some legitimacy to what Hispanics were saying, because Blacks didn't quite understand bilingual education. They could not accept the notion that we needed some clustering of our kids.

Attorneys for the N.A.A.C.P. actually objected to our trying to legally intervene in the Milwaukee desegregation case. They insisted that it was their issue and not ours and that we had to find another way to deal with our bilingual concerns. Eventually we negotiated it out, but it took several years to develop relationships of trust. It took a long time for Blacks to understand what we were talking about in terms of bilingual education and for Hispanics to understand what desegregation was all about.

These are very difficult moments in any urban and racially-mixed community. Depending on how we relate, you either build coalitions or you destroy relationships. We went and continue to go through this in Milwaukee.

After much involvement and some successes with community groups, organizing parents and students, I began travelling around the country as a "desegregation and bilingual education technician." Remember the desegregation centers that were created by the Department of Education? We were funded under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act. I went all over the place, working with people trying to develop desegregation plans and bilingual plans.

South Division on the Map

After doing all of that, I went back, focused again on Milwaukee, and spent more time looking at very specific projects, so that we could begin to have some meaningful impact on our urban agenda. That's why, together with a local group of educational activists, I took on the task of dealing with South Division High School in Milwaukee.

South Division has 2300 kids and is comprised, basically, of three populations. It's about one third Hispanic, one third Black, and one third white. And they have some Native Americans and Asian students.

It was one of these schools that had terrible discipline problems, with youth gangs emerging all over the place. They brought in a principal who cleaned up the place, who straightened the whole thing out, and gave the school a spirit of success. Kids began to believe they would succeed. They became tops in sports, and South Division was again on the map.

Yet South Division was also on the map when we looked at test scores and other performance measures. It had the worst record in terms of S.A.T. scores in the whole state. It had one of the worst records in terms of achievement on standardized tests. It had the worst record in terms of the G.P.A.'s [Grade Point Averages-ed] of minority students, and whites were not doing that well either. The average G.P.A. in that school in 1985-86 was 1.6 [on a four point scale]; for Hispanics, 1.4; and for Black children, 1.3. When we disaggregated the data, we found worse stories, such as average G.P.A.'s for Black students in math, 0.80. Average G.P.A. for Hispanic students in science was 0.92 and so on.

Surprises you? But keep this in mind: one of the important things we've done in Milwaukee is develop a wealth of data. In many urban centers we *know* there are problems, but we don't have enough data to make appropriate analyses and comparisons. I suggest to you that for any one of your major urban centers, if you will do the kind of data analysis we have done (and more than likely somebody has done the groundwork already; it's a matter of accessing the information), you would be amazed!

We found of fifteen high schools in the city, only *two* had average G.P.A.'s above 2.0. And when we looked closer at the data in terms of drop outs and everything else, it's a disaster! And this is in a state that has a progressive history of school performance.

In the South Division case, we went to the school administration. We negotiated with them on a number of issues, and we didn't get anywhere. We negotiated for about two years, initiated more studies, accumulated a wealth of data. But no action!

The people there thought the school was doing fine: "We have peace in the school. Walk the hallways! Really! It's clean. And the principal works really hard. He's there at six o'clock in the morning and leaves at seven o'clock at night. It's definitely a good school." And we said: "No it's not, because look at the outcomes. Less than 15 per cent of the graduates go anywhere after they graduate. The *graduates*! Those are the ones that make it. And less than 49 per cent of the ninth graders make it to the 12th grade."

We began to raise these issues; we put it together in an article in a local community newspaper, in *Spanish*. Overnight, badly written, just to lay out the facts. The school went bananas. They went bananas because the people who were raising these concerns had acquired some sense of credibility in the political community. "*Tony* wrote that? Oh gosh, what's next?"

The school administration translated the article into English. They mistranslated it, purposely, to suggest to the teachers and the students that I was bad mouthing the school. They said to the students: "Look what this guy is doing to your good school! Don't you feel good about this school?" "Yes, we feel good about our school." "Look what he's saying about you, that you're all failures. That you can't get anywhere."

To the teachers, the administration suggested: "He thinks you should all be fired." And do you know how those teachers felt? They believed it. That I was saying they should all be fired, that the principal should.

This administration response created a lot of conflict and dissension. After spending years working with parents in the local community, even the parents I had worked with were being turned against me. Suddenly I was a political animal that was trying to destroy this school that was now a clean and neat school.

Then a rumor went around that if you were to look at the leadership involved in the South Division issue, they're mostly Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. That we hadn't involved Blacks. And that what we were proposing would displace Blacks from this school. That was the claim.

School and Community

You see the contradictions there? Those of us who think we have empowered people? Most of the time we don't empower anybody. Let's not fool ourselves. We manipulate people all over the place. That's part of the sadness of this all. That after years of working with parents, I realized that what I had done was manipulate people to work with me on issues that I cared about. But that, in fact, the critical skills of empowerment still weren't there for those parent leaders and those students.

We have to realize it's not so simple as saying that because we have been involved in neat projects, we have empowered people. Empowerment really has to come from them. And they have to develop that critical ability to look through and read through the crap. And that had not happened. I learned that with the South Division experience.

It's taken us a while, using the political status we had achieved in the community to pressure the school board and the school administration and other leadership in town, to support a plan to transform that school. We're still in the process of winning over the parents and students again after they were turned against us.

Can you imagine: teachers and administrators put together a pep rally of 300 to 400 students chanting, "Kill Baez, kill Baez!"

I actually arrived in Milwaukee one day at the airport and called home, and my son said, "Do you know what's happening at South Division? They have a rally going on—against you."

I say, "What?" I get over to the school, walk in, and there's a pep rally going on, and I say: "What the heck

did I do this time?" I had to spend about an hour and a half with the students, talking with them, and saying: "This is not what I was trying to do. But I have some suggestions. Let's talk about them."

After we talked for a while, they challenged me. Students were saying, "Okay, I think we understand where you guys out there in the community are coming from." It had become community versus school, because the principal and teachers were so successful at persuading students and parents that the community guys were the enemies, that "all those people want is political power."

We have to realize it's not so simple as saying that because we have been involved in neat projects, we have empowered people. Empowerment really has to come from them.

We eventually worked out some understanding with the students and teachers. We spent time with them, negotiating with some of the students, meeting with them and actually suggesting: "Look, we're going to give you something. We're going to work with you for the next few years developing a plan to transform this school."

Our vision is to create a school in the community which is fully integrated and engaged in substantive, quality kinds of things. Where we come from there's a university as well as the public schools and the community college system. We've got staff from all of those institutions to work together with students and parents, and we've actually gotten a grant from the school board to develop a plan to transform that school and make it into a "school of the 21st century."

One of the things that has to happen there first is to throw the curriculum out the window. We're trying to get experimentation status from the state, so that we can experiment with curriculum, rewrite what's there, and actually engage students, parents, and community in that.

But what we're realizing in Milwaukee is that working with the public schools is not enough. We have to go out to the other power institutions in the area to achieve substantive educational reform.

So some of us, for instance, have been dealing with the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Which, by the way, is an amazing example of how retrogressive a major urban education institution can be. Its School of Education last year graduated one minority teacher! You may think this is odd, but it's the same all over the country. Schools of education are generally a disaster. We have people working in those places training people to teach, who have never taught themselves, or certainly have never been good teachers themselves. I don't know how the hell they do that!

Leadership from the Community Colleges

We are also working with the local community and technical college, because if we want to develop a sound strategy for education in urban America we cannot do it in isolation. We need to build broad-based strategies and plans that encompass the whole continuum in which education exists, taking into account the reality of the labor market and what jobs are all about right now.

I had been at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and when I decided I needed to get out of that place, I was invited to join the staff of the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). As an educational activist, I didn't think much of two-year institutions. But the fact is four-year institutions are not the ones training people for the job market. And have not been training people for the job market for a long, long time. And do not provide education and job training opportunities for the broad majority of people that need it, that is, the 75 per cent that don't make it to those four-year institutions.

One of the things I have found is that there are a lot more progressive people working in the community colleges, with closer contacts into working class communities, than you have in four-year institutions. We need to bring these people together and do something together with them. After spending about a year and a half doing a study on access and retention in the college, I realized that there was a lot of potential there. With others, we began to work to also transform MATC.

One of the issues we've begun to talk about is that it makes no sense to talk about empowerment in the abstract. We've got to deal with developing the economic base, the infrastructures that are going to empower the people that we want to see in power. Hungry people do not have power. And people who are the victims of all kinds of social pathologies do not have power.

It doesn't make any sense to me to continue to talk about how we deal with the education of minorities in isolation from how we are going to create jobs for minorities, in isolation from how are we going to utilize the resources accessible to us. We need to bring together strategies, generate ideas and discussion about jobs and economic opportunity and the revitalization of poor neighborhoods. It doesn't make any sense if we don't do that. I guess what we found in the Milwaukee case is that we needed to do a lot more of that.

The Milwaukee Area Technical College is not small. There are about 70,000 students who, yearly, take courses there. It is the largest technical college and perhaps the second largest community college in the country. About 32 per cent of its students are minority, and in the Milwaukee campus alone, there's 42 per cent minority. That's where we found our minorities, our disadvantaged population. Where 70 per cent of the student enrollment is on financial aid. And where 82 per cent of the students are part time, because they need to work, because they need to survive. That's the type of folks I wanted to work with, I wanted to have an opportunity to exchange ideas with.

It doesn't make any sense to me to continue to talk about how we deal with the education of minorities in isolation from how we are going to create jobs for minorities...

In the last year or so, after a lot of debate, we finally began to engage in a process of totally transforming our system for providing basic skills education. We have adopted a plan to empower students with the type of skills they need to be self-directed, take on their lives, move on, and work on the transformation of their communities.

We've been able to do things like significantly increase the participation of the faculty and staff in community activity for social change. Over 70 per cent of the people working in the college today are involved in community activity, on a day-to-day basis, on boards and committees, etc.

We've been trying to bring a philosophical understanding of where we're going as a college. We talk about working in and connecting to the economic life of that community, working to create jobs, and working with others to create jobs. At the same time, we are trying to empower students to do more of that. Actually connecting students into lobbying mechanisms, struggles at the legislative level, and all of that kind of stuff. And in fact, it's been working!

It's been interesting, the transformation that is taking place. I wrote a position paper on where we were going with all of this, and—to my surprise—the president of the college required everybody in the institution to attend a number of sessions to participate in philosophical discussions about where we were going. Everybody—from custodians to faculty—has to attend these sessions and negotiate and discuss and debate where the college is going. Now we're moving into the stage of saying: "If we are achieving this type of a transformation in this two-year institution, then we have to become the center of activity in the area of urban educational reform." Now we're able to reach out to the public schools. Now we're able to reach out to the University and engage our faculty and our staff in working towards offsetting the conditions of failure in the public schools. The attitude, right now, is that we can do that.

Faculty Empowerment

One quick remark about the implementation of all of this. When we looked around us, only ten per cent of our faculty was minority. We realized we had to do something quickly to change that. We had to deal with affirmative action.

In the last year, through the initiative of the president of the college and some of the staff, we made some changes. We don't have any white males as academic deans of that institution any more. It's amazing. We have six academic deans: three are females, and three are Hispanic. Now we're trying to retain a Black dean, because the one we had left.

But when we started to deal with questions of faculty empowerment, we realized that in institutions where progressive things are happening, white progressives want to be so much a part of it that they have great difficulty accepting affirmative action. Now I'm being grieved by white progressives because they didn't get the jobs because Tony Baez is hiring minorities. "How dare he, when I am more progressive and more prepared?"

It's part of the dilemma of race, class, and gender again. You cannot implement a real, significant transformation of our educational institutions without continu-

ously having to address the dilemma of how to relate to issues of race, class and gender. And in fact, those white progressives who surround us have a hard time accepting that they may not be "it" in those systems and in those processes, when it gets to the point of the jobs and opportunities.

I know these issues are very sensitive and very hard, but I hope you have a chance to think about them. Part of what progressive educators have to do is take a close look at themselves when they work in urban communities and when they work with minorities and realize that we have not had the opportunities as a group that you have had to be progressives, to think and deal with all kinds of other profound philosophical questions.

We've been in the trenches for a long time. And it's very rough. And because we have not had those opportunities, our pool of people equipped to go out and be the implementors of a lot of our agendas is limited. And if we do not prepare that population of minorities to be able to implement those agendas, we will continue be victims of the contradiction of the *other* group defining for us. We can't afford that in urban America any more. And it's going to be rough, it's going to be painful, and you have to learn how to live with that.

I don't have any more time. I could go on forever. I want to thank you for being patient with me. I hope I said some things that made sense. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity.

Tony Baez is a longtime community and educational activist in Milwaukee. He was Minister of Education in the Young Lords, worked for bilingual education during the implementation of desegregation, and is currently Dean of General Education at the Milwaukee Area Technical College.

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So, You Want To Help an Adult Learn To Read

You've just watched Dennis Weaver act the role of an illiterate working man in *Bluffing It*. Or you've read Jonathan Kozol's *Illiterate America*, which claims that one out of three Americans can't read that very same book. Maybe you've heard PLUS (Project Literacy U.S.) ads on your favorite PBS station. The bus you take to work is papered with signs saying "Help Another Adult Learn To Read." And there's always a number to call.

Adults who volunteer as literacy tutors report that one or several of the media messages above finally persuade them to call a literacy program. Here's what might happen if you make that call to a California Literacy Campaign office in the San Francisco Bay Area.

You would agree to attend training sessions totalling approximately 12 hours, and to commit yourself to tutoring another adult twice weekly (1-1/2 hours a session). We ask for at least six months' commitment since it's often difficult for the tutors and learners to see measurable progress in a shorter time.

Literate adults need to make inferences, to draw conclusions and to critique what they read.

At this point, I enter the picture as the tutor trainer who will guide you and 20 to 45 others through the 12 hours of preparation. The first orientation session sets the tone for the rest of training. Prospective tutors introduce themselves to one another and to staff. They explain briefly what moved them to volunteer. Many love to read and can't imagine others who don't or can't. Others see the need to give something back to a community that has been generous to them. Some talk about the illiteracy of a family member or a friend. Still others see the political implications—the power of reading in this society.

I ask them to consider, on this first night together, a range of reasons for illiteracy and then to focus on the possible strengths of the adult learners who join our programs.

In small groups, we discuss skills or ideas we've tried to grasp as adults. What helped us? The positive feedback? The repetition? The relevance of the material? What hindered us? Fear? Time problems? Jargon? Impersonal teaching? Perhaps these insights will be valuable as we begin our tutoring.

I make clear that our program is based on a partnership model and not what Brazilian educator Paulo Freire calls the "banking idea of education." Freire criticizes the educational process which simply deposits information into the students' "bank" and is satisfied when student can learn and repeat this without questioning. Rather I stress the importance of the tutor-student relationship, of sharing interests, skills, and needs, and suggest that tutors will learn at least as much as tutees.

The next phase of training introduces a proposed four-part lesson plan which we describe, discuss, and practice together.

Language experience, the use of students' spoken words taken as dictation by the tutor, is a potent way to show the relationship between the spoken and the written word. Students' language experiences have taken forms as profound as Vietnam War or Depression experiences, or "What's the first thing you'd do as president?," and as commonplace as responding to the question "How do you make that spaghetti sauce?" In all cases, the words, unedited, are theirs.

Next, I talk about our language, fascinating from a historical perspective, but frustrating from any rational view and particularly so for our students, whose hard-won victories over such problems as plurals are crushed

when applying the rule. For instance, use: tooth—teeth, booth—????; louse—lice, blouse—????

The comedian Gallagher does this better than I, but the point is clear. So we work on the parts of the language that are consistent and help the student see patterns that exist, words that rhyme and are spelled the same. In any given tutoring session, the tutor points out a common pattern cluster in students' material and a few minutes are spent developing that pattern. At—bat—chat; up—cup—pup; would—should—could. The learner is asked to add to the pattern as he/she meets new words.

Mastering the mechanical components of reading (not unlike repairing a bicycle) requires a degree of serenity and an even greater degree of humor. Just suppose your student applied his/her new letter by letter phonics knowledge to words like "would," "though," "yacht"!

The California Literacy Campaign provides textbooks to our tutors and students. The texts guarantee that what is structured and sequential in the mechanical process is presented in that fashion. (We use texts from the New Reader's Press Laubach and Challenger series.) I challenge the tutors to apply text-taught skills to students' lives and to the real world after each lesson.

Say the one thing your student learned from the text today was the look and sound and name of the letter **b**. Let's also say that this student's goal is to pass the written driver's test. The tutor might have the student look for two words starting with **b** in the driver's book, and then ask the student to think of words he or she knows starting with the *sound* of **b**. Think of family names, foods you like, places you know, always drawing on the learner's knowledge and experiences, helping the learner be an active participant rather than a recipient of information.

Finally, and probably most important, I introduce the idea of goal-directed learning and ask that part of every tutoring session be spent on the learner's goals, broken down of course into small, manageable steps.

In one session the learner in need of a driver's license might work on words on traffic signs, learning them as sight words (by memory). At another time tutor and student might work on the application form. In between, the tutor might read from the driver's manual to the student, encouraging the student to join in when able.

The student might collect tests taken by others to use as practice. And tutors might examine supplementary reading material written expressly for adult learners. There are, in fact, several on driving and licensing written at lower reading levels. Trainees are given hypothetical students and asked to suggest a variety of approaches to student goals. This area of the lesson plan allows for creativity from both tutor and learner.

During my final session as tutor-trainer with "not quite ready for prime-time tutors," I suggest that reading comprehension needs to be more than a literal "who, what, when, where, etc." Literate adults need to make inferences, to draw conclusions and to critique what they read. Even a piece of junk mail addressed to your student can be examined critically. Who probably wrote this? Why? Which words are loaded? Is there fine print somewhere? Did you actually win the $1,000,000?

Poetry, particularly of the "workplace genre" (Tom Wayman's "Going for Coffee," Jim Daniel's "Changes," Sue Doro's "Heart, Home & Hard Hats"), and song lyrics have a place in the tutoring process. They are generally word-efficient and thought provoking. We read a poem together during this last session and draw out the various uses, not the least of which might be tutors and students writing their own poetry.

When possible, the program staff invite a working tutor and learner to visit and discuss their initial fears and their current progress. The staff explain that matchmaking is the next step in the process.

Potential students have already been interviewed and assessed by project staff and these learners know they will have a volunteer tutor who is often as apprehensive as they are. Once a match is made, the tutor contacts the student. They agree on location and time of their sessions, and the work begins. Tutors send in monthly reports and six month evaluations made with the learner's participation.

Project staff conduct monthly in-service workshops for tutors, a student support group for learners and a variety of events for all. Recent events have included discussions on the First Amendment, US-Soviet relations, and elections; a "Celebration of Literacy" dinner at which learners read to 350 guests from their recently published book of writings, "The Dreams in Our Book"; and a "Literacy in the Workplace" breakfast to involve local business, industry, and unions in literacy awareness.

This particular project is one of 70 supported by state library funds which will soon need to be matched by local funding. Is this a solution to *the* literacy problem? No, just one of many approaches.

—by Joan Sheldon-Conan

Booker T. Washington and William J. Edwards

The Industrial Education Movement In the Southern Black Belt

by Donald Stone

The following are excerpts from **Fallen Prince: William James Edwards, Black Education and the Quest for Afro-American Nationality**. *Donald Stone's book is a historical analysis of the life of W.J. Edwards and of the period of Booker T. Washington's ascendancy in Afro-American history. Edwards graduated from Tuskegee in 1893 and founded the Snow Hill Institute that same year in his rural Alabama hometown.* **Fallen Prince** *will be available in early 1989.*

On October 7, 1901, the school opened with its highest attendance ever. For the first time the enrollment reached 400 and was almost equally divided among boys and girls. Nevertheless there remained thousands of Afro-American youth who were not touched by schooling in any way. In Wilcox County alone, there was a school-age population of 11,623 and at best only a little over 1,000 had the opportunity for any kind of real education. Including Wilcox, Dallas, Lowndes, Monroe, Butler, Marengo, Clarke and Perry Counties, there was a Black school-age population of 85,499. Where there were public schools, the teachers were generally incompetent and barely literate. The people were ignorant and superstitious, easy prey for the landlords and merchants who continually robbed them of their farm products and their labor. "Now what can be expected of any people in such a condition?," asked Edwards. "Can the blind lead the blind? They could not in the days of old, and it is not likely that they can now."

These conditions—the rule for Afro-Americans throughout the Southern Black Belt—were the driving force behind the mission of the industrial schools: uplift the submerged masses; shine a light in the Black Belt; lengthen the school term; make education practical; make agriculture and its attendant occupations the economic basis for the race's rise.

Donald Stone is a writer and political activist living in Snow Hill, Alabama.

Booker T. Washington

Edwards agitated for public schools wherever he went. But until the state and counties assumed their responsibilities, the Snow Hill Institute directed its students and graduates into the rural districts to build schools and lengthen the school term wherever they saw the possibility. The Institute was organized to carry out this mission. Its teachers were passionately committed to the aims and objectives set out for them at Tuskegee by their Principal Booker T. Washington, and those who had not attended Tuskegee were just as thoroughly drilled in their mission by Edwards and the other teachers at Snow Hill.

■■■

There was an interesting feature to the educational policy of Snow Hill Institute. Though the industrial plank was the key aspect to the educational process—that element which, if grasped, would accelerate the whole development of Afro-American existence—this was handled with great democracy. Though all students had to work (or, as the Catalogue put it, "All students must labor"), there was no requirement that each student must take a trade. That was the option of each student. One could take courses entirely in the Academic Department, if one so desired. The advanced students, however, took this educational opportunity to become fully competent in both departments. With this broad education, they set out to found schools and lengthen school terms. Since there were tens of thousands of their sisters and brothers who were ignorant, superstitious and illiterate, the most conscious of the students applied themselves to this social cul-de-sac. Others became teachers, and still others became proficient in their respective trades, taking their place in the developing Afro-American economic panorama as farmers, carpenters, brick-masons, timber inspectors, seamstresses, domestic science workers, printers, cooks, blacksmiths, steamfitters, and yes, poets and musicians.

* * *

An axis of industrialists and philanthropists attempted to put its stamp upon Afro-American education. Their motives were likely a mixture of genuine concern for human advancement and economic self-interest. It was easy to see the work record of the Afro-American masses. The slavocracy rose on the backs of the bonded people, who had labored for centuries without compensation. Now plans were effected to get the cheapest form of labor from the freedmen to drive the industrial and communications network that was in formation as capitalism leaped towards its monopoly stage.

On the other hand, there was probably a desire to make some democratic liberties available to the former bondspeople short of full social and political equality. This included the right to some level of education, which the Afro-Americans in their thousands and hundreds of thousands were not receiving. Ironically the interests of the capitalists and Afro-American masses (mainly peasants) coincided for a historical moment. It was this coincidence that allowed Washington mainly but also Edwards to exploit the contradiction that existed between the Northern industrialists and Southern agrarians for educational purposes.

This axis of powerful men and organizations included John D. Rockefeller, whose philanthropy provided the initial effort to form the General Education Board. Over a seven-year period, he gave $54,000,000 to the Board. Another important contributor to this Board was Anna T. Jeanes, a wealthy Quaker. Other industrial philanthropists were Robert C. Ogden, Andrew Carnegie and William H. Baldwin, Jr. Along with the Phelps Stokes Fund, the George Foster Peabody Fund and the John F. Slater Fund, these men and foundations controlled the purse that was, in the main, funding the industrial education efforts by Afro-Americans. All of these interests were tied by a thousand threads to Tuskegee Institute and Booker T. Washington. Baldwin, Ogden, Peabody and Anson Phelps-Stokes were members of Tuskegee's Committee on Investment of Endowment Fund. (Herbert Aptheker, *Afro-American History: The Modern Era*, New York: The Citadel Press, 1971, p.120.) This was a fund of $2,000,000 and was surely invested in the business interests of the capitalists who sat on its board.

While the purposes of the capitalists such as Baldwin, Ogden, Carnegie, and Rockefeller were in getting the rural, Afro-American peasants enough education to fit them for the factories, the purposes of Washington and Edwards were quite different. Industrial education was the key to the rise of the race. Embodied in it was the economic factor, which took precedence over politics. Since Blacks were in the rural districts and had been agricultural workers all their lives, a materialist analysis insisted upon a program emphasizing these factors. The key element within industrial education was therefore agriculture. And under the guise of industrial education, land was being acquired.

Instead of urging their cadre and students to migrate to the urban centers... Washington and Edwards urged Afro-Americans to remain in the rural areas where they would find their economic and political salvation.

Instead of urging their cadre and students to migrate to the urban centers where the industrial engine demanded their labor power, Washington and Edwards urged Afro-Americans to remain in the rural areas where they would find their economic and political salvation. Exhorted Edwards, "Too many of our young men and women have no vision as to the future. They want to go through school and run off to Chicago, Detroit, New York and other large cities and do mere work that any ordinary man can do. We are not educating you for that. But here in the South a great work is before us and the vast majority of our people are here." (Principal's Sunday Evening Talk: "Sowing and Reaping," 1/23/21.) Agriculture required extensive land holdings of which they had very little. Washington asked for "your surplus land" in his Atlanta Exposition Speech. There was land everywhere in the Black Belt South that lay fallow but which under the cultivation of the former bondspeople could be made to blossom. There was a profound strategy in the advice that Edwards and Washington were giving their fellow Afro-Americans.

Washington had called Blacks "a nation within a nation." The nation—if it was to exist—needed land as well as a method of obtaining justice, freedom and liberation. These were to be accomplished under the rubric of industrial education. First the economic struggle had to be pursued in a vigorous manner, and land acquisition was an active program. The doors to the political arena had been shut since Reconstruction's end. Social equality was not even a discussion among the majority of the Afro-American peasants. The orientation of the masses of Afro-Americans was therefore directed towards industrial education and agriculture as the economic basis for a developing independent and self-reliant existence. Political and social struggles and the movement for advanced democracy would come based upon a ripening of subjective factors, and when it arrived this movement would be buttressed and anchored by a firm economic foundation.

This was the program for advancement proposed by Washington, Edwards and others. It was issued at a time when the Afro-American masses were suffering a brutal and fascist-like oppression. If some degree of progress could be made even under the conditions of segregation, Jim Crow and racist reaction, then when these conditions no longer obtained, the spiraling development of Afro-Americans would accelerate.

The relationship of Washington to the industrialists was not unlike that of the fox and the rabbit. Shadows. Masks. Veils. These two sectors of the American population courted each other ardently: the industrialists, with their dreams of a never-ending source of cheap and docile labor, and the Washingtonians, with their ideas and dreams of economic independence and a self-reliant existence in the Black Belt South.

Washington and Edwards held that the economic factor was the one which, if grasped, would push forward all aspects of Afro-American society. Having adequate shelter, proper clothing, and nutritious food would help raise the social life of the community. If Blacks could acquire land, they would be able to control their economic destiny. Political development and the general struggle for democracy would move along when the objective and subjective factors had reached higher levels. The rise of the race would then depend upon how well Afro-American leadership oriented the Movement. The fundamental issue was internal to the Movement, and its fate therefore lay not with the racist white society but with Afro-Americans themselves. Edwards at least saw this as a struggle involving the

masses of American people. These points were hammered home in the writings, speeches and teachings of these men.

Their strategies and tactics were based on the masses of Afro-Americans, upon those great numbers of Afro-American peasants in the broad expanse of the Black Belt stretching scythe-like across the Southeast, South and Southwest. There were two contrasting viewpoints in the Afro-American movement. One, advanced by Washington, Edwards and others, emphasized the realities of the rural peasantry. The other, proposed by DuBois, Trotter and others of the Niagara Movement, focused on the intellectual training of the "talented tenth." The insistence of Washington and Edwards on a strategic approach to uplift the ninety per cent showed them to be thoroughgoing materialists.

Even theologically, Washington and particularly Edwards showed a sense of dialectical materialism. They held that the religion of the Afro-American must address itself to the materiality of the parishioners. Praying, singing and preaching were not enough. Works were necessary. Deeds had to be done by the Black man's religion and churches. Edwards further held that more important theologically than Jesus' resurrection and celestial exaltation was his life here on earth: the manger in Bethlehem, his carpenter's bench, his work among the masses and the burden of Calvary's cross—these were the true meaning of Christ's life. Thus Washington and Edwards were able to unite the spirituality of the Afro-Americans with their material existence, constructing a progressive and liberating theology.

Were these men then Marxists? Certainly not; they had not discerned class struggle as the motive force of society. But over 90% of Afro-Americans were of the peasantry, and as Marx himself said, "Mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem itself rises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation." The conditions of Afro-American life in this period did not conform to a proletarian reality. The solution to the problems of Blacks lay in basing any analysis on their peasant status. Washington and Edwards had discovered that such solutions did not lend themselves to idealism and mysticism. Thus they were forced, as it were, to consider the forward march of the race from the standpoint of the concrete world, from what actually confronted them.

The massive migrations that were to convert the Afro-American into the backbone of the American proletariat had yet to occur, and in the face of capitalism's development into its monopoly stage Washington and Edwards encouraged Blacks to remain in the rural districts. As it turned out, their exhortations fell on deaf ears. With the onslaught of Northern capital's labor needs on the one hand, and the eventual dominance within the Afro-American Liberation Movement of the "Talented Tenth" perspective on the other, the Tuskegee Program was finally vanquished.

During the Tuskegee Program's ascendancy, however, the application of its principles to the struggle of Afro-Americans yielded exciting results. The peasantry became a landed class, and a program of economic self-reliance was in the process of development. These events occurred in what American historiography calls "a dark period" or the "nadir." Despite the brutal oppression expressed most obscenely in lynchings, Afro-Americans nevertheless managed to acquire and hold almost $500,000,000 worth of farm property.

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"In the unceasing struggle for profit, man has made profit the end rather than the means to the end. The changing of this state of things is the duty of the schools. To make over our educational system and to conform with the social purpose cannot be accomplished in a day or a year. It will take time to bring such a change about, but it is worth the while for us to begin this arduous task now. The teacher's soul must be saturated with this philosophic idea. Such a teacher can do much in the way of transmitting this idea to the student and to his people. He may do anything which makes for the health of the body; anything which means wholesome food and drink. He can promote the highest welfare of the individual and of the community as well." (W.J. Edwards, from a speech entitled "The Function of Our Schools.")

Fortified by such philosophical views and under the leadership of William James Edwards, Snow Hill Institute became a school of unsurpassed excellence, the most important social force for Afro-Americans in that region, the state and perhaps the South in general. Its cadre, as it were, went forth from Snow Hill armed with the view of themselves as liberators. They planted themselves in these rural and depressed districts; they lengthened the term of the three-month school; they built schools where there were none; they raised the economic life of these communities; they acquired land. They were a leavening agent raising the race. ■

■■■■■■■■ *Call for 1989 National Conference* ■■■■■■■■

Reconstructing Our Schools: Organizing for Justice and Democracy

August 4-7, 1989 - Cincinnati, Ohio

Educational activists from around the country will gather this summer to talk about organizing, teaching and education. The conference is for teachers, parents, community organizers, administrators, teacher educators, union activists, public officials and student activists.

Last summer in Lisle, Illinois, sixty-five activists from fourteen states spent three days discussing a variety of educational issues. (Tony Baez' keynote speech to the conference is reprinted here.) The conference focused on organizing, particularly the contradictions between oppressed nationality communities and the progressive movements for educational reform, which are often-times white-dominated.

At a November meeting in New York City, two dozen activists from across the country planned a 1989 National Educational Activists' Conference. The conference will focus on both teaching and organizing. The teaching workshops will focus on the use of critical pedagogy, the educational method based on work of Brazilian Paulo Freire which encourages dialogue, critical reflection and action. The organizing workshops will concentrate on organizing within the teacher unions and within the oppressed communities. The conference will be conducted in workshop fashion, encouraging debate and reflection by all participants. Workshops will include Whole Language Teaching, Labor Studies in High School, Setting Up New Schools, Democratic Discipline, School-Based Management Councils, Organizing Democratic Unions, Parental and Community Organizing, Developing Gender-Equitable Classroom Practices, Teaching and Organizing Against Racism, Politics of Educational Reform, Building a Rainbow Coalition for Educators, Resisting the Right-Wing Educational Agenda.

For more information, contact Phil Nash (718) 575-4319, Haven Henderson (212) 860-8935, Bob Peterson (414) 265-6217, Maria Sweeny (201) 329-6822, Christina Brinkley-Carter (215) 877-8987, Harold Berlak (415) 530-7592, Mike Charney (216) 451-7104 or write Dr. Roy Silver, Dept. of Sociology, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky 41076.

Palestine Perspectives

The Final Friday of Ramadan in the First Year of the Intifada, Jerusalem

by Hady Alex Amr

Four thousand soldiers are in the old city—4000 machine guns, 4000 loaded clips with twenty live bullets in each of these guns. They are here to fight a "non-existent resistance" from these stone streets, from the flat roofs of the houses and from everywhere else you can't see.

"You have just witnessed the last whimper of the uprising," the military commander laughs out through his riot gear. "In a few weeks the world will ask, *what uprising?*"

The word is that the streets are too empty, that there is *such* a restraint on travel, that it is too much quieter than this past winter—everyone is anticipating.

Small children carry plastic guns instead of other toys. While other Arab children dream of playing on their national soccer teams, these children, confused, not yet knowing, responding to what they see, take their cues from soldiers.

A military helicopter circles the Great Mosque and the thousands of worshippers within its open yard. Imagine trying to find some sort of communion through the overbearing rumble, through the hurled tear-gas cannisters, through the gaze of soldiers who will beat you, who *always* hold guns, who scrutinize your bending gestures to God from the walls of your shrine.

Policemen drag one man out a side entrance, past the Wailing Wall and into a cluster of military and police vehicles, an encampment for this battle ground. Like much of the land of Palestine, this large, open area has a history of struggle. Just weeks after the '67 War, when Israeli forces began their occupation of these territories, this thriving residential area was bulldozed to make way for a police station that watches over both holy sites; the struggle continues. Two older women try to block the procession that will end in prison. They cry, "By God, how can you do this!" The policeman shouts, "Get away, you are not his mother." They respond, "We both are. All of us." Her hands, arms, make a quick circle showing that she means all women. "In this struggle we are the daughters of Palestine and the mothers of the Palestinians." The policeman pushes by with his captive. Another wards off photographers.

Some of the old city is in two layers. Above the stone houses there are tin-roofed shanties, dwellings scraped together from the discards of the local economy—oil cans and car doors, fruit crates and palm leaves. The garbage which is unsuitable for housing is picked up by the children for entertainment.

Sounds of shouting beckon some toward the *Suq al-Qattanin*, a covered alley with six square openings that let in light, that lead up to nine steps and then to one of the gateways to the mosque; others flee.

Shouting, throwing off a soldier's grasp, an old woman is cast down these steps onto her face and breasts. Later they will say that she was resisting arrest.

A candy vendor, nineteen, bushy-haired, and delicately boned, screams out, protesting this violence, ripping his throat for some kind of justice.

Two soldiers retaliate, running after him with their clubs. Horrified, he flees behind his small shop's iron doors which are forced open. He is violently beaten; a head wound spills enough blood to cover the whole left side of his body.

Leaving, the soldiers will smash his candy-cart, ruining the spilled goods; in three minutes two policemen will erase this mess, casting the peach and green colored candies into the shop. For the Israeli record, this never happened.

The soldiers threaten to smash my camera while everyone else—old and young women, younger men—shout: "Show the world! Show the brutality!"

A curly haired and fat father, a merchant in a dirtied *thobe*, beckons me into his store. He has been passive too long. After twenty years of demoralizing occupation, he is sparked into action: "Come, call your paper in America, they must know this."

A one-legged youth tells what led up to this, how the soldiers were beating everyone as they exited the gate and the woman resisted. He stretches out his hands and draws them back; with them come boys of all ages to show me their scars from the past half hour: bloodied shins from boots, eyes that swell up, bruises struck with the butts of guns.

Dazed, the bloodied candy vendor wanders back into the covered alley; he has not gone to the hospital. A Dutch man confronts the military, asking them why...

There is a dispute between the on-the-scene military commander and a higher ranking police officer who arrives later feeling that the violence was excessive; here questioning the systematic repression never goes beyond words.

After all, "*What Uprising?*"

From this courtyard I follow the circles and shrill whistles of these quick sparrows, first over Jerusalem and then eastward; unsettled by the artificial nature of this morning's violence I calm at the turnings of the land.

Just across from the *Suq al-Qattanin*, hours later, the one-legged youth will shout down to tourists from his hollowed out window, "This is not for the Jews, it is for the Arabs." We are on the edge of the Jewish quarter, there is an ancient star with six points carved next to the doorway that this family has lived in for nine generations.

Like every Palestinian, he has a story: "Four months ago the roof over my sister's room fell in. They will not issue us a permit for repairs." Insisting, he pains his way up forty-three steps. "They allow only one like this." He points up to a flimsy tin covering, like those above many of the Palestinian homes in view. Permanent construction requires permission of the military governor.

Just west, the Jewish quarter: glass windows, polished stone and a roof twice as high as this one.

Next door, the space where a house used to be, garbage and crumbled stone. "The supporting columns needed repairs that were not allowed. Two years ago they built this," he said, pointing at the large Jewish structure. "The vibrations from the construction brought this house to rubble." Pleading, "Can you blame us for throwing these stones at soldiers?"

Later, in a hospital over Jerusalem, a Palestinian grandmother will turn her head, revealing part of the day's casualties, bruised bones from an improbable rubber bullet—lead cylinders coated in millimeters of black rubber. Her peeling window looks down into the Great Mosque's courtyard where she fell.

"Thirteen casualties from the Mosque came to us," the doctor says. "Four required constant care. Three did not stay, fearing that the army would come and take them: two victims of live ammunition and one arm broken from beating." They will remain in hiding, fearing imprisonment on the non-charge, *Administrative Detention*, an ambiguous justification that allows for indefinite detention. All this in utter violation of the Geneva Convention.

Hady Alex Amr is a recent graduate of Tufts University and of both Jewish and Arab descent. He draws his identity from both cultural backgrounds. This article was completed while the author was on a recent fact-finding mission with Boston-area peace activists in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Solidarite Palestine

Palestinian boy being interrogated by Israeli troops.

Just above the hospital, a hotel owner and his son tell stories, how the earth is fabled to split right here on the crest of the Mount of Olives; laughing, the father says, "And we will be the first to fall in." He tells how there have been no tourists these past months, "From this, we are suffering." Looking west over the sun setting across Jerusalem he says, "They are suffering too."

I can't help focussing on the last skyscrapers imposing from the west; they will remain foreign to the history of the land. I imagine that they are the real tanks that march across Palestine, across olive trees and the gently gathered stones that terrace these hills, across the girls whose backs stretch harvesting these olives and their grandmothers who sit in circles in tree-shade, threshing this wheat, toughening their hands with the branches of Palestine.

Tomorrow the editor of an army-closed Bethlehem press will tell us that only 15,000 Muslims were allowed to pray at the Mosque; last year this holiday drew 200,000. The road-blocks that we thought were to prevent journalists from entering the Occupied Territories were meant to keep prayers out of Jerusalem on their holy day.

He goes on, telling us about the past months as his children's eight eyes, black, shining, run circles in the next room while their grandfather, gold-framed and faded, accepts his six month prison sentence for nothing.

"A month ago, when I was in Ansar III, where my father is, a few of the soldiers talked to us. They wanted to understand why we were throwing stones. Others were the settlers that had been besieging Dheishe camp. Their treatment was inhuman, worse than ever before.

"When Abu-Jihad was assassinated, the Israeli soldiers wanted to anger the *shibab*; 'we killed them,' the soldiers shouted. The *shibab* threw stones. The whole town demonstrated. This, like the whole uprising, affirms our commitment to the PLO; they are our husbands or brothers, our grandfathers or grandchildren, they are in our bodies. They are our leaders, but we are also theirs."

He goes on, telling us about the preparations that they have made while he runs his fingers across the stones that fit together to form the high walls of the church at Manger Square; they are the same stones that make up the whole town, the ones that are like rainbows, that they hope will bring down the occupation.

"No, the *Intifada* is not weakening. It is regrouping and will reemerge in a new form: mass civil disobedience. There is a saying in Arabic: with each blow we receive, we grow stronger."

"We are bringing flour and dried beans and cracked wheat into our houses. In this way, if the stores close for one month, two months, meagerly, we can live. And all of the families like this."

One Sunday, *The Jerusalem Post* will read "Police, Moslems face off on Temple Mount...Four policemen and about 17 Moslems were injured. Nineteen Moslems were arrested...chanting nationalist slogans and raising a Palestinian flag. They burned replicas of an American and Israeli flag...Police Inspector-General David Kraus told reporters that the incident "ended well," considering the advance information that the police had regarding the plans of *extremist* Moslem groups for the day."

May 20, hours off the plane, outside of Boston, silent, I wonder how this past week's pattern of struggle and repression and struggle again will be abracadabraed into back page passivity as the recent trend suggests.

Involuntarily I project movie of the past weeks onto a landscape where days of rain have just cleared for this sunset; I keep stopping on the scene of the woman declaring: "In this struggle we are the daughters of Palestine and the mothers of the Palestinians." As if through the pitch of her gesture she would sober America.

A friend will stop me, "It was quiet while you were there, only a little tension in Jerusalem on Friday?" ■

Justice For the Hartford 15!

In the United States, as the recent presidential elections demonstrated, winning the hearts and minds of the public has less to do with publicizing issues than with presenting images. Use the word "terrorist" and most people in the United States, according to a recent poll, will respond with these words: dangerous, criminal, violent, and foreign. If a political movement is perceived as terrorist, its political goals do not have to be taken seriously and its actors do not merit the protections and liberties afforded citizens.

In US District Court in Hartford, Connecticut, the US government is battling for the hearts and minds of the US people against the Puerto Rican independence movement. In 1983, Victor Gerena, a driver for the Wells Fargo Security company, single-handedly pulled off a seven million dollar robbery—the second largest heist in history. Then Gerena and this money disappeared. Gerena has never shown up again, but some of the money resurfaced in Hartford a few months later in the form of toys and gifts for the Puerto Rican community on Three Kings Day. Gerena sent a message to this community that he was a member of the Macheteros, an underground Puerto Rican organization that believes Puerto Rican independence will only happen through armed struggle. Gerena said that the money taken from the Wells Fargo truck would be used to further the independence struggle. Many of the Puerto Ricans on trial in Hartford are accused of being members of the Macheteros, by guilt of association, and are charged with conspiracy to commit a robbery.

From the first arrests in 1985, and continuing today, the US government has tried to attach the terrorist label to those arrested by surrounding them with a barricade of police and heavy security. On August 30, 1985, in what has popularly been called "the second invasion of Puerto Rico" (the first occurred in 1898 when the US annexed the Island as its colony in the Spanish-American war), more than 400 FBI agents in SWAT uniforms swarmed onto the island or circled overhead in helicopters. Armed for combat, they cordoned off residential neighborhoods, searched homes (without warrants in many cases) and detained (mostly without warrants) numbers of prominent Independistas. William Webster (then head of the FBI regional office in Boston, and more recently acting director of the CIA) told the press that the Puerto Rican terrorists had been captured.

"...the American system of justice is on trial, and this case strains to the breaking point the idea of a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury."
— Don Noel, Hartford Courant

Immediately, those arrested in Puerto Rico were whisked off the Island where they are known in the community, to Connecticut. For some it was the first time they had ever set foot in that State. The US government succeeded in keeping the trial in Hartford rather than in Puerto Rico where the Independence movement is understood and the Macheteros have a context.

The US Attorney persuaded the US District Court judge that those who were arrested were "dangerous to the community" and should not be released on bail before trial. While none of those arrested were charged with violent crimes and most have no criminal records, seven of the fifteen were held in jail for fifteen months and two were only recently released, after being detained for almost three years. These releases occurred only after an appellate court determined that such

lengthy pre-trial detention was unconstitutional. This detention is the longest pre-trial detention in any Western country since World War II and has been internationally condemned. Almost immediately after defendent Filiberto Ojeda Rios was released he was rearrested for old charges stemming from his resisting arrest in 1986. These charges had not been formally bought before and could have been processed while he was in pre-trial detention as is normal procedure in other criminal cases. Ojeda Rios is still in pre-trial detention with no trial date in sight.

Even though fourteen of the fifteen are free on bail, they are not yet free of this matter. After five years of investigation, three years of prosecution, and an expenditure of more than thirty million dollars, the US Attorney still cannot try most of the defendants. In August, 1988, the defendants won a major victory when many of the tape-recorded conversations were eliminated as evidence because the FBI recorded the conversations illegally. These tapes are the only evidence the FBI has against many of the defendants. The government appealed this ruling to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals which will take at least one year to make a decision. In desperation, the US government this September started a trial against five of the defendants, who are primarily charged with the distribution of toys and money on Three Kings Day. (A sixth, Luz Berrios Berrios, pled guilty to one count of distribution.)

Political columnist Don Noel of the Hartford *Courant* declared, "as much as the Wells Fargo defendants are on trial, the American system of justice is on trial, and this case strains to the breaking point the idea of a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury." Even before opening statements were made to the jury, the battle for the hearts and minds of the jurors was underway. The defense moved to change the site of the trial to Puerto Rico where jurors would be peers, fluent in Spanish and knowledgeable about the history and politics that are central to this case. But the motions were continually denied by the judge. Usually attorneys on both sides of a case receive a list of the names, addresses and employment of prospective jurors to use in the process of selecting an appropriate jury. In this case, Judge Clarie insisted that the jurors remain completely anonymous, even to the attorneys. They are identified only by numbers.

Both jury selection and the trial itself began under extreme security measures, even though the defendants are not charged with any crime involving violence and are free in the community on bail. Jurors are transported from predetermined locations by federal marshals. The public, guaranteed the right to observe trials by the US Constitution, must pass through two metal detectors to enter the courtroom. Many times people have to wait to be admitted to the courtroom because the marshals, for security reasons, have limited the number of seats available in the courtroom.

The US Attorney, supported by the judge, would like to characterize this case as an ordinary bank robbery. During the opening statements, each time the defendants began to describe their commitment to independence or the realities of Puerto Rico, the US Attorney would object and stop the proceedings. In front of the jury, the judge admonished the defense attorneys not to stray from the facts. At one point, the judge lectured a defendant, that "if you support the Cancer Society, you cannot rob a bank to finance its activities." When one attorney told the jury that this case was about FBI misconduct and abuse, the judge interrupted him and, again in front of the jury, instructed him not to criticize an investigative agency "for the sake of criticism."

The trial continues in Hartford and the battle to win the hearts and minds of the jurors and the American public has heated up. While the papers in Hartford and Puerto Rico have maintained regular coverage of this trial, there has been little coverage elsewhere. Please help us get the word out.

—Lenore Glaser and Juan Vargas

The authors are members of the Boston Committee for Puerto Rican Civil Rights. They encourage you to reprint this article and to contact them at Box 1222, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

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