

Racial Progress

Seven-year-old Linda Brown lived within four blocks of an all-white school in Topeka, Kansas. Instead of attending her neighborhood school, she was forced to walk six blocks, cross the busy Rock Island rail yards, and travel 15 more blocks to an all-black school. Her father, Minister Oliver Brown, enraged that his daughter had to be bused so far, unsuccessfully tried to enroll her in the nearby all white school. Having failed, he filed a lawsuit in 1951. The lower courts declared that segregated schools were legal, but the case was brought before the Supreme Court. In 1954 Chief Justice Earl Warren solemnly read the unanimous decree: "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."¹

Busing for Integration

Since that decision a second revolution has occurred in American education. Because of busing, both North and South have experienced numerous court decisions resulting in school closings and fierce riots. Some people have argued that since 44 percent of American children take buses, with only 3 percent for integration purposes, the issue is really, as Professor Thomas F. Pettigrew of Harvard remarked, a "polite, culturally sanctioned way to oppose the racial desegregation of the public schools."²

Two well-known congresswomen had a heated debate over busing. "I never bought a home without looking first to find out about the schools my boys would attend," said Republican Edith Green of Oregon. "If the Federal Government is going to reach its long arm into my house and say, 'We are sorry but your children are going to have to be bused 30 miles,' I say the Government has gone too far."

"Let me bring it right down front to you," answered Brooklyn's black Democrat Shirley Chisholm with fiery emotion and scorn. "Your only concern is that whites are affected. Where were you when black children were bused right past the white schools?"³

Despite the rhetoric about racial harmony and cooperation, our nation is still divided. The volatile busing issue has been a vital issue causing this separation. The problem is not simply busing children, but forced busing determined solely by skin color. When, in 1951, Linda Brown could not attend her neighborhood school because she was black, the

Supreme Court ruled she could. Today, reverse discrimination occurs, and white children are often forced to bypass their neighborhood schools solely because of their color.

Most Americans believe separate racial schools are detrimental. On the other hand, many strongly object to their loss of freedom to send their children to neighborhood schools. Schools need strong community and parental ties; the greater the parental access to schools, the greater the school's effectiveness. In many schools parental involvement is lacking, and busing children miles away only further prevents more parents from participating.

The opposite side of the issue concerns minority students condemned to inferior neighborhood schools. In 1949, when the "separate but equal" school system policy was in effect, Clarendon County, South Carolina, spent \$179 a year for each white child compared to \$43 for each black child.⁴ However, when, in 1966, Johns Hopkins sociologist James S. Coleman completed his massive report analyzing more than 600,000 children and 60,000 teachers in 4,000 schools, he found that schools attended by whites and minorities differed less in physical facilities, curriculums, and teachers than anyone had suspected. His conclusion: "Family-background differences account for much more variation in achievement than do school differences."⁵

Minority School Achievement

Though schools may differ little in their physical plant, there is a vast difference in educational achievement among schools. When City University of New York implemented the admission standard that all high school graduates must have an eighth-grade reading and mathematics ability, they found that 40 percent of entering students had been failing the test since 1971. Of these students, the *New York Times* reports, "72 percent of the black students sampled scored below eighth-grade level in either reading or math ability that 65 percent of Hispanic students similarly scored below that level and that 20 percent of the whites did."⁶

A black minister of a successful Harlem church told me how delighted he and his wife were when across their street a new school was built for their son to attend. At this school his son was at the top of his class. Through an open enrollment plan, other neighborhood children attended another school. These children, the father observed, were not outdoors as often as his son was because of their homework; his child, however, received little homework. Questioned about homework, the son said he had none.

Even though the child was the brightest in his class, the father felt his son was being shortchanged. Through the same open enrollment plan he transferred the boy to an old school in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood. He was the only black child in the school, and he did terribly. The work was extremely difficult; he just cried in class. The father asked why he was acting this way.

“I don’t understand the work,” the son complained. “They seem to be so far ahead.”

He was in the fourth grade, yet in this school he was barely toeing third-grade level. In his father’s view the neighborhood school had victimized him: Whereas in the former school he had been top of the class, now he was at the bottom. The father believed that an obstacle can be made either a stumbling-block or a stepping-stone, and being a determined man, he chose stepping-stones. Instead of giving up, he worked tirelessly with his son to repair his deficient education. The son met the challenge and graduated on a par with the other students.

Educational achievement and standards in many minority schools are disastrous. Most parents do not object to having minority children in their local schools, but they violently object when their children are forced out of their neighborhood schools to attend nonlearning and undisciplined schools, which are often in unsafe neighborhoods. The busing issue is a racial problem only because the government has made race a criterion; objections would arise to mandatory busing even if all races were the same. Regardless of reasons given, no concerned parents, whether black or white, want their child bused from a good neighborhood school to an inferior one.

Think of concerned parents who are required to send their children to undisciplined schools. The objection can be raised: “What about the parents living in these neighborhoods?” Certainly they deserve good schools. But the solution is not for these parents to insist that their children be bused out of their inferior schools while outside children are compelled to attend their undisciplined schools. Rather, these parents should band together and insist that their neighborhood schools have quality education in a disciplined environment. Parents deserve the freedom to choose the neighborhood and school they desire and not be forced by reverse discrimination to commit their children to detrimental environments.

One family, Al and Mildred McCauley, became so upset over forced busing that they kept their three children—David, 15, Danny, 14, and

Debbie, 10—at home. Their boys would have had to get up at 6:35 A.M. to ride a bus for 50 minutes to reach a ghetto school 22 miles away in Louisville, Kentucky.

“They won’t go there—ever,” Mrs. McCauley vowed. Their major complaint was the inferior education their children would receive and the school discipline problems they would encounter. They have also heard of crimes, stabbings, and rapes in the Parkland neighborhood. The McCauleys realize the desire for blacks to want better schools, but they reasoned, “Why don’t they just upgrade their schools? I just can’t see sending my children in there to get a lower education so that *they* can get a better one.”⁷

Carl Merchant refused to have his 13-year-old daughter attend a school located in a black neighborhood in Pontiac, Michigan. He does not consider himself a racist. “I work with black guys in the shop, and they’re as much against busing as I am,” he said.

Because of his refusal to send his daughter to the appointed school, Merchant was brought to trial. His primary defense was his concern for the safety of his daughter. Pontiac’s police chief likewise bore witness that the school was situated in a high-crime area—even the police traveled in pairs.

“I couldn’t bring myself to let my daughter go down into that environment,” declared the father.

Nevertheless, Merchant was convicted of “educational neglect,” and his in-laws were given custody of his daughter.⁸

Voluntary Integration

Allowances can be made for parents whose children are zoned for inferior schools and who hope to have them attend better schools by incorporating a voluntary transfer system. Newspaper columnist William Raspberry recommends adoption of a policy whereby students can attend any school that will improve racial balance. If schools implemented such a program, he notes, they would “not generate the fear-spawned opposition that busing has generated.”⁹

Portland, Oregon, has a voluntary transfer system. So far, 2,700 pupils, mostly black, have taken advantage of the opportunity to go to white neighborhood schools. A white exodus has not resulted since white children were not forced to attend predominantly black schools.¹⁰

To foster better racial relations, magnet schools can be utilized, and

children from various neighborhoods can enter these specialized schools to participate in their unique programs. Trotter High School, in Boston's Roxbury ghetto, was staffed by some of the best teachers in Boston; it had an innovative and exciting curriculum, including a fine arts course. Before the busing disruption, it had two thirds blacks and a long waiting list for whites. In the Dallas suburb of Richardson, the previously all black Hamilton Park Elementary School is balanced, with 289 white and 265 black students. It is a magnet school with outstanding courses in gymnastics, drama, and music with a 16:1 pupil-teacher ratio.¹¹ Many of the colleges are naturally integrated because of the specialized programs they offer.

Busing Results

Many minority parents are rightly concerned that their children receive a proper education; nevertheless, many receive a permissive educational experience. Instead of promoting a program of quality education in a disciplined environment, much money is spent on forced busing. Minority parents are often deceived into thinking their children are now in "good" schools after being bused; in reality, their children often receive the same permissive education as in their former schools.

Two critics of busing came from two black women, Biloine Whiting Young and Grace Billings Bress, who have studied the history of school desegregation since its inception in 1954. In the educational journal *Phi Delta Kappan*, they showed from several studies that integration had a "lack of significant effect on black achievement" in schools. "For 20 years the national remedy for low minority achievement has been busing for integration—the faith that if the correct racial mix can be provided in a classroom, problems of low achievement and racial tension will disappear. Such a 'solution' now appears to have been dangerously simplistic, creating expectations it has, so far, been unable to satisfy. Further, mandatory busing has contributed to the racial and economic segregation of our cities on a scale undreamed of in 1954, to the extent that in many there are no longer enough white pupils to integrate."¹²

As a result of forced busing, "resegregation" is taking place North and South as whites flee to the suburbs leaving the city schools to the minorities. Some prejudiced parents have put their children into private schools, but the majority of parents choose private schools to avoid having their children receive an inferior education in undisciplined schools. The

majority of private schools have an open admissions policy. What appeals to many parents is that private schools stress morality, have a disciplined learning environment, and offer back-to-basics approach to education.

When busing began in Detroit in 1971, the schools were 60 percent black; today they are 82 percent black. In Richmond the schools have switched from 55 percent white to 82 percent black, while Boston has changed from 60 percent white to 60 percent black since the implementation of busing. After integration, Atlanta black enrollment spiraled from 59 percent to 90 percent and Washington, D.C., from 57 percent to 92 percent.¹³

In 1966 University of Chicago sociologist James S. Coleman issued a pioneering report indicating that children from slums benefit when attending middle-class schools. His report was the basis for much of the federal school desegregation effort. Today, he no longer favors compulsory busing because it has forced an exodus of white children from cities or to private schools leaving the public schools more segregated than ever. "The only honest way to proceed in something like this," Coleman remarks, "is to ask, 'Is this the kind of regulation that I would want applied to me? Would I be willing to have my child sent to a school in the metropolitan area which is determined, not by my judgment, but by the school district, and I can't do anything about it unless I move away?' I think that very few of us, because we care very strongly about our kids' education, would be willing to answer 'yes' to those questions."¹⁴

"What's wrong with compulsory busing is that it's a restriction of rights," Coleman further objects. "We should be expanding people's rights, not restricting them."¹⁵ He finds it understandable that both black and white parents resist sending their children to schools "where 90 percent of the time is spent not on instruction but on discipline."¹⁶

Derek A. Bell, former black civil rights lawyer who supervised 300 cases of desegregation while with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and now dean of the University of Oregon Law School, said, "My contacts with blacks convince me that they want quality and effective schooling, they don't want the inconvenience of busing."¹⁷ UCLA Professor Thomas Sowell, also black, stated that busing black children is a terrible mistake because it did not help black achievement. He contends that the quickest way for blacks to improve their schools is to implement strict discipline and get rid of the few troublemakers who prevent the majority from learning.¹⁸

Racial Quotas

Instead of strict discipline and a program of quality education to guarantee minority progress, permissive leaders have another solution: Keep the program of automatic promotion and provide more freedom and rights. When minorities cannot make college grades, blame the colleges for racial bias. Minorities are failing, they say, not because of their inferior education, but because of the way tests are worded and on account of different cultural background. Educational standards must now be lowered to allow a fixed percentage of minorities into higher education. Some legislators in Maryland proposed that state bar examinations be eliminated as a requirement for law graduates to obtain a license to practice. Their reason was that black applicants were failing the tests disproportionately to whites; they claimed these tests were not “job related.”¹⁹

The Boston Latin schools, which opened the doors of higher learning to generations of Irish, Jewish, and Italian children, have been forced to lower their standards. These two schools were not part of the busing dilemma facing Boston; they were city-wide schools that required a rigorous entrance examination. These schools were integrated having between 7 and 9 percent black enrollment. When Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., discovered that they did not reflect the racial composition of the city, he ordered the schools to disregard test scores and admit 35 percent minority students.²⁰

Allan Bakke, a Marine Vietnam War veteran and an honor college student, decided to become a doctor. Though having a promising career as a space-agency engineer, after hours he took premed courses and worked as a hospital volunteer. At age 32, Bakke applied to the University of California Medical School at Davis, but was twice rejected. He discovered that though he ranked far above other accepted students, he was rejected because he was white, instead of being black, Hispanic, or Asian American. Out of the 100 applicants, 16 places were reserved for “disadvantaged students,” which could include whites but never did. In their average aptitude percentile rankings the 16 students enrolled in 1973 scored 35 in science, 46 in verbal skills; Bakke scored 97 in science, 96 in verbal skills.

Bakke filed a lawsuit, *Regents of the University of California v. Allan Bakke*, charging racial discrimination on the grounds of the equal-

protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment: “No State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The issue had become so complex and explosive that nearly 60 separate legal briefs had been filed by “friends of the court,” the largest number of briefs in Supreme Court history.²¹ After a long-awaited decision, the Supreme Court rejected rigid racial quotas but allowed race to be considered as a factor for special consideration.

“One of the most serious dangers of the QUOTA doctrine,” warns Bayard Rustin, the black president of A. Philip Randolph Institute, “is that it will perpetuate the stereotypical and profoundly mistaken view that Blacks lack the ability and the will to make it on their own.” Rustin analyzed that the quota system would automatically cause the “dominant White society to question the abilities of all Blacks, including the overwhelming majority who have succeeded because of their intelligence, skills, and self-discipline.”²²

Permitting minority students to enter colleges with lower standards because there is a lack of a representative sampling and permitting such students to graduate will have grave repercussions. Who will respond to these minority professionals on a free and open market where they will have to withstand competition? If an individual, whether black or white, is deathly sick and has the freedom to choose between a minority doctor who perhaps advanced because of lowered standards and another doctor required to pass the original standard, whom will he choose? The minority doctor may have been the brightest in his class, but patients do not check school records. All they know is that members of a certain race were permitted to enter these institutions with lowered standards. To be on the safe side, many will avoid these doctors—not because of racial prejudice but because of racial qualifications.

The end result will be that all minority doctors will bear the permanent stamp of racial inferiority, thereby causing generations of minorities to suffer. The same outcome will result for lawyers, engineers, architects, or persons in any other field where standards were lowered; finally, all minorities will bear the scar of racial inferiority.

When Rosa Cuevas heard about Allan Bakke, she declared: “Hurray for Allan Bakke! I am a Spanish-American female who will apply to medical school next fall. I have a 3.9 average (out of a possible 4.0). I do not want sixteen slots reserved for people like me. I want to be selected on the sole basis of my achievements.”²³

John Hope Franklin, a black professor at the University of Chicago, said:

I, for one, would want to know how my physician stood in his class and on his board examinations. Who would want to place his fortune or his sacred honor or even his life in the hands of an attorney, whose only record shows that he was exposed to the study of the law for the prescribed three years and that a state board certified him with no evaluation of his performance to practice law? The spirit of egalitarianism that would make us all lawyers or physicians or economists on the basis of our membership in the human family not only reflects irresponsibility but is counter-productive of the true objectives of a democratic society.²⁴

As more and more minorities graduate with lowered standards, there will be an increasing cry from top minority students who suffer from the stigma of intellectual inferiority. Here is a complaint by David L. Evans, a senior admissions officer of Harvard and Radcliffe colleges:

So much has been written about the illegitimacy of special recruiting efforts for minority students, black students' disillusionment and "reverse discrimination" that the mere *presence* of blacks at selective institutions has more and more begun to imply substandard credentials or relaxed admissions policies. Why is this? One reason is the almost total absence of news media coverage of the successes of black students. This one sided coverage has, in many cases, become an excuse for inaction and a belief that nothing can be done without "lowering the standards."

Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges have no special programs for minority students, but the more than 400 black undergraduates here have not escaped this unfair criticism. . . .

Although averaging above the 94th percentile on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and thus belonging to the cream of the crop of all college-bound teenagers, black students who come to Harvard far too often receive the coolest, most ambivalent reception given to any upwardly-mobile ethnic group that has ever entered these ivied walls. The polite black student still finds some of his white peers suspicious and probing.

"They are often trying to silently confirm that 'awful

something,” explains one black student, “so even a casual conversation takes on a nasty competitiveness. I feel I have to be wary of making the little mistake that will confirm what they are seeking—proof that ‘reverse discrimination’ is what brought me here.”²⁵

It is unfortunate when top-quality minority students have to defend their status. This is, however, a natural consequence when government forces schools to lower standards to achieve a certain percentage of minorities. Russell Kirk, editor of the *University Bookman*, points out, “Washington is using the force of law to compel colleges to hire under qualified and unqualified persons as professors merely because they are members of one ‘minority’ or another.”²⁶

In 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson launched the federal affirmative action program. At Howard University, President Johnson said, “You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘You are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.”²⁷ This is true. On the other hand, one does not take the person and start him in the middle of the race and declare him a winner. Really to help this unfortunate individual one should make special effort to train him until he can begin the race at the starting line. Then, when everyone competes equally, he can emerge as a true winner.

Few would object to seeking out talented minorities and providing extra help so that they can compete on an equal footing for college and employment. Objections arise when double standards are applied, solely on the basis of race. A Gallup poll showed that 83 percent of all respondents and 64 percent of the nonwhites, opposed racially based preferential treatment for colleges and employment.²⁸

When a great shortage of minorities occurs in a certain field, special classes can be provided so students can reach the necessary standards to enter specialized schools. Qualifications are not lowered; rather students are upgraded to meet standards. Upon graduation these students can then effectively compete with their peers. Instead, minority students are often pushed through the educational system whether they learned or not. St. Louis University instructor Ernest Calloway remarked about black students, “The expectation of the teacher is very low. One of the problems is raising the expectations so the child will be told, ‘You *can* learn. You *will* learn.’”²⁹

Eugene V. Rostow, professor of law and former dean of Yale University Law School, said he pioneered recruitment programs in black colleges and summer-school programs for promising black students so that they could “come into law school better prepared to compete in a basis of equality.” His program was to “help those who’ve been disadvantaged without threatening the standards by which all should be judged.”

To the comment “Advocates argue that reverse discrimination is the fastest way to help minorities recover from years of mistreatment,” Rostow, replied, “No, it isn’t. What happens very often with a quota system is that you get a large attrition rate. If you take in a lot of people who really can’t do the work, you find that many of them drop out. They are bitter, bruised and badly hurt by their experience.”³⁰

Programs are needed to help minorities achieve, not stopgap measures that destroy them. For too long these issues have been improperly handled. It is time educators faced the problem squarely and promoted realistic racial prosperity.

Minimum Competency Tests

One of the most popular trends in education today is the minimum competency movement. A panel appointed by the government to explore the movement reported that it deplored the idea of statewide testing before students could be awarded a diploma. One reason cited for rejecting the tests was: “If success on tests—for purposes of graduation or promotion—is achieved by four-fifths of a suburban school system but only one-third of a central city’s system, the consequences could be serious for domestic tranquility as well as social equity in a world where a high school diploma, regardless of intrinsic meaning, is frequently a ticket to particular jobs.”³¹

The argument that many inner-city children will fail to obtain a diploma in comparison to suburban children should be the exact reason for demanding competency standards. After seeing these high rates of failure, inner-city parents and educators should be saying, “Let’s have the facts. We welcome any device helping us realize our shortcomings; for by understanding our weaknesses we can upgrade our schools.” Unfortunately, there are those who believe that minority success can better be achieved by rejecting exposure of educational failure.

The report released on the Educational Testing Service, *The Reign of ETS: The Corporation That Makes Up Minds*, written by Allan Nairn, stated that ETS’s tests are biased against minorities and lower-income

students. ETS president William Turnbull replied, “Nader and Nairn wrongly blame the tests for showing that minority students are less well prepared in school than majority students. . . . The tests do not create the difference; they reveal it.”³²

‘When black columnist William Raspberry heard that half of Washington, D.C., first-, second-, and third-grade students had failed the promotional tests, he was quite sure of the reaction. “I thought we’d have a sprinkle of blame-placing, a dash of explanation, several dollops of criticism of inadequate parents, and then: a half-baked campaign to get rid of the tests that brought us the bad news in the first place.”

Instead, superintendent James Guines inaugurated a drive to recruit 1,000 volunteers to tutor most of the nearly all black children. Then Raspberry wryly commented, “It is such a sensible step that I’m astonished anyone thought of it. Its obvious premise is that the children can learn—even if they haven’t learned all they should have learned so far. It also accepts the principle that children who haven’t mastered one grade ought not to be promoted to the next one.”³³

The tenth annual Gallup poll on the public’s view of education indicated that “those who are most likely to have children who fail in their school-work—poorly educated parents—are the ones most in favor of requiring students to pass tests for promotion.”³⁴

Bilingual Education

Another program instituted to help particularly minority foreign born students is bilingual education. Instruction is mostly in Spanish to accommodate the large population of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Mexican children. In addition, there are to be 61 other languages, including the many tribal languages of the American Indians and Eskimos. Children are taught in their native tongue while English is learned as a second language. It is claimed that by gradually having children master both their native tongue and English they will be encouraged to remain in school. Previously, schools had an effective program called ESL (English as a Second Language), which encouraged students to learn English quickly, rather than depend on their native tongues. Bilingual programs do not emphasize English, as the ESL program does. A Spanish paraprofessional told me that in her school bilingual classes for American-born Spanish children are conducted in Spanish except for the study of English. She said that people favoring bilingualism are those who anticipate returning to their own country, not those planning to stay in America.

In the South Bronx a bilingual teacher voiced his opposition to the bilingual program (he stressed English, not Spanish). He showed me papers written by two Spanish children in this country only one and a half years, and I was amazed at their excellent English. Nevertheless, when school authorities observed him teaching, he was instructed to teach children more Spanish.

In another South Bronx school I interviewed a group of Spanish bilingual teachers. One teacher of many years' experience believed the bilingual program was detrimental. However, the younger teacher supported the program; she had come to this country at the age of 15 and knew how difficult it was to learn. The experienced teacher remonstrated, "If they would have had a bilingual program you never would have went to college."

The purpose of bilingual programs is to teach subject matter to foreign-speaking children handicapped in English. Yet both these teachers disclosed that in their junior high school only 1 out of 50 students in the bilingual program could not speak English; all had been born here or had come to this country when very young. The *New York Teacher* states, "The U.S. Office of Education claims that only one-third of the students enrolled in bilingual classes were of limited English-speaking ability. In the preliminary report, the study claimed that 85 percent of the Title VII project directors who were surveyed said that children were kept in the program after they are able to function in English."³⁵

Frank E. Armbruster, a director of interdisciplinary studies and author of *Our Children's Crippled Future*, says in his detailed study:

We began by examining the urban school systems at the beginning of this century, the last period when large numbers of predominantly rural people swarmed into our northern cities. During this time, northern-city schools saw vast numbers of pupils who spoke no English. In New York 53 percent of the children came from families where no English was spoken, and 72 percent of the city's entire population was first- or second-generation immigrants. Similar situations existed in Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, Milwaukee, and Buffalo, as well as many smaller coal, iron, and mill cities throughout the East. . . .

Classrooms housed up to eighty or ninety pupils. Teachers were from earlier immigrant groups but spoke only English in class and often as not are said to have despised the unwashed

newcomers. Yet the schools upheld the standards and taught the essential subjects of middle-class America. The pupils learned to read and write, and learned basic grammar, arithmetic, history, and geography by the sixth grade—which was as far as most children went in those days. . .

The Great Depression era again saw high student/teacher ratios (about 30 to 1); many schools with second-generation immigrants whose parents couldn't speak English (and those who could had generally gone only to the sixth grade); and little money for education “specialists” or for schools in general. Yet pupils who couldn't read by the seventh grade in those days were virtually unknown. They could also do long division, knew history, geography, could write compositions, and scored some of the highest grades on ninth-grade academic achievement tests we have ever seen. Most states had strictly enforced laws that kept pupils in school until they were sixteen, but these big, tough kids were orderly, for slum, or mining patch, behavior, grammar, and dress were left at the schoolyard gate. Middleclass standards were maintained, and even “Manual Arts” program students had to take and pass one year of algebra, one year of geometry, two years of a foreign language, three years of real history, and four years of English, including composition and American and English literature. During World War II, these were the boys who had those high aptitude test scores.³⁶

Millions of former immigrants have learned through our schools and become assimilated into our nation. Now, with bilingualism, these children will have greater difficulty functioning in society. For many, bilingualism compounds learning problems; foreign children, who often have enough difficulty learning one language, must now learn two languages!

Knowledge of English is still essential for opportunity in America. Certainly non-English-speaking children should be helped over the rough transition period and encouraged to learn their parents' culture and language, as in ESL and foreign-language courses. But the current bilingual program helps to polarize nationalities and is ineffective in helping children learn and master English. It is another permissive method making it easier for children to adapt, but creating future hardships.

A *New York Times* editorial casts additional light on the difficulties of bilingualism:

Viewing the growing language conflict in Canada, Americans can be grateful that this country has no great region of non-English-speaking citizens such as the Province of Quebec. . . .

Many other difficulties have grown out of Canadian bilingualism. Hostilities are fanned by requirements for French speaking quotas in Government offices and even for whole units in which French must be spoken. . . . It has proved a political curse in Belgium, an endless source of friction in ethnic patchwork countries like Yugoslavia and a cause of bloody massacres in India. Only in little Switzerland does it not seem to have been a millstone.

Immigrants to America have naturally formed language enclaves, but the sooner their children have learned to think, speak and write in English, the greater has been their mobility, the better their chances of success and the freer their country from the friction of clashing cultures. This is not to deny the need to tide Spanish-speaking children over a rough transition period in New York's school system. It is rather to urge that it not be allowed to encourage a language separatism that can only grow more harmful with the years.³⁷

Quota Discipline

Another racial issue is the disproportionate amount of minority punishment. More than a million children are suspended from public schools for disciplinary reasons each year, and black students are punished twice as much as any other group. Sex discrimination also exists: Boys far outstrip girls in receiving disciplinary action.

Superintendents of New York City schools were told by the school chancellor to monitor ethnic data in student suspensions because of the demands of the Office of Civil Rights. Some of the high school principals were cited because of the high percentage of a certain ethnic group. Ted Elsberg, president of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, said, "Essentially, what does monitoring of suspension by ethnicity mean? It means that the offenses—be they mugging of students, beating of teachers and supervisors, drug pushing or whatever—are deemed less important than the ethnic label of the offenders.

"Maintenance of discipline in the schools for the sake of pupils of

all origins becomes irrelevant. Quotas never made any sense.”³⁸ Scott D. Thomson, associate secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, claims the problem is not racial prejudice, for “blacks are suspended more often than whites even in schools that have black administrators.” In his opinion, “The life style of black kids simply gets them in trouble more. Traditionally, the white kid succeeds by following the rules, while the ghetto kid gets ahead by acting tough.”³⁹ Eugenia Kemble, special assistant to the AFT president, says, “The proportionality argument—in suspensions, testing, credentialing- is emerging as evidence of discrimination. But we need to know how many of the suspended children—black or white—are from broken homes, live in single-parent families, have suffered from child abuse, and neglect, or are from families with incomes below the poverty level. I would be willing to wager a guess that if these factors were looked at across racial lines, many of them would prove to be much more crucial determinants of suspension than race.”⁴⁰

However, the government is often not interested in facts; it simply wants everything to look proper on paper. Imagine a school having 30 percent black, 20 percent Hispanic, 5 percent Oriental, and 45 percent white, with a 50 percent male and 50 percent female population, at the end of the school year it could report to the government that suspensions and disciplinary actions perfectly matched these figures. Utopia!

Perhaps a 5 or 10 percent deviation could be allowed to show flexibility. What will such a program of “quota discipline” produce? If a school with 50 percent minority and 50 percent white students has 75 minority troublemakers and 100 white troublemakers, what should it do? Search for 25 minority students to punish or let 25 white students go free? If another school has had too many minority students sent to the dean’s office, should it send a notice around: “Please note: Minority quotas have succeeded the allotted number; we will take only white students until further notice.”

Yet there are minority individuals who rightfully complain of the soft treatment their people receive. One such person is Omar Blair, a black member of the Denver Board of Education who protested about double standards: “Teachers don’t discipline black students because they say they are afraid of the consequences. Black students roam the halls and are ignored. Teachers allow black kids to talk back to them and won’t do anything about it. In contrast, white kids would be sent to the principal.”⁴¹

A white teacher in Charlotte, North Carolina, said, “I wasn’t even aware that I was going easier on blacks than whites until a black student mentioned it to me. He said I was not yelling at them as much and asked if I were afraid of them. I guess I was afraid black students would take it as a threat.”⁴²

In New York City many of the minority schools have much greater discipline problems; consequently, when the students enter other schools they transfer their learned undisciplined behavior. Contrariwise, a high school where I was a dean had a good number of Chinese students who caused very little difficulty. Will this school fall under the government ax for being discriminatory if it does not reach the quota for Chinese?

Government quotas for discipline can only be a disastrous policy. It prevents teachers from implementing proper disciplinary procedures where students of another race are involved for fear of being labeled prejudiced. The end result? Minority students suffer.

Teachers and school officials face a dilemma: On the one hand, minorities complain that their children are not disciplined the way whites are; at the same time, the government charges that too many minority children are being punished. The solution is not to count colors but to reject racial figures as a criterion for taking disciplinary actions. It is far wiser to attack racial discrimination whenever it rears its ugly head.

A Destroyed Generation

The effect of lack of discipline and low educational standards has been calamitous—a generation of minorities has been destroyed by the inferior education they received. Today, because of the busing issue, exodus of the middle class, high crime, and other economic factors, many cities have an increasing population of minorities and high unemployment. The *New York Times* reports, “Despite chronic unemployment among young blacks that now officially exceeds 40 percent—some estimates range upward of 70 percent—there has been no agreement among experts about how to avert what could become a human disaster in which millions of blacks become adults with no hope of ever finding jobs with a future.”⁴³

“A new generation of ghetto youths is casting a long shadow across many of America’s big cities,” states *U.S. News & World Report*. “Poorly educated for the most part and lacking in job skills, such black youngsters are drifting by the hundreds of thousands toward aimless lives of poverty, drugs, crime and violence—in effect, closing their minds and turning their backs on the outside world.

“These young people are a minority within a minority.”⁴⁴ Andrew Billingsley, president of Morgan State College in Baltimore and an expert on black family life, says, “We have young people in our black communities 30 years old or so who have never held a job. We are thereby developing a permanent jobless subsociety, the implications of which are far too dangerous to imagine.”⁴⁵ The high level of unemployment has had its impact on the criminal behavior of the youth. A study made by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration comments that the present level of violence of black teenagers is “without precedence.”⁴⁶

In looking behind the disturbances in Detroit, where the majority of the city’s 1.4 million people are black, including the mayor and many high officials, one finds that there are few family men in their prime managing to hold on to a steady job. According to the Census Bureau, black families have been splitting up at a growing rate in the ghettos; nearly half the children in Detroit are living with one parent—usually the mother—or with relatives, and the chances are both mother and children are on welfare. Unemployment of black youth in Detroit is estimated to be from 50 to 75 percent. *U.S. News & World Report* describes the terrible conditions:

Many nonworking Detroit youngsters have been out of school, either as dropouts or graduates, for years and still haven’t landed their first job. Others who did try no longer bother to look, preferring instead to scratch out a living on the streets as “con” artists, petty criminals, drug pushers, pimps and prostitutes.

Even if there were jobs for everybody, sizable numbers of black youths probably still would not be working.

Some just don’t want to work. Far too many, say Detroit businessmen and black leaders, are trying to enter the job market with no skills, little appreciation for the “work ethic,” and without even the fundamentals of an education. They’re simply unprepared to hold a job.

Those in close touch with ghetto youth point out this: In all their growing-up years, no one has explained to such youngsters what it means to come to work on time, or how to cooperate with fellow workers, take supervision or separate personal problems from their job.

Largely because of inadequate preparation in job skills and attitude, only a handful of young disadvantaged blacks who land

jobs are successful in keeping them.

In one hiring program aimed at helping members of Detroit gangs, a mere 20 per cent of those hired were still on their jobs a month later. Almost all of those who stuck with it had been gang leaders before. One is now making over \$300 a week as a plant supervisor.

Black leaders here blame the schools for failing to do a better job of educating these youngsters—and many criticize themselves for not insisting on quality education.

Some high-school graduates “can’t even read their own names on their diplomas,” complains a black union official. . . .

There is growing criticism, too, over what is being stressed in the predominantly black public schools. Too much emphasis, critics argue, is being put on instilling “black pride” in these young people and not enough on teaching them to read, write and do simple arithmetic.

“The educational system has deteriorated terribly in this city,” comments Tom Turner, a black who is president of the Detroit AFL-CIO Council. “And I suppose the black community is partly responsible.”

He says the problem started decades ago when blacks, lured from the South by the prospect of high-paying employment in factories, migrated here by the tens of thousands.

They eventually pushed out of the traditionally black East Side into the northwest and far-west sections of the city. White families in those areas moved to the suburbs, leaving the neighborhoods and the schools with a black majority. This fall the schools have a 76 per cent black enrollment.

Mr. Turner continues: “What the black community did—tragically in retrospect—was to insist that the school board lower the standards of the system to the level of the black students instead of raising the black levels to the existing standards.”

Those wanting to go on to college have been especially cheated, critics contend. On their college-entrance tests this year, Detroit students scored among the nation’s lowest.⁴⁷ (Used by permission.)

In Detroit, as the article reveals, one can observe the results of permissiveness: children not trained to work, no insistence on quality

education, automatic promotion where some high school graduates “can’t even read their own names on their diplomas,” neglecting to teach children the three R’s, and lowering the standards for the minorities. Results? College-bound youth is one of the worst in the nation, and poorly educated youth are drifting “toward aimless lives of poverty, drugs, crime and violence.”

Patrick J. Buchanan writes about the schools in Washington, D.C.:

By dollars spent, D.C.’s schools should be among the nation’s best. Twenty-five years ago, when the city spent about \$250 per pupil, we did indeed boast of some of the finest public schools in America. Now, the taxpayers shell out \$1,800 per student (fourth among the top 20 cities in America) and ours is arguably the lousiest public school system in the United States. Nineteen of every 20 kids in attendance are black. They are being robbed as systematically as the taxpayers footing the bill.

Take discipline. As a Fortune Magazine writer who studied the city described it, “The public school system is a shambles. Violence is commonplace. Absenteeism in the upper grades averages 21%. The cost of replacing broken windows comes to \$620,000.”⁴⁸

A most pathetic incident in relation to inferior education has to do with a Washington, D.C., black student graduating as valedictorian from Western High School, which Buchanan says was “one of our best public highs.” While at high school he had a straight A average; but when he tried to enter George Washington University, he scored so low on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) that he failed the entrance exam. His verbal score placed him in the lowest 13 percent of college-bound seniors; his math score put him in the lowest 5 percent. The administration was puzzled by the wide discrepancy between his high grades in school and his low SAT score. The university administered a different test, and the result was the same!

Superintendent of schools Vincent Reed speculated that in a school plagued with discipline problems he might have had his grades inflated because he behaved. When Joseph Ruth, George Washington’s dean of admissions, was asked what went wrong, he replied, “My feeling about a kid like this is that he’s been conned. He thinks he’s a real scholar. His parents think he’s a real scholar. He’s been deluded into thinking he’s gotten an education.”⁴⁹ The seriousness of the situation lies in the

question: If the valedictorian did so poorly, what level of achievement did the other students possess?

Minority youth need a proper education to find meaningful employment. But the government must be careful to promote incentives to train minorities and not force industries to hire unqualified help. Pressure in the latter direction will compel industries to flee to areas rich in capable help. Some persons may object and insist on having success now, claiming they have suffered long enough. But what has instant success produced? Minorities are suffering and alienated more than before.

Quality Education

Implementing a program of quality education that will assure all minority students a proper education is not an instant success program, as the racial quota system tries to be. But what if such a program were incorporated in minority schools so that *all* children were expected to know the basics for each grade level? A school located in a ghetto area with grave social problems would certainly have more difficulties attaining such goals. The remedy is not to water down the curriculum to ensure that children experience success; rather, it is to spend extra time and effort to help them succeed. If achievement promotion and reasonable educational standards are established and minority children are trained to work and learn to compete on their own, then when entering employment or higher education they can unashamedly declare they have achieved on their own merits. With such achievements the future for minorities will be bright.

With racial quotas utilizing lowered standards, results are instantaneous. However, the future will be bleak for minorities, even for those who have achieved on their merits. Every minority person will suffer the permanent label of inferiority, and his children's children will bear the scar of this stigma. They may fight the label, but the fact that they were permitted to enter schools and graduate with lower standards cannot be altered.

Minorities have not had their full share of the American dream. To partake of the benefits of this land, they must avoid the easy solutions that guarantee quick success. Minority leaders must demand a proper education, a disciplined environment for their neighborhood schools, and challenge students to take difficult courses.

Our nation needs a healing of the races. I long to see the day when all races will freely share, work, and live together as fellow human beings

in love and harmony. It was a great encouragement to me to find when I was a substitute teacher that in some of the all-black schools of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Harlem, the children did not possessing a bitter racial spirit. Herein lies hope to provide these and other minorities a bright future. Yet we live in a world that practices racial hate and discrimination. The way to end discrimination is not by pampering minorities with progressive policies that cause racial deterioration, but by fighting discrimination itself.

We may look at ghetto neighborhoods with their shattered buildings, fenced stores, and grinding poverty; but we must never forget that living here are people—people with dreams, visions, and aspirations just like ours. The education they have been subjected to has made it impossible for them to succeed. They have been trained for failure. America needs to train a new generation, and to provide *every* race with a program of quality education.