

EDUCATION TO GOVERN THE ADVOCATORS



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INTRODUCTION

When the James Boggs-led group, the Advocators, put out *Education to Govern* in 1971, public school systems especially in the city centers had already undergone ongoing major crises, to the point where the authors wrote that their schools “often resemble red light districts and sometimes even baby-sitting compounds more than they do centers for learning.” But at that time, coming off the high tide of the late 60s protests against the Vietnam War and for Black Power, militant student protests were still erupting. Students refusing to be warehoused went on strike. Campuses (mostly college, but also high school) were hotbeds of political action and debate. The threat to labor was, as the authors described, automation and “cybernation”—but the devastating impact of deindustrialization had just begun to emerge in US urban centers. Neoliberalism and the reordering of manufacturing and production in the world had only just begun.

In the decades following, the condition of public education mirrored all other previously “public” sectors, as capital sought more profitable expansion in countries with low cost, non-unionized labor and little or no environmental regulations. First Mexico with NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), then the so called Asian Tigers¹ customized

¹ Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan were grouped together and called the Asian Tigers, a name coined by bourgeois economists to give a new, popular brand conveying strength and independence to countries who remained

their economies to imperialist interests; they based their economies on export, growing their GDPs through stripping their countries' resources, pimping out their populations' labor and turning their land into massive dumping grounds to make cheap products cheaply for the (mostly) US market.

The US saw a massive decline in the kind of manufacturing jobs that had required basic literacy, math skills, and above all, discipline to work. And so, as *Education to Govern* describes, at the beginning of this process we have since seen played out, public education's original purpose to provide the workers for those jobs was obliterated. The privatization of public schools through the creation of charter schools; the outrageous yet unopposed shift from calling schoolkids "children" to referring to them as "consumers" (under the pretense of ensuring they were treated with more respect, because in the US, the customer is king!); and the standardized testing "solution" to the problem of schools full of kids who could neither read nor do basic math, were all part of a steady march of the state providing new avenues for capital investment.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2019-2020 and the long interruption of "in-person" schooling, the situation, which most thought could not get much worse, became much worse.

entrenched in the same relationship—semi-colonial countries beholden to their imperialist masters—in spite of their short-term economic growth.

An entire generation of schoolkids living in urban centers in school districts that struggled to provide technological “solutions” and/or safe outdoor space for socially distant learning, has had very little schooling for over a year and a half. How many of the children the teachers have reported as “disappeared” will return in the fall? How will a year and a half of *not* “teaching to the test” affect test scores, and consequently, funding, school closures and staffing? How will already ill-equipped and overtaxed teachers help students who have faced unprecedented levels of trauma and isolation, many of whom are struggling themselves? The answers to these questions in a specific sense remain to be seen. But the preemptive general view is not difficult to forecast. If we use history as a predictor, the blame for the fallout of capitalism’s utter failure to cope with a global pandemic will make its rounds and ultimately land on the doorstep of individuals: students, teachers, poor and working-class families.

By any measure, even before COVID-19, public schools in urban centers in the US have failed to do the work to which they lay claim: provide basic education for the public. But *Education to Govern* is not a text defending public education. It does not detail the litany of crimes that the state has perpetrated on the poor and working-class youth in the US in the name of education. Rather, it is a text that questions the very premise of education in a capitalist system itself—and lays out a framework of

what education should and will involve in a system that raises its young into adults who are capable of governing themselves. Education in the US under capitalism serves the interest of the ruling rather than the ruled; as a consequence, the development of young people to think critically for themselves goes against its purpose. And, the authors argue:

If they [the youth] are prevented from learning the intrinsic consequences of their own choices of ends and means and made totally dependent on such extrinsic effects as rewards and punishments, they are being robbed of their right to develop into reasoning human beings.

Neither is *Education to Govern* a call for liberation. In recent decades the call for “education for liberation” has become mainstream in left and liberal vocabulary. Countless organizations, books, and curricula share the name, to the extent that its original demand as part of a social movement has been relegated to part of a glorious but distant past, or a mention in the curriculum of Black History month. Of course, even if the phrase has been co-opted and the militancy behind it erased, the demand for liberation from capitalist oppression is just—and in the order of things must come first. But the idea of governance, and what would be required in education to develop our capacity to govern ourselves—not for the bourgeoisie, but for

the people—is a more complicated and far less-addressed notion. In imperialist countries like the US, many oppose capitalism and are engaged in the struggle against its countless injustices. Far fewer are engaged with the intention and determination not only to win the protracted struggle, but to prepare ourselves in a systematic way for what we will need to construct in its place. This demand requires that we not only react *against* but also embrace the responsibility to plan *for*. *Education to Govern* is one result of an organization's attempt to map out that responsibility in the early 1970s.

A Small Overview

In the mid- to late-1960s, the Community Control of Schools movement cited in this book began mostly as an effort of parents in poor, low-income, mostly Black and Puerto Rican urban communities to demand some measure of decision-making power in their local schools. Some of the struggles were sharp and some districts did eventually cede control to boards of community members. However, as the authors described, the “black militants assumed that merely changing the color of those in charge of the schools would automatically bring about a fundamental change in the schools.” Instead, the administrators and school board members who were recruited to make change entered into the system and were changed themselves. The movement also faced opposition from the State and

in one infamous case, by the New York school system's powerful teachers' union.²

The repression and co-optation experienced in the Community Control of Schools movement culminated in the assessment that the kinds of change the black revolutionary organizations sought could not be won within the existing infrastructure of the public education system. Instead, militants began calling for Independent Black Schools, which were privately funded and could operate with their own administrators and staff using their own curriculum towards their own goals—un beholden to the local school districts. It was in this period that the Advocators released *Education to Govern*.

Many of the schools in the Independent Black Schools movement were created by Black Nationalist organizations for poor and working-class black (oftentimes alongside Puerto Rican and Asian) students and based in cultural traditions trans-

² In 1968, New York City's United Federation of Teachers (UFT) called a city-wide strike in response to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community's school administrators, and their action to lay off 13 teachers and 6 administrators who did not agree with the schools' plans for decentralization. Those administrators had recently been appointed as the result of a struggle for community representation and control, and in spite of being given the power to make staffing decisions on the local level, Central Board of Education instructed the dismissed staff to disregard the action. After 37 days, the longest teacher strike in NYC history, the staff were summarily reinstated, sounding a death knell to the Community Control of Schools movement.

lated from different parts of the African continent. While they may not have embodied all of the revolutionary aspects of education laid out in *Education to Govern*, many were able to assert a measure of autonomy within certain communities. However, the success and sustainability of the institutions, as well as the political and ideological direction and the involvement of the larger community, depended heavily on the organizations that created them. As the high tide of the Black Nationalist, and specifically, the Revolutionary Black Nationalist Movement came crashing down as a result of external and internal contradictions and historical factors, the institutions that remained in the aftermath faced a myriad of challenges.

First, the assassination, arrest, harassment and co-optation of movement militants led to a lack of organizational leadership capable of maintaining institutions like schools that required intensive day-to-day management. Consequently, many of these schools were left in the hands of small groups or individuals who were devoted to their schools, but did not necessarily have the broader perspectives and infrastructure of organizations.

Second, the deliberate flooding of crack cocaine into inner-city neighborhoods decimated the black community, to the extent that communities no longer existed in the same sense except in small pockets. Coupled with the advent of neo-liberalism and the massive deindustrialization that gutted the

manufacturing sector, violence and police brutality and transiency increased. In the process, those black neighborhoods that were once fertile ground for militancy and organizing for community control were upended.

Third, the schools had been founded during the heady days after the Watts' riots, where it seemed the Black people in urban centers in various degrees of organization, were hell-bent on either seizing control or burning it down. Those subjective conditions failed to bring about a revolution; instead, they mobilized the State to nip the burgeoning threat in the bud with a lethal combination of carrot and stick. As the movement failed and was decimated, the terrain upon which militants had been trying to build educational institutions changed—both for the people running the schools and the students and families who attended them. Calls for Black Pride and Black Power gave way to demands that black children be prepared in their schools in such a way that they would be able to secure well-paying jobs and succeed in the capitalist system. Neoliberalism proved extremely effective in constructing the hegemony around the logic and righteousness and never-ending quality of capitalism. If the system wasn't going to change—if in fact it wasn't something that could or even should be changed, what good would education about traditional cultural practices about collective work and

learning be for a young graduate looking for good employment opportunities after graduation?

Fourth, given the first three conditions, the financial demands of operating an independent private school for poor and low-income kids who didn't pay tuition became increasingly untenable. Part of the carrot of state intervention was the introduction and exponential promotion and growth of charter schools. The Charter School movement began in the late 80s, with the first school opening in 1991. They were created as an "alternative" to public schools under the premise that students and families had the "right" to school choice through a "free market." In reality, the opening of the charter school industry was really capital's first significant expansion into education, facilitated by public funds funneled to private entities tasked to run schools like businesses.

The Business of Charter Schools

The new hegemony of the 1980s Reagan-era deregulation, anti-organized labor, and the supposed superior efficiency of everything privately run provided fertile ground for the growth of the charter school industry. The crisis of capitalism that necessitated the neo-liberal "reforms" was turned on its head. Capitalism wasn't in crisis. Rather, the narrative was that public sector inefficiencies, from civil servant bureaucrats to greedy unionized teachers were to blame for the downturn in the

economy, and only the power of the free market could save us all. The State injected public money into the private sector—in the form of for-profit charter schools and required publicly administered but privately sold and evaluated standardized testing—from behind drawn curtains to prop up the mythology.

In 1994, Bill Clinton created the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP), and in its first year of funding, it channeled over \$4.5 million to recipients. By the end of his term, there were about 2000 charter schools nationwide. Under the George W. Bush administration the CSP funding grew to \$138 million in addition to tens of millions in additional support to a school choice “voucher” program as well as infrastructure funds. Consequently, the number of charter schools more than doubled during his term.³ In 2009, under the same rhetoric of freedom of choice and accountability, the Obama administration initiated the “Race to the Top” program with a \$5 billion price tag for more and different kinds of testing, as well the expansion of privately managed charter schools.

The charter structure requires schools to be administered by CEOs rather than principals, most of whom earn much more in salary than their counterparts in non-chartered public schools. Although

³ From the 2000-2001 school year charter schools grew from less than 2000 to over 7500 in 2020-2021, data.publiccharters.org.

they receive public money from taxes and are called public, they have very little oversight in terms of spending. Each charter functions as its own business, with salaries, staffing decisions, curriculum and building purchases left to the discretion of each CEO and board. Unlike their public counterparts, charter schools teachers are overwhelmingly unorganized with no union structure to negotiate contracts or intercede in grievances. Unsurprisingly, this situation has proven to be especially vulnerable to opportunism.

The *Washington Post* published a story in 2019 about charter school corruption in Pennsylvania. In it, it describes what it uncovered about Omnivest, one of Philadelphia's biggest charter school operators:

Two of the listed charters—New Media Technology High School and Imani Charter School—were shut down in 2016. The drawn-out process of shutting down New Media began not long after a 27-count indictment of two top officials who used charter school funds to pay for a private school, health food store and restaurant they controlled, as well as to pay their credit card bills. Omnivest's sister company, Mandrel Construction, converted a former church into the now defunct high school for \$5 million.

Several other clients of Omnivest have been involved in scandals, including Khepera Academy which has been fighting closure for years; the Harambee Charter School, which housed a night club in its cafeteria and whose founder's family member pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud; the Philadelphia Academy Charter Schools, whose leaders were engaged in fraud, kickbacks and theft; Aspira charters, which have been critiqued for their lack of accountability and transparency; and the Imhotep charter schools, which have been reprimanded for fraud.⁴

And lest anyone make the assumption that all the hustling for money somehow meant a better education for students, the Chester Community Charter School (CCCS) system paid its management company \$18 million in 2017 after a school year where 80% of its students scored below basic levels in math proficiency and only 14% tested proficient in English language arts. That year, the charter contract was extended for another nine years.⁵

The Business of Standardized Testing

Back at the beginning of the explosion of the charter school business and faced with a lack of finances and changing political times, the transfor-

⁴ [washingtonpost.com/education/2019/09/03/how-big-mess-is-pennsylvanias-charter-school-sector-this-big.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/09/03/how-big-mess-is-pennsylvanias-charter-school-sector-this-big/)

⁵ *Ibid.*

mation of Black independent schools into charters solved for some the immediate problem of funding—but the funding came with some significant strings attached. The main price of getting a per student payment (less than public schools and still tied to real estate taxes) was the requirement to participate in state testing. By re-entering the public education system, the charters were forced to submit to standardized testing as the main metric for success—and continuation of funding. While in the 1970s a student might be required to take one standardized test every few years, by 2015, the Council of the Great City Schools estimated that each student was taking an average of eight standardized tests every year.⁶

The rampant (ab)use of standardized testing—which has repeatedly been proven completely ineffectual in achieving its own professed metrics to “improve” learning—has been fueled in part by the business of testing, of capital seeking more avenues of expansion into education beyond curriculums and textbooks. Under the cover of rhetoric condemning the poor quality of public schooling for the poor and the need for everyone in the system to be held personally accountable (“individual responsibility” being one of the cornerstones of capitalist cultural hegemony), in 2001 the Bush administration passed No Child Left Behind (NCLB),

⁶ cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Testing%20Report.pdf

replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, to institute constant testing to measure “success.”⁷ In reality, they did very little to change the numbers of students who were left behind and did not succeed. But the Government Accounting Office (GAO) estimated that states handed over \$1.9 billion to \$5.3 billion between 2002 and 2008 alone to private, multi-national companies to meet NCLB testing requirements. But in fact:

Those GAO figures cover just the direct costs of six years of developing, scoring, and reporting the tests—which is performed under contract with private companies. Add in indirect costs, such as the amount of classroom teacher time devoted to coordinating and giving the tests and, increasingly, preparing students with ongoing “practice” tests, and testing experts say the figure could be 8 to 15 times higher.⁸

⁷ Standardized testing has a long history in the US dating back to the early 1900s. All schools, even private schools were federally mandated to administer tests regularly, but it wasn't until 2001 with the passage NCLB that standardized tests were required for every grade every year. By 2015, there was so much resistance to NCLB that it was replaced by ESSA, which essentially turned most testing requirements over to state control. Since then, most school districts, especially in the inner-cities have only increased the number of required tests.

⁸ Barbara Miner, “Testing Companies Mine for Gold,” rethinkingschools.org/special-collections/testing-companies-mine-for-gold/, Winter 2004/2005.

The crisis of capitalism necessitated the ushering in of neo-liberalism and all of its “reforms” designed to facilitate the opening of new markets for capital expansion when traditional ones had already been stripped bare. Just as “innovations” such as “Lean Manufacturing” and the Healthcare Marketplace helped solve the crisis of capitalism caused by overcapacity in healthcare as explained in the *Introduction to A New Outlook on Health*,⁹ NCLB and ESSA provided an avenue for further capital expansion in education.

At the time James and Grace Lee Boggs’ wrote *The City is the Black Man’s Land*, one of the texts the Advocators cited as influencing *Education to Govern*, the riots/uprisings of the late 60s had just exploded, rebellion was simmering in most major US cities—and the bourgeoisie was wary. But as it does when it is threatened, capitalism very adeptly co-opted the anger and rage against the injustice. Black power became a slogan and afros became images that sold t-shirts, black politicians, even those run by left organizations as the Boggs’ article calls for, entered local governments and played the role set up for them. This was essentially the replaying of the same process in the community control of schools movement referred to as unsuccessful in this text. Thus, while in 2020 over a third of the

⁹ *A New Outlook on Health*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, pp. 15-28.

55 major cities in the US elected Black mayors¹⁰—including Chicago, San Francisco, Baltimore and Houston—the situation has not improved for poor and working-class black people in those same cities. The election of Barack Obama, a lawyer marketed as a community organizer, was the superlative example of capitalism’s adaptive power and its ability to co-opt.

By the time he wrote a new introduction for the *Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party* (10 years after *The City is the Black Man’s Land*), James Boggs acknowledged the impotency of the idea that black militants could enter bourgeois politics to bring about revolutionary change in individual cities or “taking over a few Southern states.” Instead, he issued a call to build a black vanguard party that would take up the responsibility of “transforming blacks from rebels to revolutionists,” offering this criticism of communist organizations in his time:

The chief weakness of all Marxist groupings in this country is that they spend most of their time exposing the evils of capitalism and racism and agitating the oppressed to militant struggles to get “more” for themselves. They do not understand that, insofar as they do not challenge the masses to begin taking responsibility for changing the sys-

¹⁰ citymayors.com/mayors/black-american-mayors.html#Anchor-Black-49575.

tem, they are in fact reinforcing the “slave” or “victim mentality” of the masses.¹¹

Education to Govern, written in the years between *The City is the Black Man's Land* and the *Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party*, offers both the necessary sharp analysis of the evils of capitalism and racism in education and also proposes an educational program that would work towards challenging the masses to begin to take responsibility for changing the system. At the same time, the text lays out a blueprint of sorts for education we need to struggle for, it acknowledges that we cannot achieve it unless we change the entire system that it serves; it is “Obviously impossible to reorganize an educational system completely without reorganizing the social system which it serves.” The text does not offer a blueprint for how to struggle with that contradiction of just how to make strides towards qualitative change in education under capitalism, perhaps because the authors had not yet gone through the experiences and ultimate failure of the Black Independent Schools movement, the Black Charter School movement, and the co-optation of Black politicians fielded to claim independence for Black cities.

The pandemic and US’ response to it has provided to many a concrete education about capitalism—about its necessity to keep low-wage workers

¹¹ James Boggs, *Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party*, April 4, 1976.

working in order to drive the consumer economy; about its incompetence in attending to the collective good during extreme public health crises; about the ease with which the rich found ways to profit off of the crises that devastated the great majority of the rest. But as Boggs foretold over 45 years ago, without a vanguard party to consolidate and parse this education into a challenge to take responsibility for change, all of the outrage and cries against injustice have not made any qualitative inroads towards actually changing the system.

In spite of many attempts, Boggs' call has yet remained unfulfilled. But this contradiction, which has seen countless manifestations in education since the idea of "public education" was born in the US, can only continue to be grappled with by revolutionaries in practice, internalizing the profound and complicated historical lessons and experiences, like those put forth in *Education to Govern*. It is with this intention that Foreign Languages Press is reprinting this still highly relevant and thought-provoking text.

Redspark Collective
June 2021

**FOREWORD TO THE
THIRD PRINTING**

Education to Govern was originally published as a pamphlet by the All-African People Union in April, 1971 and went into a second printing a few months later.

Since then, the situation in the United States has gone from bad to worse. Not only our schools but the government and the economy are in a state of continuing crisis. Moral deterioration and social irresponsibility in every sphere of American life make daily existence a nightmare for everyone in this country—be they young or old, rich or poor, black, brown or white, male or female. The Watergate scandals have made it unmistakably clear that those who are the products of the nation's "best schools" have not been educated to govern.

When the Community Control of Schools movement was launched by the black movement in the late 60s, the leaders of the movement recognized the need to redefine the function of education in order to make it responsive and accountable to the community. However, those involved in the movement did not make a fundamental historical and philosophical analysis of why our schools have so failed the American people. If they had, they might have recognized that the educational system in this country, like the American capitalist system of which it is an integral part, operates against the interests of the community—precisely because it encourages the ambitious individual to climb the economic and social ladder out of the community.

Instead, black militants assumed that merely changing the color of those in charge of the schools would automatically bring about a fundamental change in the schools.

The result is that in the last few years it has been relatively easy for the system to promote blacks into high positions to play the same role against the black community as whites used to play. Blacks now hold key positions in education in most of the big cities of this country where black children are the overwhelming majority of the school population. Like their white colleagues, these administrators are using the school system as a means to advance their own careers. They are just as individualistic, materialistic and competitive, just as determined to be “winners” rather than “losers” in the rat race to get a piece of the action for themselves and themselves alone. They are just as anxious to enroll as many children in school for as long as possible—in order to get more funds from the state and national governments for higher salaries, more projects, classrooms, and books. And as soon as their day’s work is over, they too rush away from their jobs in the inner city to their homes in outlying areas. For them, better education is chiefly a question of more money—the more the better.

Meanwhile, our schools have become little more than custodial institutions for our children.

What, then, should be the purpose of education today? What are the essential ingredients of a new

system of education? How long are we going to allow our children to be destroyed by an outmoded school system because we are not willing to carry on the theoretical and practical struggles necessary to create a new philosophy and practice of education suitable to our day and age?

Ask yourself these questions as you read this pamphlet which is even more important today than when it was originally published.

Detroit, Michigan
August 1974

**EDUCATION TO
GOVERN**

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR HOPE AND OUR FUTURE

Today, in towns and cities all across the United States, the walls of schools in Black communities are lined with posters of Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, “Rap” Brown, and other contributors to the cause of black liberation. Above these posters are slogans proclaiming *Black Pride*, *Black Unity* and *Black Power*. In every classroom there are students, teachers and even some administrators wearing African dress, sporting long, natural hair-dos. As they pass each other in the corridors, they raise clenched fists—symbolizing *Black Pride*, *Black Unity*, *Black Power*.

Some people judge the quality of black education and the progress of black people by these most superficial symbols. However, the real extent of black education must be judged by examining what is actually taking place in these schools.

The schools in black communities often resemble red-light districts and sometimes even baby-sitting compounds more than they do centers for learning. In the halls and corridors some students are passing narcotics of various kinds to one another; others are singing and dancing to the latest top ten tunes on the “Soul” charts. Straws, purchased or stolen from the cafeterias, serve for the snorting or “tootin” of cocaine. The rest rooms,

male and female, of too many high schools, are little more than state-financed dope houses—where marijuana, cocaine, and heroin are bought, sold and used.

Administrators, teachers and parents used to worry about the high rate of drop-outs. Now the problem is the large number of drop-ins. Drop-ins are drop-outs or former graduates who return to the school, usually through an open rear door or a door unlocked by a student accomplice, in order to sell drugs, to extort money from students, to recruit potential prostitutes, to break into student lockers, and to sell or purchase the “hot” goods which generally come from breaking and entering neighborhood homes and/or shoplifting in downtown department stores.

Regular police departments are no longer capable of handling or halting the robberies, selling of stolen goods, criminal assaults, vandalism, peddling of drugs, and pimping which have become as much a part of normal inner city school life as the classes themselves. So, in an attempt to cope with the deteriorating situation, Boards of Education have hired a plainclothes, sometimes undercover, security force. However, under the supervision of the present administrators, the primary target of this security force has become students engaged in political activity. The administrators' expressed concern for the safety of students has become merely a camouflage for their real concern: the

halting of militant struggles against the outmoded and bankrupt educational system in which they have such a huge vested interest.

Under these circumstances, many parents feel as if they are sending their children off to war instead of to learn. Teachers also feel themselves surrounded by hostile forces; they live in fear of the communities they are supposed to be serving. Their “student pets” are the only links between them and the community.

Most teachers have no understanding of the historical role which education has played and continues to play in American society. They have not the slightest notion or even concern as to the purpose which education should play at this stage in human development. Their interest in the students is like that of the canner in a cannery; their sole motivation for coming to school is their bi-weekly paychecks.

For most teachers, black and white, self-indulgence (a larger and more ostentatious automobile, a more expensively furnished home, fancier clothing) is really the order of the day. In fact, most of these narcissistic administrators and teachers never even thought about the purpose and content of their profession until student rebels began shattering their “glass houses.”

Very few school administrators and teachers ever ask themselves why they are doing what they are doing. This inability or refusal to raise funda-

mental questions about the purpose of American education is destroying our children. As a result, many students are increasingly turning to pool room “rappers” or street corner philosophers for leadership.

Obviously this is a critical situation. What is so critical is not only the corruption and deterioration that have overtaken black youth since the urban rebellions began in 1964, but the fact that black youth are losing any desire to learn. In the most vigorous and resourceful of our youth, those between the ages of 10 to 20, the will and incentive to learn are fast dwindling. The inability to envisage any meaningful future has so demoralized our young people that even some of the brightest among them view “revolutionary suicide” (the slogan of the Black Panther Party) as viable alternative. As if suicide of any kind provided a meaningful alternative!

Ironically, the educational system—which in 1970 consumed over 50 billion dollars, involved over 45,000,000 persons, and has been charged with the responsibility of motivating and preparing the country’s youth for the future, is the institution primarily responsible for the mental and spiritual degeneration and demoralization of young people.

The picture printed is horrible, but not nearly as horrible as the reality. And each day that we hesitate to face this reality and to begin the struggle for meaningful change only means the destruction

of increasing numbers of our youth. We realize that the struggle for a new educational system, a system that meets the needs of the times in which we live, will neither be easy nor quick. But the first prerequisite for such a struggle is a willingness to face the reality, ugly as it is, and the destruction of any illusions we may still have that the schools are contributing anything to the education of our children.

The present US educational system cannot be patched up. It is already much too late for such band-aids as *more money*, or *more police*, or *more schools*, or *more patient involvement*, or *more teachers* or *more time in school!* Struggles around these inadequate and piecemeal solutions can only produce more demoralization, more despair, and more destruction of our young people. At this stage, militant struggles without a vision of the educational goals we are trying to achieve and without concrete programs can only lead to more frustration.

Before we propose a program for getting out of this situation, we must examine the history of its development.

The most recent period of black struggle in education began with the Supreme Court decision of 1954, which declared that segregated schools were unequal. Following this decision, most black parents thought that integration was the panacea, which would provide equal opportunity and quality education for their children. However, the

continuation of de facto segregation, the physical struggles in those few cases where black and white students were thrown together, and the increasing realization (through contact) that whites too were getting a worthless education, have forced black parents and the black community to realize that merely seating black and white students next to each other is not the answer.

With their faith in integration dampened, blacks began to seek new directions. They demanded the hiring of more administrators and black teachers and the inclusion of black history in the school curriculum.

The positive fruits from these demands were meager. Most black history classes consisted of little more than the listing of black personalities. No real attempt was made to distinguish between reactionary and progressive black figures or to provide black students (or any other students for that matter) with an understanding of the historical development of and the organic relationship between racism and capitalism in the United States.

The next stage in the evolutionary process of the black struggle for quality education was the demand for “Black Control of Black Schools” or “Community Control of Schools.” With this demand the entire struggle began to assume new dimensions. Blacks were no longer asking for favors but demanding *power*. Now the struggle escalated rapidly, especially at IS 201 and Ocean Hill-Browns-

ville in New York City.¹² Blacks were now demanding the power to establish local governing boards, to control the budget, to hire, screen and set the standards of accountability for all school personnel, administrators and teachers, to set educational policies and programs, to determine curriculum and to control purchasing power for books, supplies, equipment, food services and building. With these demands the struggle over education ceased to be merely a tug of war between the various boards of education and the black community over intangibles. Now white-controlled administrators and teachers' unions, large corporations involved in publishing books and manufacturing equipment, building contractors and building trades unions and all those preying on the communities of blacks and other oppressed minorities became involved in the struggle.

Finally a compromise called "Decentralization" was worked out by the Ford Foundation's McGeorge Bundy. Formerly one of the grand manipulators of US foreign policy, Bundy introduced into the schools struggle the same tactic that the US has been employing in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The Blacks, like the oppressed people in the former colonies, were to be appeased with the facade of power. Decentralization is in fact a form of domestic neocolonialism by which blacks are given the illusion of power through local gov-

¹² See Footnote 2—*Ed.*

erning boards, while the real power remains in the hands of the white-dominated central administrations.

There is no use in our complaining about this scheme by the power structure. What it is doing is only what should be expected of it. On the other hand, we do have a right to demand more of those who are leading the struggle to take power away from the educational establishment.

When one raises the question of power, one incurs the obligation and responsibility of putting forward a program which makes clear what one would do with that power. Up to now, although blacks have complained bitterly and justifiably about the outmoded educational system, we have not proposed a meaningful program for change. In an essay entitled "201—First Steps Towards Community Control," Charles E. Wilson, the IS 201 Administrator, points out the root difficulty:

While there have been important external barriers to the success of 201, a final most significant internal barrier must be acknowledged. It lies in the fact that the demonstration district, its personnel, its parents, and its supporters pursued their task without ideology, without a sense of history, without established models, and with little experience at institution building. The zeal and commitment of the educational rebels, while

productive, has not completely overcome their own lack of experience and the amoral pragmatism of the present order.

Finally the lack of an ideology means that the educational rebels are not a serious threat to the status quo. Rebels without a point of view will be arrested at the level of curriculum change, black studies for white studies, for example, they will be left unable to pursue more distant goals of change, such as the education and liberation of the Black and Puerto Rican students who now demand the creative and human capacity of teachers in a healthy, productive education environment.

We of the All-African People's Union recognize the extent and complexity of the crisis in education. But we have not been overwhelmed by its complexity nor have we succumbed to the "Survival" panic which now has the black community in its insidious grip. We are convinced that black people in this country can have a future—but only if they struggle to create and control that future. We believe that if blacks utilize their historically conditioned strategic position—in the heart of the United States' largest cities to organize escalating programs of struggle, we can ultimately achieve state power and build a new social order—based on the concept of *man* as the center of the universe

and taking full advantage of the unprecedented technology which the United States has achieved.

On this basis we have decided, to begin with, that “The City Is the Black Man’s Land” because most of this country’s largest cities are dominated, population-wise, by blacks. Blacks are the only ones who can solve the crisis of US cities. Blacks have the greatest need to solve the problems of US cities. Blacks are not in possession of the power necessary to solve these problems, but the inquisition of this necessary power only becomes possible through a program of struggle whose goal is the taking of that power. A program of struggle directed towards taking power in the arena of education cannot develop without purpose, direction, content and structure, the “Education to Govern” program of the All-African Peoples Union has been developed with these considerations in mind.

We recognize that the struggle will not be easy. We know that our program will not be liked and will indeed be fought by two million administrators and teachers, tens of millions of blue and white collar workers and their unions determined to keep kids in school and off the job market, millions of construction workers and building contractors, hundreds of book publishers and instructional equipment manufacturers. But they are not our chief concern. Our concern is for the millions of children, born and yet unborn, not only black but of all races, whose spirits, minds and lives will

be destroyed if we do not struggle and if we do not win. In particular, we are determined not to allow the masses of black and other youth of color to be demoralized and robbed of their human essence. The human condition is our major concern.

We are black but we know and want to know about things other than blackness. We are concerned with the long historical process through which the human species has struggled to expand its productive capabilities (work, labor and technology) and its political and social responsibilities. Consequently, we have taken the lessons acquired from the last sixteen years of struggle by black people for humane, meaningful and quality education and developed the *Education for the Purpose of Governing Program*.

During these same sixteen years, in order to combat the devastating destructiveness of the educational system, black people have engaged in many programs of struggle, basically directed towards ridding the schools of racism and obtaining “quality education” for black children. However, all these programs have had the aim of improving the system as it presently exists. Consequently, they were bound to fail because the present educational system was organized for a specific historic purpose, to train the children of European immigrants to fit into the rapidly advancing industrial framework of the United States. From this original, and now obsolete; purpose comes the still prevailing notion

that the purpose of education is to get and hold a job.

Today, particularly in the United States, the purpose of education must go far beyond preparing people for jobs. Education must be grounded in a totally new philosophy, one developed to meet the realities and the requirements of this stage of history, in this country, "Education, the Great Obsession" (reprinted from the September 1970 issue of *Monthly Review*) puts forward the philosophic basis from which the Education to Govern program was derived.

We recognize that neither this nor any other program is a finished Product good for all time, and that it (like any other program) will be enriched and expanded by the living necessary to transform ideas into reality. But we Maintain that any program which attempts to meet the needs of the present stage of United States society must be based upon the philosophy and ideology contained in this pamphlet, a philosophy and ideology which instill in students a purpose and a reason for learning NOW.

Detroit, Michigan
April 1971

EDUCATION: THE GREAT OBSESSION¹³

Education today is a great obsession. It is also a great necessity. We, all of us, black and white, yellow and brown, young and old, men and women, workers and intellectuals, have a great deal to learn about ourselves and about the rapidly changing world in which we live. We, all of us, are far from having either the wisdom or the skills that are now more than ever required to govern ourselves and to administer things.

In the present struggle for a new system of education to fulfill this pressing need, the black community constitutes the decisive social force because it is the black community which the present educational system has most decisively failed.

Shortly after the 1969 school term opened, James Allen, the US Commissioner of Education, proclaimed a crash program for the 70s which shows he is even less equipped to get this country out of its mounting educational crisis than Nixon is of getting it out of the war in Vietnam. We make this comparison deliberately because we believe that during the 70s the United States will experience struggles and polarizations over education that will make the conflicts over Vietnam appear tame.

¹³ "Education: the Great Obsession" was part of a lecture series entitled "Challenge of the 70s" delivered at the University Center for Adult Education, Wayne State University, in the fall of 1969 [written by Grace Lee Boggs—*Ed.*].

Ten years from now, Allen solemnly promised (or threatened), no child will leave school without being able to read enough to meet the demands of job and society. The United States has had free public education for over a century. For nearly half a century practically every youngster has been required by federal law to attend school until the age of 16. Enough teachers and school facilities exist to support this compulsion. Yet the only goal the US Commissioner of Education has been able to set is the kind already surpassed by literacy drives in new nations where, prior to independence, the great majority of the people never even had schools to go to. For the world and country in which we live, Allen would have been more relevant if he had promised that by the end of the 70s every school-child would be fluent in a second language like Chinese, Russian, or Spanish.

Like other administration programs, Allen's is of course a pacification program, aimed at cooling the complaints of personnel managers who are obsessed by the apparent inability of job applicants to fill out employment forms; high school and college instructors who tear out their hair over student errors in spelling and punctuation; and the great majority of Americans, many vocal black parents, who are still naïve enough to believe that if black children could only read they could get better jobs and stop roaming the streets.

Allen's 10-year program will not bring tangible benefits to these complainants. The people who stand to gain most from it are the professional educators who are already lining up for the million-dollar grants that will enable reading experts and testers to test black children, find them wanting, and therefore justify more million-dollar grants to these reading experts to repeat the same remedial reading and compensatory programs which have consistently proved useless.

Since these professional educators are the chief beneficiaries, they are naturally the chief propagators of certain myths about education, which are unfortunately shared by most Americans. Chief among these are the myths that:

- (1) the fundamental purpose of education in an age of abundance is to increase earning power;
- (2) the achievement level of children can be defined and measured by their response to words on a printed page;
- (3) schools are the best and only place for people to get an education, and therefore that the more young people are compelled to attend school—and the more extended the period that they are compelled to attend, the more educated they will become.

The rebellions in secondary schools and colleges during the past few years¹⁴ are a sign that young people, black and white, have already begun to reject these myths. Seventy-five percent of secondary schools have already experienced these rebellions to one degree or another. During the next ten years the struggle to destroy these myths, root and branch, will continue to escalate. In the black community the struggle will probably take place under the general umbrella of the struggle for community control of schools. In the white community it will probably be around issues of student rights to freedom of dress, speech, assembly, and press. But whatever the focus, any educators, black or white, professional or paraprofessional, who continue to try to run the schools by these myths, will find themselves increasingly resorting to force and violence and/or drugs like Ritalin to keep youth quiet in school and/or to keep so-called troublemakers and trouble out. The odds are now overwhelming that the American equivalent of Hitler's gas ovens and storm troopers will appear first on school and university campuses.

¹⁴ In May 1970, a nation-wide high school and college student strike swept the US. The strike was mainly against the Vietnam War, but escalated when National Guardsmen shot and killed four students at Kent State University in what became known as the Kent State Massacre. The killings ignited protests with broader scopes and demands, shutting down almost 500 schools and universities and involving over 4 million students—*Ed.*

How It Developed

The above myths represent the attempt of the public school system to adjust to the changing needs of the American capitalist system over the past 50 years. Because the present school system is so huge and so resistant to change, we tend to think that it has existed forever. Actually it is only about two generations old. In nineteenth-century America (and in Western Europe until the end of the Second World War), the school system was organized to prepare the children of the wellborn and well-to-do to govern over the less well-born and not so well-to-do. Thus, at the turn of the century only six percent of US youth graduated from high school.

Early in this century the mass public school system was developed to assimilate an essentially immigrant working population into the economic, social, and political structure of the American Way of Life. According to this Way, known as American Democracy, those closest to the Founding Fathers in background and culture rule over those who have the furthest to go in achieving this ultimate goal and who meanwhile need to be inculcated with a Founding-Father complex.

To accomplish this objective the schools were organized:

1. To give the children of workers elementary skills in the three Rs¹⁵ which would enable them to function as workers in an industrial society.
2. To give these children proper reverence for the four As: American History, American Technology, the American Free Enterprise System, and American Democracy.
3. To provide a smoothly functioning sifting-mechanism whereby, as Colin Green has phrased it, the “winners” could automatically be sorted from the “losers”;¹⁶ that is to say, whereby those individuals equipped by family background and personality to finish high school and go on to college could be selected out from among the great majority on their way to the labor market after a few years of elementary school, or at most a year or so of high school.

This automatic separator worked quite well during the first half of this century. It was acceptable to the European immigrants whose children constituted the core of the urban school population and who, in appreciation for the opportunity to come to the Land of Opportunism, felt the

¹⁵ The Three Rs are: Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic—*Ed.*

¹⁶ Colin Green, “Public Schools: Myth of the Melting Pot,” *Saturday Review*, November 15, 1969.

responsibility was *theirs* to become integrated or assimilated into the American Way of Life.

Proceeding from this premise, working-class children from Eastern and Southern European stock (the “losers”) dropped out of school quietly around the age of 14 or 15, while the exceptions or “winners,” usually those from WASP or Northern European stock, finished high school in preparation for college, which would qualify them to become doctors or lawyers or engineers or teachers. The high-school curriculum and staff were set up on the basis of this implicit stratification. With such elite, highly motivated students, the high school teacher had only to know his subject well enough and drill it deep enough into the heads of students so that they would feed it back on college entrance exams.

Thus in 1911 only 11 percent of the high-school-age population were in school, in 1920 only 20 percent. Not until 1930 did the number reach the relatively mass proportion of 51 percent.¹⁷

During the 30s, with the shrinking of the unskilled and child labor market, some kinks began to develop in this automatic sorting mechanism. But these were ironed out temporarily when the high schools expanded their skills curriculum to meet the needs of an increasingly technical society, including such subjects as typing and shop and

¹⁷ James Coleman, *Adolescents and the Schools*, New York, 1965.

simultaneously put greater emphasis on basketball and football, in which the children of workers could excel and develop enough sense of belonging as to not upset the applecart.

By 1940, 73 percent of high-school-age youngsters, hopeful of gaining higher skills and thus escaping the back-breaking insecure jobs of their blue-collar parents, were attending high school. Those who dropped out before graduation—which for the last 30 years has averaged approximately one-half of all those entering ninth grade and at least two-thirds of black youth—could, if they were white, still find such useful jobs as delivery or stock boys, or helpers of various kinds in the many small businesses which still existed, thus adding to the family income. Or they could just make themselves useful around the house doing the chores not yet outmoded by labor-saving devices. During the war years, with a maximum of twelve million Americans in the armed services, there were jobs aplenty for their younger brothers and sisters.

It was not until after the Second World War, and particularly in the 50s and 60s, that the American school system began to find itself in deep trouble. The Andy Hardy world of the 30s was disappearing. Mechanization of agriculture and wartime work had brought millions of families to the cities from the farms and from the South—including blacks and Appalachian whites who had heretofore been getting their education catch-as-catch can.

With the automation of industry following the Second World War and the Korean War, the swallowing up of small family businesses by big firms, and the widespread use of labor--saving appliances in the average home, the labor of the dropout teenager became surplus and the adolescent became highly visible.

What now should be done with these “losers?” The obvious solution was to keep them in school. Thus, instead of the high schools acting as automatic sifters to sort out the “losers,” they were turned into mass custodial institutions to keep everyone in the classroom and off the streets. If at the same time some could also be trained for white-collar jobs, that was a fringe benefit. For the great majority in the high schools, skills training played the same supplementary role that it plays in a juvenile detention home.

By 1960, 90 percent of high-school-age youngsters were attending school. From a relatively elite institution for the college bound, the high school has been transformed within 40 years into a mass detention home. The ideal teacher is no longer the college-entrance-exam-oriented pedagogue but the counselor type who can persuade the average youngster to adjust to this detention, or the tough authoritarian who can force it down his throat. Since “winners” and “losers” are expected to stay in school until graduation, the high school diploma is no longer a sign of academic achievement but

of the youngster's seat-warming endurance over a 12-year period. The success of the public school system itself is now measured in terms of its efficiency in persuading or compelling youth to extend their schooling indefinitely; if possible not only through high school but on to junior college, with each higher institution acting as a remedial program for the lower.

Meanwhile, to sell the public on the new custodial role of the schools, the myths of education as the magic weapon to open all doors—particularly the door to higher earnings and unlimited consumption—and of the schools as the only place to get an education, have been propagated. Extended schooling has been made into an American obsession. As a number of observers have noted, faith in education has replaced faith in the church as the salvation of the masses. In the practice of this faith, education has become the nation's second largest industry, expending, upwards of \$50 billion a year.¹⁸ The professional educator has become the new religion's practicing clergy, constituting the country's largest occupational grouping. At the same time, in order to distract and placate the detainees and to create an outlet for the goods pouring off American assembly lines, the youth market has been created.

¹⁸ Berkshire Hathaway reported that the US education industry had a market value of \$1.35 trillion in 2017 and was projected to reach over \$2 trillion by 2026—*Ed.*

The Internal Contradiction Exposed

The internal contradiction between the traditional separator and the new mass custodial roles assigned to the schools was bound to lead to conflict and disintegration, and this, in fact, is what has been taking place over the past twenty years. The black revolt has only brought out into the open and given focus to the mushrooming tensions between elite and average students, and between students and teachers, which first manifested themselves on a city-wide scale in the New York City strike of predominantly white high school students in 1950.¹⁹ No one knows these tensions better than the school teachers and administrators, white and black. But because they have a vested interest in the system, they have for the most part been willing to settle for higher (i.e., combat) pay and better working conditions, such as smaller classes and more preparation time. Teacher organizations to achieve these demands have to some extent met the economic or class needs of teachers as workers. But the more teachers have gained as workers, the less they have felt inclined to expose the bankruptcy of the educational system and to make

¹⁹ In April 1950, New York City high school students went on a three-day strike in support of their teachers' demands for a salary increase. *Life* magazine reported: "Carrying banners on which their pro-teacher sentiments were scrawled in lipstick, they held up subway trains, wrecked automobiles, and dared police to break them up" (*Life*, May 8, 1950, p. 47.)—*Ed.*

fundamental proposals for its reorganization. They have made the fatal mistake of confusing their role as a special kind of worker engaged in the process of developing human beings with the role of production workers engaged in the process of producing inanimate goods.

It has thus been left to the black community to expose the fundamental contradictions within the system.

The Black Revolt

Prior to the Second World War black youth had been concentrated in the South, not only separate and unequal but practically invisible. With the war a whole generation came North to work in the plants. With rising expectations whetted by relatively stable employment, service in the armed forces, and the postwar nationalist movements in other parts of the world, black parents began to send their children to school in such numbers that black youth now constitute the major part of the school population in most of the big cities from which whites have fled. But the more black kids finished high school, the more they discovered that extended education was not the magic key to upward mobility and higher earnings that it had been played up to be. On the job market they soon discovered that the same piece of paper which qualified white high-school graduates for white-collar jobs only qualified blacks to be tested

(and found wanting) for these same jobs. Their teachers, parents, and preachers tried to placate them by explaining how even more education was now needed to qualify for the increasingly skilled jobs demanded by automation. But all around them black youth could see that the jobs which they were told required two or more years of college when occupied by blacks were actually being done by white high school dropouts.

Accepting at face value the myths about education, black parents began to turn their attention to the schools, only to discover that instead of being places of learning, the schools had become baby-sitting institutions in which their children had been socially promoted²⁰ year after year, regardless of achievement levels as determined by the schools' own tests.

When school administrators and teachers were challenged to explain this situation, they tried to explain away their own failure by shifting the blame to black children. Hence the theories of the "culturally deprived" and "culturally disadvantaged" child which have been masquerading as sociological theory since the 50s. In effect, these educators were saying: "There is nothing wrong

²⁰ Social promotion is a widely accepted practice where students who have failed academically are nonetheless "promoted" with their peers to the next level. The rationale behind social promotion is that there would be more harm done to the child's well-being by holding them back than by letting them advance with those their own age.—*Ed.*

with the system; only the wrong children have shown up.” Through these alibis the professionals not only hoped to divert the attack back to the black community; they also hoped to hustle more money for themselves in the form of compensatory, remedial, more effective school programs.

But the defense has boomeranged. Forced to defend themselves and their children against the thinly disguised racism of the theory of “cultural deprivation,” black parents and the black community have counterattacked. They have exposed the racism of school personnel and school curriculum, the unceasing destruction by the schools of the self-concept of black children so necessary to learning, and the illegitimacy of a system administered by whites when the majority of students are now black. From early demands for integration, the movement jumped quickly to demands for black history, black teachers, black principals, and then, in 1966, with the rising tide of Black Power, to demands for control of schools by the black community, beginning with the struggle over Harlem I.S. 201 in December of that year.²¹

Struggle for Control

During the next 5 to 15 years the black community is going to be engaged in a continuing struggle for control of its schools. Sometimes the struggle will be in the headlines and on the picket lines, as

²¹ See Footnote 2—*Ed.*

in Ocean Hill-Brownsville in 1968. Sometimes it will be less dramatic. But the black community is now unalterably convinced that white control of black schools is destroying black children and can no longer be tolerated.

During the next 5 to 15 years the black community will also be redefining education for *this day, this age, and this country*. The overwhelming majority of black students who are not succeeding in the present school system (estimated by New York teachers' union President Albert Shanker at 85 percent) have in fact rejected a used, outmoded, useless school system.

Over the past ten years literally billions of dollars have been injected into the schools all over the country—even more than has gone into the moon race—in an attempt to make the system work. In New York City alone the school budget was raised 200 percent until it is now more than one billion dollars a year, or one-third of the entire city budget.²² The New York teacher-pupil ration was lowered to an average of 1:17;²³ \$70 million of Title I²⁴ money was poured into the organization of 2,000 innovative projects; experts from the

²² The New York City school budget for 2020-2021 was \$34 billion, with a total of \$88.2 billion for the 2021 fiscal year.—*Ed.*

²³ 2018-2019 teacher to student ration in New York City public high schools was over 25 students to 1 teacher.

²⁴ Title I was originally a federal aid program created by Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" in 1965 that gives federal

twelve colleges in the area were consulted and consulted; money was spent like water; book publishers, project directors, educational consultants were enriched, teachers drew bigger salaries to compensate them for the nightmare of the school day. But the achievement level of black children has continued to fall.

The black community cannot afford to be wasting time fighting for reforms that have already proved worthless. Every week, every month, every year that we waste means that more black children are being wasted. We must reject the racist myth that by keeping kids in school an extra day, an extra week, an extra month, we are giving them a chance to learn a little something or helping to keep them out of mischief. Not only are they not learning in the schools, but the schools in the black community today are little more than mass penal institutions, breeding the same kind of vice and crime that mass penal institutions breed, making the average child an easy prey for the most hardened elements. Day after day, year after year, the will and incentive to learn, which are essential to the continued program and future development of any people, are being systematically destroyed in millions of black youth, perhaps the most vigorous and resourceful of those between the ages of 10 and 20.

money to schools with high percentages of low-income students.—*Ed.*

Redefining Education

The key to the new system of education that is the objective of the black movement for community control of schools is contained in the position paper of the Five-State Organizing Committee which was formed at a conference at Harvard University in January 1968. At this conference the black educators and community representatives agreed that *“the function of education must be redefined to make it responsive and accountable to the community.”*

The schools today are in the black community but not *of* it. They are not responsive or accountable to it. If anything they are an enemy force, a Trojan Horse, within it. The teaching and administrative staff come from outside the community, bringing with them the missionary attitude that they are bearing culture to backward natives—when in fact, like missionaries, they are living off the natives. The subject matter of the schools, beginning with the information about the policeman and the fireman given to first and second graders is alien to the lives of the children. And, *most important*, students succeed only to the degree that they set their sights toward upgrading themselves *as individuals out of the community*, so that the schools are in fact an organized instrument for a brain drain out of the community.

American education, like American society, is based upon the philosophy of *individualism*. According to this philosophy, the ambitious individual of average or above-average ability from the lower and middle classes is constantly encouraged to climb up the social ladder out of his social class and community. To achieve this goal, like the black Englishman in colonial Africa, he must conduct himself in ways that meet the approval and social standards of those in power, that is to say, as much unlike those in his community and as much as those in the Establishment as possible. If he does this consistently to the satisfaction of those in power, who are always observing and grading his behavior, he is rewarded by promotion and advancement into the higher echelons of the system. This is what is known as “making it on your own.” The more opportunistic you are, the better your chance of “making it.”

In the school’s system this means relating to the teacher and not to our classmates. It means accepting what is taught you as the “objective” or “gospel” or “immaculately conceived” truth which stares at you out of the pages of the textbook. (The textbook itself, of course, is by its very weight and format, organized to convey the impression of permanence and the indubitability of Holy Scripture.) You then feed these truths back to the teacher (“the correct answer”), evading controversial questions that require thinking for yourself or taking a posi-

tion. If you are willing to do this year after year, giving the “correct answers on exam after exam, for as long as is necessary to satisfy the “guild” standards of the Establishment, you have it “made.” You have proved yourself a sheep as distinguished from the goats. Your parents are proud of you. You can buy a big car to show off before the neighbors, and you become eligible to share in the benefits of high-level corruption in its various forms.

The overwhelming majority of black youth see no relationship between this type of education and their daily lives in the community or the problems of today’s world which affect them so intimately. They see automation and cybernation wiping out the jobs for which they are supposedly being prepared—while such jobs as are still available to them are the leftovers that whites won’t take (including fighting on the front lines of Vietnam). The book-learning so honored by their teachers and parents seems dull and static compared to what they see on TV and experience on the streets. In their own short lives they have seen what passes as truth in books being transformed into lies or obsolescence by living history, and what passes as objectivity exposed as racist propaganda. Through TV they have discovered that behind the words (which in books looked as if they had been immaculately conceived) are human beings, usually white, usually well-off, and usually pompous intellectuals. The result is that as the teacher stands

up front bestowing textbook culture on them, they are usually carrying on a silent argument with him or else turning off their minds altogether.

Not having the drive to succeed in the man's world at all costs, which is characteristic of the ambitious opportunist, and much more sensitive to what is going on around them, they reject the perspective of interminable schooling without practice or application, which is now built into the educational system. Besieged on all sides by commercials urging them to consume without limit and conscious at the same time of the limitless productivity of American technology, they have abandoned the Protestant ethic of work and thrift. So they roam the streets, aimlessly and restlessly, everyone a potential victim of organized crime and a potential hustler against his own community.

Only One Side Is Right

There are two sides to every question but only one side is right, and in this case the students who have rejected the present system are the ones who are right, even if, understandably, they are unable as yet to propose concrete alternatives.

1. *The individualist, opportunist orientation of American education* has been ruinous to the American community, most obviously, of course, to the black community. In the classroom over the years it isolates children from one another, stifling their

natural curiosity about one another as well as their potential for working together. (This process is what the education courses call “socialization.”) In the end it not only upgrades out of the community those individuals who might be its natural leaders, fragmenting and weakening precisely those communities which are in the greatest need of strengthening. It also creates the “used” community which is to be successively inherited by those poorer or darker in color, and which is therefore doomed from the outset to increasing deterioration.

2. *Truth is* not something you get from books or jot down when the teacher holds forth. It has always been and is today more than ever something which is constantly being created through conflict in the social arena and continuing research and experimentation in the scientific arena.
3. Learning, especially in this age of rapid social and technical change, is not something you can make people do in their heads with the perspective that years from now, eventually, they will be able to use what they have stored up. By the time you are supposed to use it, it has really become “used.” The natural relationship between theory and practice has been turned upside

down in the schools, in order to keep kids off the labor market. The natural way to learn is to be interested first and *then* to develop the skill to pursue your interest. As John Holt has written in *How Children Learn*, “The sensible way, the best way, is to start with something worth doing, and then, moved by a strong desire to do it, get whatever skills are needed.”

A human being, young or old, is not a *warehouse* of information or skills, and an educational system that treats children like warehouses is not only depriving them of education but crippling their natural capacity to learn. Particularly in a world of rapidly changing information and skills, *learning how to learn* is more important than learning specific skills and facts. A human being cannot develop only as a consumer. Depriving children of the opportunity to carry on productive activity is also depriving them of the opportunity to develop the instinct for workmanship which has made it possible for man to advance through the ages. *The experience of performance is necessary to learning. Only through doing things and evaluating what they have done* can human beings learn the *intrinsic relation* between cause

and effect, thereby developing the capacity to reason. If they are prevented from learning the intrinsic consequences of their own choices of ends and means and made totally dependent on such extrinsic effects as rewards and punishments, they are being robbed of their right to develop into reasoning human beings.

4. Finally, you cannot deprive young people of the rights of social responsibility, and social consciousness, and the ability to judge social issues during the many years they are supposed to attend school and then expect them suddenly to be able to exercise these essential rights when they become adult.

Our children are not learning because the present system is depriving them of such natural stimuli to learning as exercising their resourcefulness to solve the real problems of their own communities; working together rather than competitively, with younger children emulating older ones and older children teaching younger ones; experiencing the intrinsic consequences of their own actions; judging issues. It is because the present *system wastes* these natural human incentives to learning that its demands on the taxpayer are constantly escalating. It is because those who have succeeded under the present system have ended up as such dehu-

manized beings—technicians and mandarins who are ready to provide so-called objective skills and information to those in power (Eichmanns)—that students are in revolt on secondary and college campuses.

Towards a New System

We should now be in a better position to make more concrete the meaning of the proposal to “redefine the function of education in order to make it responsive and accountable to the community.”

Instead of schools serving to drain selected opportunists out of the community, they must be functionally reorganized to become centers of the community. This involves much, much more than the use of school facilities for community needs, although this should certainly be expanded. In order for the schools to become the center of the community, *the community itself, with its needs and problems must become the curriculum of the schools.*²⁵

More specifically, the educational program or curriculum should not consist of subjects like English or Algebra or Geography. Instead the school must be structured into groups of youngsters meeting in workshops and working as teams. These teams are then encouraged (1) *to identify* the needs or problems of the community; (2) *to choose*

²⁵ See Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, Delacorte Press, 1969.

a certain need or problem as a focus of activity; (3) to *plan a program* for its solution; and (4) to *carry out the steps* involved in the plan.

In the course of carrying out such a curriculum, students naturally and normally as a part of the actual process acquire a number of skills. For example, they must be able to do *research* (observe, report, pinpoint—all related to the social and physical geography of the community); set *goals* or objectives; *plot steps* towards the achievement of these goals; *carry out* these steps; *evaluate* or measure their progress towards their goals.

Through such a curriculum, research becomes a means of building the community rather than what it is at present, a means by which the Establishment prepares counterinsurgency or pacification programs against the community. Through the solution of real community problems, students discover the importance not only of *skills and information* but also of the *ideas and principles* that must guide them in setting and pursuing goals. In the *struggle* to transform their physical and social environment, they discover that their enemies are not only external but internal, within the community and within their own selves. Thus the weaknesses or needs of the community become assets in the learning process rather than the handicap or drawback that they are presently conceived to be.

With the community and at times the entire city as a learning laboratory, students are no lon-

ger confined to the classroom. The classroom is an adjunct to the community rather than the reverse. Students have an opportunity to exercise responsibility by identifying problems and by proposing and testing solutions, with the teachers acting as advisers, consultants, and instructors in specific skills. Students from various teenage groups can work in teams on the various projects, with each contributing according to his abilities at the various stages, younger students learning from older ones, and those with the capacity for leadership having an opportunity to exercise it.

One of the most important community needs and one which naturally suggests learning activities, is the need for community information, which can be met by student-produced newspapers, magazines, TV news and documentary programs, films, etc.

Education to Govern

No one should confuse this curriculum with a curriculum for vocational education—either in the old sense of preparing young blacks for menial tasks or in the up-to-date form in which Michigan Bell Telephone Company and Chrysler adopt high schools in the black community in order to channel black youth into low-level jobs. The only possible resemblance between these proposals and vocational education is the insistence on the opportunity for productive life-experiences as essential to

the learning process. Otherwise what is proposed is the very opposite of vocational education. It is indeed education or preparation for the tasks of governing.

Concrete programs that prepare black youth to govern are the logical next step for rebellious black youth who, having reached the stage of Black Power in the sense of Black Pride, Black Consciousness, and total rejection of the present social system, are not sure where to go. Young people whose *self-concept* has undergone a fundamental change must be given concrete opportunities to change their actual conditions of life. Otherwise, they can only exhaust and demoralize themselves in isolated acts of adventurism or in symbolic acts of defiance or escapism.

The fundamental principles underlying such programs are crucial to elementary as well as secondary school education. These principles are:

1. The more human beings experience in life and work, i.e., the more they have the opportunity to experience the intrinsic consequences of their own activity, the more able they are to learn and the more anxious they are to learn. Conversely, the more human beings, and particularly young people, are deprived of the opportunity to live and work and experience the consequences of their own activities, the

more difficult it is for them to learn and the more they are turned off from learning.

2. The most important factor in learning is interest and motivation; and conversely the more you cut off motivation and interest, the harder it is to learn.

This principle is especially relevant to the question of reading. If you try to force children to read, you can turn them off from reading in the same way that generations of children have been turned off from music by compulsory music lessons. Actually reading is much less difficult than speaking, which kids learn pretty much on their own. Once the relation between letters and sounds is learned—a matter of only a few weeks the reading development of children depends almost entirely upon interest and self-motivation. Thus, almost every good reader is actually self-taught.

When young children are regimented in the average elementary school classroom on the false assumption that children of the same chronological age have the same attention span and learn at the same pace and rhythm, what happens is that the great majority stop learning altogether,²⁶ *becoming either passive or defiant*. Few parents know that

²⁶ Black parents who send their children to Catholic schools on the basis that in that “law ‘n’ order” environment their kids at least learn their three Rs should reflect on what this authoritarian environment may be doing to their children’s real, i.e., creative, learning potential.

in the average classroom most children are paying attention only about ten minutes out of the 300-minute school day. The rest of the time they are trying to get into trouble or stay out of trouble. The few children in a classroom who can adjust to the rhythms arbitrarily set by the teacher become the “bright ones,” while the others are categorized from very early as the “dumb ones.” The tracking system²⁷ is not the product of a particular teacher’s biases; it is built into the system of forced learning. Parents particularly must begin to try to envisage a classroom reorganized to provide the opportunity for children to move about freely, choose among activities, learn what they are interested in learning, learn from each other and from their own mistakes.

Obviously the range of choice and area of activity cannot be as broad for younger children as it is for teenagers. But once we get rid of the stereotypes of wild children who must be forced to learn, we will be able to think in terms of curriculum and structure for elementary schools. For example, classroom space could easily be subdivided into

²⁷ The tracking system refers to the practice of grouping students into different classes based on their academic achievements. Racial, class and gender bias, coupled with the idea that grade-school-aged children can be effectively evaluated for how they should be challenged academically for the rest of their schooling essentially traps students in a designated “track,” regardless of their ability to develop and change.—*Ed.*

sections, each of which is associated not with specific children but rather with activities: a library and writing space where “reading and writing will be in the air,” a rest and privacy space, an arts and crafts space, a play space. Children would be able to move from one area to another as they choose. The teacher could remain fixed at times-available for consultation—or as others move about from space to space. Children of different ages, within a particular range, could learn from each other.

The Opposition

We must have no illusion that it will be easy to reorganize American education and particularly education in the black community, along these lines. Vicious as well as subtle opposition will come from all those with a stake in the present system: teachers and administrators who have climbed up the social and economic ladder within the framework of the old system and who now think they have earned the right to make others undergo the same ordeal; the publishing industry, which is making such huge profits off the school system; city agencies like the Board of Health, the Board of Education, the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Sanitation Department; the building industries and the unions; the merchants and finance companies. Concerned only with their own vested interest in living off the black community, they can be expected to raise a hue and cry

about “irresponsible youth taking over” and “child labor.”

Some very fundamental questions are posed here, questions which American society will have to face sooner rather than later, because it is obviously impossible to reorganize an educational system completely without reorganizing the social system which it serves.

First of all, who are the irresponsible ones? The young people who will be trying to improve their communities? Or the institutions and agencies (supported by their parents' taxes) who have been presiding over its deterioration. The issue here therefore is not young people but the same issue as that involved in the right of the black community to self-determination. Obviously what these opponents fear is not just youth but the threat to their continuing control, the exposure of their shortcomings, and programs which may end in their replacement.

On the question of “child labor,” it should be emphasized that what we are proposing is not “labor” at all. *Labor* is activity which is done for wages under the control of persons or organizations exploiting this labor for profit. What we are talking about is *work*, which the young people choose to do for the purpose of improving the community and under their own direction.

However, the clash is unavoidable. Because labor has been the only means for survival and

advancement in this society, and because increasing automation and cybernation have cut down jobs, any kind of productive activity has now become a privilege monopolized by adults and increasingly denied to youth. The whole process is now reaching the absurd proportions of older people doing jobs that could be more safely and easily done by youth, while youth are supposed to stay in school, expending their energies in play, postponing the responsibilities of work and adult life, on the promise that longer schooling will make them capable of better jobs. Meanwhile the skills they are acquiring become obsolete. The whole procedure is based on the false assumption that education is only for the young and that it must be completed before you start to work and live. Actually the time is coming when society will have to recognize that education must be a lifelong process for old and young. In the end a rational society will have to combine work and study for all ages and for people in every type of activity, from manual to intellectual.

Rallying to the support of all these vested interests we can expect the intellectuals, social scientists, physical scientists, to claim that by such programs society will be drying up the supply of experts, intellectuals, scientists, etc. The charge is absurd. Such programs will increase the supply because it will stimulate the desire for learning in great numbers of youth who in the past were turned off from learning.

The Struggle

In the long and the short run, the opposition of all these vested interests can be overcome only if black parents and black students begin to see that this is the only kind of education that is relevant in this country at this stage, particularly for black people, and that unless we embark on a protracted struggle for this kind of education, our children will continue to be wasted.

That is why the struggle for community control of schools is so important.

The black community will have to struggle for community control of schools. It can struggle most effectively, that is to say, involve and commit the greatest numbers of people from the community, if it can propose concrete programs for reorganizing education to meet the real and urgent needs of the black community.

The organic, inherent, irreversible weakness of the present educational power structure is its complete inability to develop such programs because it has been organized and is structured only for the purposes of producing an elite and detaining the mass. Hence the strategic importance of fighting them on this front by developing concrete programs for curriculum that the black community can regard as its own and therefore insist that the schools implement. The time is especially ripe for such proposals because mushrooming decentral-

ization programs are of necessity contradictory and confusing, creating areas in which no one is quite sure who has decision-making power.²⁸

The Total Community

In the preceding we have concentrated on the needs of the black community because it is in the vanguard of the struggle for community control of schools and therefore more immediately faced with the question of how to redefine education. But this is not only a black question. During the next 5 to 15 years, increasing numbers of white students are going to turn their backs on the educational system, not only in college but in high school. At the present time the majority of white students still accept the system because their little pieces of paper are still a passport to jobs and college. But even if the white school front remains quiet, every concerned citizen should be asking himself: "Do we really want our children to end up, like Nixon's Great Silent Majority, ambitious only for their own financial advancement and security, apathetic except when confronted by blacks moving into their neighborhoods or competing for their jobs, afraid not only of blacks but of their own children and indeed of any fundamental social change to meet the needs of changing technology, acquiescing in the decisions of the Mayor Daleys, the Judge

²⁸ See Introduction—*Ed.*

Hoffmans, the Spiro Agnews, and eventually the George Wallaces?”

These whites did not come from outer space any more than did the “good silent Germans” of Hitler’s day. They are the products of the American educational system, which has been organized to fit the American Way of Life: It was in the public schools that Nixon’s Great Silent Majority learned, through a systematized procedure, the values of materialism, individualism, opportunism, and docility in the presence of authority. It was in the schools that they were systematically indoctrinated with the myth that truth is what you read in books or hear from those in power, and with the ideology that this is not only the best of possible worlds but that it operates with the inevitability of natural law, making it futile to criticize—or oppose its operations. (“What’s the use? It’s always been this way and it’s always going to be this way.”) It was in the schools that the seeds of their present fears and powerlessness to rebel against authority were systematically sown.

All these are the values against which today’s youth, black and white, coming of age in a world of unprecedented technological and social revolution, are in revolt. Today’s youth are determined to have power over their own conditions of life. But the public school system has failed to prepare today’s Great Silent Majority to understand its

own youth, let alone the need to transform itself to cope with the rapid changes taking place.

It therefore is the schools which must accept a share of the responsibility for creating the contradiction which now threatens this country's destruction, the contradiction between being the technologically most advanced and the politically most undeveloped country in the world. They are also one of the weakest links in the system's chain of operations.

Before the present system of education was initiated some two generations ago, education was only for the *elite* to prepare them to govern over their subjects. Then came *mass education*, to prepare the great majority for labor and to advance a few out of their ranks to join the elite in governing. This system is now falling apart as a result of its own internal contradictions, with the cost being borne at the present time by the black community. That is why it is so urgent that we develop a new system of education that will have as its means and its end the development of the great masses of people *to govern over themselves and to administer over things*.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF A NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

1. Education Must Be Based on a Philosophy of History

In order to realize his or her highest potential as a human being, every young person must be given a profound and continuing sense:

- (a) of his or her own life as an integral part of the continuing evolution of the human species; and
- (b) of the unique capacity of human beings to shape and create reality in accordance with conscious purposes and plans.

The historical past is not an accumulation of facts. It is the continuing drama of the human species. *Animals* struggle to survive from one day to the next. *Human beings* have the unique capacity to strive consciously in order to transcend the past and to create a new and better future in which people will live and transform themselves and their environments in accordance with ever-higher and more universal standards of creative excellence and social responsibility.

A meaningful sense of identity with the past and future of humanity cannot be achieved simply by reading about the past. Ways and means must be created by educators to give young people the opportunities to relive the past, for example,

through dramatic reproductions of the practical and intellectual activities of our precursors in the evolution of Mankind and of the conflicts and great leaps in intellectual and practical creativity, which have always been necessary to advance humanity.

By reliving the struggles and the leaps by which we have reached the present stage in human history, young people are given the impetus to continue these struggles, for continuing innovation, for increased political consciousness and social responsibility, for expanded social being, and for continuing practical and intellectual creativity.

2. Education Must Include Productive Activity

Productive activity, in which individuals choose a task and participate in its execution from beginning to end, remains the most effective and rapid means to internalize the relationship between cause and effect, between effort and result, between purposes (ends) and programs (means) an internalization which is necessary to rational behavior, creative thinking and responsible activity.

Today's revolutionary technology and economy of abundance have produced a culturally deprived generation of young people, deprived not so much of goods or amusements but of the challenges, the satisfactions, the discoveries, the workmanship that are involved in productive work to fulfill basic needs. A rational society (and hence the educational system of a rational society) will have to

combine work and study for all ages and for people of every social type, in all kinds of activities, manual as well as mental.

3. Education Must Include Living Struggles

Every young person must be given expanding opportunities to solve the problems of his physical and social environment, thereby developing the political and technical skills that are urgently needed to transform the social institutions as well as the physical environment of our communities and cities. Only through living struggles can young people acquire an understanding of the various social forces within the community, the city, the nation and the world, and learn to resolve the antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions between all these forces. Only through living struggles will young people, and particularly young blacks, acquire the drive to develop the technical skills necessary to rebuild their communities. Only through living struggles can young people transform themselves along with their environments, developing within themselves the continuing commitment to social change, the capacity for creative thinking, for criticism and self-criticism, and for the correct handling of the controversies and conflicts inseparable from the necessity to choose between alternative solutions. All these capacities are indispensable to the new, politically conscious, socially responsible, independently creative and

unashamedly self-critical human beings who are needed to govern a technologically complex society. Meaningful political identity can only be created by meaningful political choices.

Fifty years ago educators could argue whether controversial social issues should be discussed in the classroom. Today such controversy is part and parcel of all our lives, inside and outside the classroom. The United States will never be able to go home again to the days when the average individual could concentrate on his private concerns, evading difficult social issues and hoping that these would eventually be resolved either by economic growth and/or by the government.²⁹

4. Education Must Include a Wide Variety of Resources and Environments

In the complex “One World” in which we live today, education must be consciously organized to take place not only in schools and not only using teachers, books, computers and audio-visual equipment, but also a multiplicity of physical and social environments—the countryside, the city side, the sea, factories, offices, other countries, other cultures. In this way young people can develop an ecological appreciation of what is involved in all

²⁹ A large segment of the population were trained to do just that until the COVID-19 pandemic, which uncovered how successful the bourgeoisie had been in making that notion—which seemed far-fetched at the time this pamphlet was printed—into hegemony.—Ed.

these environments and of the relationships within Nature, between Man and Nature and between Man and Technology. In this way also, young people can develop an understanding of different cultures and the contributions that different peoples can make to a world society. Against this background they can then begin to integrate their responsibilities to their own community with their responsibility to all Mankind, their responsibilities to the people living now with their responsibilities to the continually developing human species.

5. Education Must Include Development in Bodily Self-Knowledge and Well-Being

Modern scientific and technological progress in the field of health and medicine require more knowledge of self, more participation by the patient in self-care, more preventive medicine, more teamwork on the part of all health workers, more decentralization and more gradation in health and medical care. Instead what we are getting in this country is more depersonalized, assembly line, pill and needle treatment of symptoms, more specialization, more professionalism and hierarchy, more centralization. The schools must begin to reverse this trend by continuing and carefully organized programs for health and physical development and by training students in health care and health information that they can bring to the community.

6. Education Must Include Clearly Defined Goals

Education is not just living and learning. A new system of education must be governed by a new philosophy of education, which clearly defines the purpose of education. At this stage militant struggles over education which are not governed both by a fundamental understanding of the historic role which the present educational system has played in US society and by a vision of a new role for education, will be productive chiefly of continuing demoralization, desperation and therefore destruction of young people.

Education in the US can no longer be for the purpose of earning or for achieving the “goods” life or for fitting people into the framework of our present industrial society. Education must now be for the purpose of governing, that is, for the purpose of changing society and for changing ourselves simultaneously.

Within this new overall purpose, a new system of education must contain clear goals for each age group in terms of increased knowledge, consciousness and skills. In order to give an indication (but only an indication) of what these goals might be, we have drafted the diagram which appears on the back cover of this pamphlet. The smallest circle in the center contains a suggested curriculum for children aged 5-9; the next larger circle contains one for youth 10-14; with the largest circle for the young adult, 15-18. Clear-cut goals in productive, communications, ecological, physical, physiologi-

cal, and social-political skills and knowledge have been established for each age group, escalating in complexity and responsibility as we move up the age ladder. Each age group builds on and continues to strengthen the foundation previously established, at the same time that it is meeting new challenges. In order to (a) allow for natural and normal variations between individuals of the same chronological age, (b) avoid tracking, and (c) take advantage of the reciprocal advantages of emulation, students should work and learn in teams and within age groups rather than as individuals or in homogeneous age groups.

A new system of education does not come into being overnight. It emerges out of needs which are deeply and widely felt by a large proportion of the population on all levels. It is argued for passionately by pioneers. It is justified by philosophers and, finally, after a long struggle, it must be implemented by very practical organizers. The long struggle for a new system of education can only be won if there are some dedicated people who are ready to commit themselves to this goal and to struggle around concrete programs in which the fundamental ingredients of the new system are embodied.

In this period of unparalleled, unceasing crisis in the schools, the All-African Peoples Union has assumed the responsibility for putting forward such a program.

THE ALL-AFRICAN PEOPLES UNION PRESENTS A PROGRAM FOR LEARNING NOW!

Purpose:

To equip high school students with:

- (a) the principles, conceptual ability, knowledge and experiences necessary to make socially responsible decisions;
- (b) technical skills needed to carry out these decisions.

A Program for Learning Now

1. Social Studies

All Social Studies programs in high schools shall be organized on the basis of studying the City and the basic ingredients of the particular Community; health, facilities, stores, transportation, street lighting, alleys, housing, parks and recreation, schools, churches,—social services, factories, and their relationship to the Community (including their personnel), as well as the home-grown issues arising spontaneously in the Community.

Methods

All classes shall be organized into teams and on a workshop basis in order to go into the Community to investigate (research) the above conditions. Students will report back their findings and

proposals and will evaluate each other's reports. The instructor shall act as an adviser and resource person and must be genuinely concerned about the Community. Competition should be around the best reports and the best proposals for resolving specific problems. Students should be graded according to:

Initiative • Participation • Interest • Attendance • Working With Others • Creative Ability • Effort

- Definite goals with specific timetables should be set.
- Friday afternoons should be devoted to reporting back to individual workshops or classes the work of the previous, week, with students and instructors jointly responsible for evaluation of this work.
- Once every month a debate or panel discussion should be held for the entire school around a particular issue of the Community or City which seriously affects a significant section of the people of the Community or City, e.g. war, economics, transportation, housing, health, foreign affairs, etc.
- Once every two months a public debate or panel discussion should be organized by the students for the Community with parents and other citizens urged to attend.

Goals

- Students get to know their communities.
- Students learn to work together
- Students learn to judge themselves and one another.
- Students learn through practice in relation to concrete problems of the Community and City.
- Students become more relevant to the Community.
- The Community itself becomes a challenge as well as a resource to the students.

2. Technical Skills

Classes should be organized in Urban Planning to explore the concepts, acquire the knowledge, and develop the skills needed to plan, design and construct the elements of *city living*. This requires:

- **Environmental Knowledge and Concepts:** Ecology, Geography, Biology, Geology, Human Physiology
- **Construction Skills:** Drafting, Carpentry, Steamfitting, Heating and Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Metallurgy, Roofing, Electricity and Electronics
- **Communication Skills:** Writing, Speaking, Typing, Printing, Graphic Arts, Photography, Film Production, Radio, Television, Sound Engineering

Goals

- to acquire the skills and the scientific knowledge that are necessary to implement political decisions.
- to learn how to use language, the graphic arts, and the mass media as a means to create a new sense of Community.

3. Languages

Special equipment (language labs, etc.) should be installed to enable students to acquire skills in the languages of the people of Asia, Latin America and Africa. In the past, language skills were oriented towards the Western nations (Greece, Germany, France) that are rich in philosophy, music, art and science but are either declining or will not represent substantial social forces in the future. The languages of these nations should therefore be pursued more from a specialist viewpoint. On the other hand, Chinese and Spanish are spoken by hundreds of millions of people whose struggles to develop a new society will dominate the next century.

Although Swahili is spoken in certain sections of East Africa, it is chiefly a trading language. Africans have not yet established a continental language. In most areas education is in the tribal language plus the European language of the colonial power—English, French, Portuguese. French

should be studied in order to communicate with the Africans in the former French colonies.

A European language more relevant to the social forces of the future would be Russian.

There are ten times more English-speaking Chinese than there are Chinese-speaking Americans.

Goal

- to overcome our isolation from the many hundreds of millions elsewhere in the world who are also struggling to create a new society. Towards this goal those achieving a certain competence in these languages should make a trip to the countries where they are used so as to have an opportunity to practice the language and relate to the people. Those who do not achieve this level of competence should help subsidize the trip, e.g. by projects to raise funds for transportation, housing, etc.

4. Health and Physical Development

- Students should study their own bodies and the best methods for caring for them with the aim of setting up health facilities to check out the health of the student body as a whole. Doctors and other health professionals should be brought in to lecture and conduct workshops on preventive health care.

- Physical Education must involve the entire student body and not just the highly skilled athletes. Every student should be required to develop skills in boxing, swimming, gymnastics, running, etc. as well as in team sports.
- Once a month mobile units should be at every school to carry out dental and physical check-ups, vaccinations, x-rays, etc. with student trainees acting as aides to the unit technicians.
- Once a month students should hold seminars for parents and citizens of the Community on Health care, utilizing as resources the doctors, dentists, optometrists, medical and health technicians, and nurses of the Community.

Goals

- Students develop respect for their own bodies.
- Students develop skills in the area of health care.
- Students are able to provide information to the Community on the effects of foods and drugs on the body.
- Students are able to assist the Community in utilizing and expanding its resources in health care.

5. The Art and Science of Food Preparation

Physical Development and Health Care are directly related to the foods that we eat. Today, like many other arts and sciences, the art and science of food preparation are being lost to the machine. People are eating pre-cooked, frozen, dehydrated TV dinners with practically no nutritional value. Black young people in particular are beginning to live on hamburgers, hot dogs and potato chips from vending machines and drive-ins. At this rate, not only are the health, strength and endurance of blacks being steadily undermined, but it won't be long before black people will have to go to fancy schools of the Culinary Arts—like rich white folks—just to learn how to cook greens, fried chicken and pies. Black people in this country have a long historic tradition in agriculture—the growing of foods; and in cooking—the unique skills, developed out of necessity, to take ingredients that whites considered beneath them and to turn them into delicious and appetizing dishes.

In order to ensure that this tradition not be lost and for the sake of better health and physical development of this and future generations, all junior and senior high schools should set up departments to train *boys and girls* in the art and science of food selection and the preparation of meals for health, taste and appearance.

NOTE: Many blacks may regard this as a proposal to put them back into the kitchen or to keep us in a place that we are trying to get out of. We believe, on the contrary, that no people can control who they are unless they control what they eat. Those who master the art and science of food preparation are preparing themselves for one of society's most fundamental life-enhancing roles.

6. Community Assemblies

Once a month Community Assemblies should be held so that students can exhibit their achievements and prowess in all the above fields before the entire Community.

The City Is the Black Man's Land to Mold and to Govern

Molding, Governing require the ability to analyze this society and to understand why the principles, ideas and values on which it operates are now in direct contradiction to the continuing evolution of Mankind.

Molding, Governing require an insight into the principles, ideas and values that are necessary to create a new society in which Human Dignity and Human Development are more important than Material Development and the Gross National Product.

Some books and articles which are more relevant to this purpose of Molding and Governing than the old civics books now used in schools are:

- *The Culture of Cities, the City in History and the Urban Prospect*—by Lewis Mumford
- *The Life and Death of Great American Cities and the Economy of Cities*—by Jane Jacobs
- *The Emerging City*—by Scott Greer
- “The City is the Black Man’s Land” by Grace and James Boggs, *Monthly Review*, April 1966. (Reprinted in *Racism and the Class Struggle*)
- “The Liberation of Gary, Indiana” by Edward Greer, *Trans-action*, January 1971.

Goals in Reading

- to find out why, how and by whom cities have been formed in the past.
- to grasp the scope of the present crisis of US cities.
- to create a vision of a NEW CITY which will be a living symbol of Mankind’s will and capacities to control its own destiny.
- to discover the role that Black youth in particular can play in realizing this vision.

Our Parents and Grandparents Came to the City With Hope, *Our* Generation Can Realize This Hope

Collection “Works of Maoism”

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|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>Collected Works (1968-1987)</i>
Communist Party of Peru</p> <p>2. <i>Selected Works, Volume VI</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>3. <i>Selected Works, Volume VII</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>4. <i>Selected Works, Volume VIII</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>5. <i>Selected Works, Volume IX</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>6. <i>Selected Works, Volume I</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> | <p>7. <i>Selected Readings from the Works</i>
Jose Maria Sison</p> <p>8. <i>Selected Works, Volume II</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>9. <i>Selected Works, Volume III</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>10. <i>Selected Works, Volume IV</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> <p>11. <i>Selected Works, Volume V</i>
Mao Tse-tung</p> |
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Collection “Foundations”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. <i>The Foundations of Leninism</i>
Joseph Stalin</p> <p>2. <i>Wage Labour and Capital & Wages, Price and Profit</i>
Karl Marx</p> <p>3. <i>Reform or Revolution?</i>
Rosa Luxemburg</p> <p>4. <i>Socialism: Utopian and Scientific</i>
Frederick Engels</p> <p>5. <i>The State and Revolution</i>
V. I. Lenin</p> <p>6. <i>Labour in Irish History</i>
James Connolly</p> <p>7. <i>Anarchism or Socialism? & Trotskyism or Leninism?</i>
Joseph Stalin</p> <p>8. <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism</i></p> | <p>Karl Marx & Frederick Engels</p> <p>9. <i>Essays in Historical Materialism</i>
George Plekhanov</p> <p>10. <i>The Fascist Offensive & Unity of the Working Class</i>
George Dimitrov</p> <p>11. <i>Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism</i>
V. I. Lenin</p> <p>12. <i>The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State</i>
Frederick Engels</p> <p>13. <i>The Housing Question</i>
Frederick Engels</p> <p>14. <i>The Modern Prince & Other Writings</i>
Antonio Gramsci</p> |
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|---|--|
| <p>15. <i>What is to be Done?</i>
V. I. Lenin</p> <p>16. <i>Critique of the Gotha Program</i>
Karl Marx</p> <p>17. <i>Elementary Principles of Philosophy</i>
Georges Politzer</p> <p>18. <i>Militarism & Anti-Militarism</i>
Karl Liebknecht</p> <p>19. <i>History and Class Consciousness</i>
Georg Lukács</p> <p>20. <i>Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution</i>
V. I. Lenin</p> | <p>21. <i>Dialectical and Historical Materialism & Questions of Leninism</i>
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