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**Education for assimilation, integration or liberation? A critical  
analysis of Black educational thought in the late sixties and  
early seventies**

**Lee, Boon Tzao, Ed.D.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991**

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EDUCATION FOR ASSIMILATION, INTEGRATION OR LIBERATION?  
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF BLACK EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT  
IN THE LATE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES

by

Boon Tzao Lee

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## ABSTRACT

LEE, BOON TZAO, ED.D. Education for Assimilation, Integration or Liberation? A Critical Analysis of Black Educational Thought in the Late Sixties and Early Seventies. (1991). Directed by Dr. H. Svi Shapiro. 246 pp.

This study examines radical Black educational thought in the post Civil Rights era within the context of Black Power. The ideology of radical Black education manifested in four major areas namely, 1) educational colonialism, 2) community control of schools, 3) the Black Studies movement, and 4) the Black University movement. Radical Black educators employed the colonial model to explain the education of blacks asserting that public education was an education of subjugation. Community control of schools was seen as "a process of nation-building"--re-Africanization and decolonization of Black children. Black education was to expand Black consciousness to challenge domination. Perceiving education at the white institutions of higher learning as "irrelevant or destructive" to Black educational experience, Black students demanded Black Studies programs. The programs were deemed an important tangible way in which Black students resisted "cooption" by the system and as a strategy to fight against "cultural imperialism." The Black University movement was intended to blacken the "Negro" colleges, and to "saturate" students in blackness.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is a popular literary allegory in classical Chinese literature depicting a lone scholar reading by candle light long into the wee hours. The imagery symbolizes that the pursuit of knowledge is a lonely task. I would like to use the analogy to describe my writing of this dissertation. It was a lonely task. The process of writing may be lonely, however, the end product is never the labor (in a very broad sense) of one person. Throughout my research and writing, I benefitted from the wisdom, knowledge, and creative insights of many individuals, particularly, my dissertation advisor, Dr. H. Svi Shapiro and members of the dissertation committee, Dr. Fritz Mengert, Dr. David Purpel and Dr. Loren Schweninger. They gave their valuable time, patience and insights. Dr. Shapiro graciously and generously gave me directions, guidance and valuable suggestions. Without his encouragement and patience, this study will not be what it is. However, any shortcomings are mine. To all of them, I extend my special thanks.

As always my wife, Barbara, and my children, Amy, Wendy and Collin have provided affection and support. They tolerated my frequent absences, particularly the weekends while I was away at the library. Though physically distant, my mother, brothers and sister have also been supportive in spirit. To them I owe a great debt of thanks.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Historian Benjamin Quarles observes that Black Americans had endowed education with a redemptive and mystical quality. Indeed, Black\* Americans have had a strong faith in education as an instrument for social change. Their long struggle to a better status in American society through education attested to their faith in the power of education. Moreover, according to Quarles, "the dominant force behind the black quest for education centers in the concept of freedom" (1976:20). This was defined by the historical experience of the Black Americans. As Solomon P. Gethers puts it, "The black man's effort to free himself of racist oppression stretches back over the entire period of his stay in America, beginning

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\*This author is aware that currently Americans of African descendants prefer to be called African Americans. However, the word "Black" is used throughout this work to be consonant with the materials used in the work. The word was widely used in the late Sixties and the Seventies, and it is not totally out of vogue now. Capitalization of the word "Black" in this study follows the practice of Johnella E. Butler in her **Black Studies: Pedagogy & Revolution**. It is capitalized when referring to the culture and sensibility. When used descriptively to indicate race, it is not capitalized. In quotation, it appears as it is in the text quoted.

with the resistance of the first African slaves and continuing unabated for 300 years" (1970:44). The struggle for freedom for the blacks was a historical reality and was not a philosophical abstraction for pondering in the salon. Their quest for education was an integral part of their political struggle for empowerment, equality and social justice.

According to Gethers, the history of blacks' struggle for freedom has passed through four interrelated overlapping stages of development:

**the struggle for freedom from physical enslavement** or the period between the 1600's and 1865;

**the struggle for civil and political equality** which got underway following Emancipation (although the seeds were planted in the period preceding Emancipation) and continued into the 20th century;

**the struggle for socio-economic equality** which began to build in the period immediately following the Civil War, reached a high point in the 1960's and has yet to be fully realized as we enter the 1970's; and finally

**the struggle for ethnic self-hood**, introduced fitfully throughout the black man's history in America, but raised to a new level of importance by the Black Power revolt of the mid-1960s (1970:45).

Freedom and education were inextricably bound together in the cultural value system that developed among Black Americans enslaved in the United States. The development of Black educational ideology follows closely the same contour of political struggle for freedom. This is not

to suggest that blacks have reduced education to politics. Blacks struggle for the rights to education is a political act and the educational process itself is an act of resistance. This fact was borne out by many touching stories of how many slaves, young and old, struggled to learn to read and write.

In order to maintain the plantation system, slave owners took every precaution to prevent slave rebellion and flight. They controlled the flow of information and cut off all knowledge of the outside world from their bondsmen. Laws were enacted in the slave states to prohibit educating slaves and severe punishment was sanctioned for anyone who taught a slave to read and write. A Carolina planter wrote "The increase of knowledge [among slaves] is the principal agent in evolving the spirit [of rebellion] we have to fear" (Katz, 1971:101).

On the other hand, slaves waged an uphill and continuous battle to learn to read and write. Slave narratives abound with stories of cruel and severe punishments meted out to those who were caught with books. The punishment had not prevented many from finding a way to have an education. They had employed many secret and ingenious ways to learn to read and write. Here is the story of Susie King Taylor, who later served as a nurse and teacher in the first Negro regiment in the Civil

War, to illustrate the point that learning is an act of resistance:

I was born under the slave law in Georgia, in 1848, and was brought up by my grandmother in Savannah. There was three of us with her, my younger sister and brother. My brother and I being the two eldest, we were sent to a friend of my grandmother, Mrs. Woodhouse, a widow, to learn to read and write. She was a free woman and lived on Bay Lane, between Habersham and Price streets, about half a mile from my house. We went every day about nine o'clock, with our books wrapped in paper to prevent the police or white persons from seeing them. We went in, one at a time, through the gate, into the yard to the kitchen, which was the schoolroom. She had twenty five or thirty children whom she taught, assisted by her daughter, Mary Jane. The neighbors would see us going in sometimes, but they supposed we were there learning trades, as it was the custom to give children a trade of some kind. After school we left the same way we entered, one by one, when we would go to a square, about a block from the school and wait for each other (Katz, 1971:133).

Although the blacks in the North did not need to struggle for physical freedom, they too perceived education would aid in the cause of freeing their brothers and sisters in the South. A proclamation of the 1853 National Convention of the Colored People stated:

Among the colored people, we can point, with pride and hope, to men of education and refinement, who have become such, despite of the most unfavorable influences; we can point to mechanics, farmers, merchants, teachers, ministers, doctors, lawyers, editors, and authors, against whose progress the concentrated energies of American prejudice have proved quite unavailing.--Now, what is the motive for ignoring and discouraging our improvement in the country? The answer is ready. The intelligent and upright free man of color is an unanswerable argument in favor of liberty, and a killing condemnation of American slavery. It is easily

seen that, in proportion to the progress of free man of color, in knowledge, temperance, industry, and righteousness, in just that proportion will be endangered the stability of slavery; hence, all the powers of slavery are exerted to prevent the elevation of the people of color (Bell, 1969: proceedings of 1853 National Convention, p. 17).

For the blacks then, education was not only an instrument for securing freedom from ignorance, poverty, and moral degradation, but also a weapon to fight racism and prejudice. Education had a very important political mission. This argument was set forth very plainly in an address of the 1835 National Convention of the Colored People. It stated:

We are unable to conceive of any better method by which we can aid the cause of human liberty, than by improving our general character, and embracing within our grasp the liberated slave for moral and mental culture.

They realized that "We were not only slaves but our ignorance made us willing slaves." Thus, the question of education was on the agenda of every national and state convention before and after the Civil War. Every convention emphasized and re-emphasized the importance of education for the uplifting of the Black people. Every convention called upon the Black parents "every where, to use every just effort in getting their children into schools, in common with others in their several locations."

Though the blacks saw education as an instrument for liberation, they did not intend what the Black children

learned to be any different from that which their white counterparts learned. Their education comprised both liberal arts and vocational training, as the second National Convention held in 1832 stated "We must have Colleges and high Schools on the Manual Labor system, where our youth may be instructed in all the arts of civilized life ... in possession of classical knowledge..." Indeed, they hoped their children "can gain up with the whites, (as gain he must, or he will be utterly lost)".

In the North the education of Black children was mainly conducted in the private schools and if public education was offered at all, it was offered on a separate and unequal basis. Black parents had to campaign for desegregation. In 1855, they gained some success in Boston. De facto segregation was the norm. Since the end of the Nineteenth Century, the "separate but equal (meaning unequal)" doctrine permeated every sphere of Black life. They had to fend off white violence, fight Jim Crowism and struggle for political rights and privileges guaranteed them by the Constitution. They wanted the opportunity to realize their American dream. Thus, the question arose: which was the best strategy to reach this goal. This debate also overflowed into the educational arena. However, it must be pointed out that education for freedom was only one position on education



taken by blacks then. There were divergent positions on education. Some urged the study of high culture, and others for vocational education. The different positions seemed to coexist. After the Reconstruction, the stream of vocational education and the stream of liberal arts education clashed head-on. The Great Debate between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois was a well-known event in the annals of American history and that of the education of Black Americans. Washington strongly advocated vocational education for the blacks as he believed that the future of the blacks lay in the South and in a strong economic base. He sought to advance the interest of the Black people by appeasing the whites on the one hand, and on the other hand, repeatedly urging his people to learn to run a business and learn a trade, to be good farmers, workers, craftsmen, mechanics, bakers, etc. making themselves productive and useful to the community where they lived. Once they had proved to the community that their services were essential and needed by the community, they would be accepted as respectable members of the community. Washington was willing to forego social integration for economic gain. His educational program accommodated the white supremacist values of the New South. His opponents saw industrial education as a political compromise between the Northern industrialists/philanthropists and the

Southern \*supremacist whites. The industrial education would maintain a steady supply of trained, docile labor force and the interracial accommodation. According to Robert G. Sherer in his study of Black educators in Alabama in the Nineteenth Century Alabama, the majority of Black educators in Alabama then rejected Washington's educational programs and his ideas because his educational programs would not lead to the type and level of social advancement that blacks desired. Du Bois and others, particularly the editor of Boston Guardian, William Monroe Trotter, opposed Washington's position of racial segregation and his industrial education to the exclusion of higher learning. Du Bois pointed out that "the tender of the palm-branch only brought about 1. the disenfranchisement of the Negro, 2. the legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro, 3. the steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro." Du Bois then pressured the nation with protest and demanded equality without compromise. He was not alone. President John Hope of Atlanta University publicly asked: "If we are not striving for equality, in heaven's name for what are we living ... Yes, my friends, I want equality." Du Bois saw that the Black people needed the college trained to provide leadership in the struggle for equality.

We are not here to pass judgment as to the merit of the

strategies advocated by Washington and DuBois. Their debate on these strategies only serves to illustrate the point that blacks consciously viewed education as a means to reach a political and social ends--political equality and social justice.

Had the industrial education and the liberal education served the blacks the way its proponents wished them to be? According to Carter G. Woodson, the answer is: "Not exactly." Woodson was a historian, educator, founder of the Association for the Study of the Negro Life and History, and founder/editor of **The Journal of Negro History**. He was self-educated until he was seventeen years old when he entered high school. He enrolled in Berea College, Kentucky and completed his undergraduate study at the University of Chicago 1908 and earned a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1912. For Woodson, education had not been a significant factor in uplifting the blacks. In his **The Mis-Education of the Negro** (1933), Woodson felt that education of Black people had "served the oppressor." Historian Harvey Wish observes that:

In his challenging book, **The Mis-Education of the Negro**, he [Woodson] saw failures in both industrial and literary schools. Few graduates stay very long in the trade for which they were trained (usually in obsolete shops) and educated Negroes experienced the frustration of those who lacked the opportunity to utilize their knowledge of literature, philosophy, and the social studies. The downward postbellum trend in skilled jobs had continued, he thought, and too few of his race were properly educated to earn a living.

Outsiders still controlled Negro education without comprehending Negro needs; and the average members of the race lacked the knowledge of his traditions such as the contributions of Africa which would give him a sense of collective pride. The Talented Tenth were increasingly in evidence, but they were estranged from Negro mass institutions such as the churches (1964:199).

Woodson felt that the curriculum in Black colleges did not differ from that of the white colleges. The curriculum served the white youths well but "The Negro thus educated is a hopeless liability of the race." The education offered to the blacks did not improve their sense of self-worth but resulted in their feeling inferior and hating themselves. He felt the progress of the Black people depended on the quality of education and the development of Black positive identity and sensitivity.

Many scholars feel that Woodson's theory and philosophy of education is applicable today. His emphasis on Black cultural traditions and on building Black collective pride and identity predates the Black Studies movement.

Indeed, in the post Civil Rights era, militant Black educators with nationalistic vent took up the task left behind by Woodson. Militant Black educators again raised high the banner of assertion of blackness and ethnic pride. As mentioned earlier in this introduction, the Black Power Movement or the Black Nationalist Movement was characterized by Solomon Gethers as the struggle for ethnic self-hood. This characterization

captures the essence of Black struggle in the post Civil Rights years. The Black people were determined to take their rightful place as first class citizens and to claim their rights which included the right to self-determination and the right to be proud of blackness.

James Turner, now Director Emeritus of the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, defines Black nationalism [or Black Power] as follows:

- (1) The desire of Black people to determine their own destiny through formation, preservation, and control of their own political, social, economic, and cultural institutions.
- (2) The determination of Black people to unite as a group, as a people in common community, opposing white supremacy by striving for independence from white control.
- (3) The resistance of Black people to subordinate status and the demand for political freedom, social justice, and economic equality.
- (4) The development of ethnic self-interest, racial pride, group consciousness, and opposition to and rejection of the dominant ideas of white-defined society perceived to be incompatible with this objective.
- (5) The re-evaluation of self and of the Black man's relationship with the social system in general (1971:9).

The ardent Black power advocates, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton declare:

Black Power seeks to correct the approach to dependency, to remove that dependency, and to establish a viable psychological, political and social base upon which the black community can function to meet its needs (1967:81).

Black Power also sought to overcome the blacks' predicament of existing "in two cultural worlds and in two different

societies at the same time, without being totally a part of either," and the marginality graphically described by Julius Lester:

Blacks have always been made to view their predicament in terms of whites. They have been all "outs" trying to get "in." This immediately gives those who are "in" a power. It is their decision whether or not you will get in. They set the qualifications. Black people have to qualify for a job or enter a school according to standards set by whites. Life for a black person can be nothing more than a series of tests with a nation of white schoolteachers grading every step you take, every breath you breathe. In the South you can fail the test if you wear a white shirt and tie. In the North you can fail if you don't wear a shirt and tie. By saying that America has a "Negro Problem," the burden for solving it has been put on the one who carries the burden of being oppressed. "If Negroes would do this and do the other, we wouldn't have this problem." It is always the Negro who is wrong. (1968:83).

Black Power was a political and an economic revolution as well as a cultural revolution. There was a general overall feeling of exuberance and pride within the Black community and the wave of Black consciousness spreaded from the street of the inner city to the ivy-covered hall of university campus. It was a time of liveliness, creativity, confrontation and contro-versy in the street as well as in the Black cultural and literary world. A Black Arts Movement had emerged in the vibrating time of the Black Power Movement. The Black Arts Movement repudiated the "Euro-Western" sensibility and committed to describe "the total feelings/emotions/attitudes and values

of black people so that black people can better understand themselves and then be able to define/redefine themselves within a black frame of reference." The Black Arts Movement sought to sensitize Black people so that they would accept their blackness. Similarly, the militant Black educators sought to "blacken" the curriculum and to Africanize and decolonize Black children. Black consciousness was displayed in the Black everyday life. Many sported the natural Afro hair-style instead of attempting to straighten their curly hair; many donned the flowing, colorful dashiki and they were proud of Black skin by declaring "Black is Beautiful."

It was a time of outburst of Black creativity and energy in the educational arena as well. This dissertation attempts to examine the Black educational ideology during the era of the Black Power Movement. It chooses to concentrate primarily on radical Black educational thinking to the exclusion of blacks' educational writings and research in such subject fields as the Head Start Program, ESEA Title I, Effective Schools, Magnet Schools, etc. Undoubtedly, all these subjects had consumed a considerable amount of the intellectual energy of Black scholars and academicians. These compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged or the culturally deprived children, particularly for those children in the ghetto,

were educational reforms advocated by the liberal whites. They were seen by militant blacks as something imposed upon the blacks. Blacks were suspicious of the intent of the reforms and were critical of the measures. Compensatory-education programs for Black ghetto children were held as nothing but "to salve and ease the conscience of white citizens by making them believe that something significant is being done for the black people." Edward K. Weaver, then Dean of the School of Education, Atlanta University criticized the reforms based on the deprivation theory as follows:

The deprivation theory places the burden on the black children and the effort to denigrate the black family, and especially the black mother, is a systematic effort to free the school systems from accepting responsibility for the miseducation of black children. The neglect of the children of the poor still continues, while superior education, facilities, and opportunities are provided for white middle- and upper-class children and youth. This means a widening gap between the black ghetto child and middle- and upper-class white children, and results in a life-long handicap to the black child by freezing him into low-class status. Cultural deprivation of the black people has been a conscious policy of the white racists and their dupes and stooges on the boards of education for more than a century. Cultural deprivation is still the major factor in the education of the black child (p. 61).

Other militant Black educators charged that the guidelines and purposes of compensatory education were set forth by the wrong persons who asked the wrong questions. The compensatory education programs were organized around



the philosophy that there was something wrong with Black children. They wondered whether the white society was really serious about educating Black children.

Black power was more a social revolution than a political revolution. As Black power advocate Charles V. Hamilton put it, "Black Power must (1) deal with the obviously growing alienation of black people and their distrust of the institutions of this society; (2) work to create new values and to build a new sense of community and of belonging; and (3) work to establish legitimate new institutions that make participants, not recipients, out of a people traditionally excluded from the fundamentally racist processes of this country" (p.156). Blacks were undergoing a psychological change. Blacks were seeking a social and cultural independence if not political independence from the mainstream society. Black consciousness gained a wide currency among Black Americans of all social strata and even among those avowed integrationists who were against the political strategy and violence advocated by Black power nationalists but approved the call for building Black identity. This psychological change had profound implications for education. Blacks demanded that educational institutions recognize Black Americans as a people with a distinct culture and that the curriculum reflects their cultural

heritage, their contributions, their humanity and race pride. They asked for Black studies and "black" curricula. Black consciousness stressed relevance in education and opportunity for an individual "black identity" outside the mainstream. Blacks wanted an education informed by Black experiences. Community control of schools in the ghetto was an attempt to implement this plan. The concept of local community control of schools was as American as apple pie. This was nothing new. However, when blacks called for community control of schools, the concept assumed a special meaning. Black power advocates wanted to see the schools, with the support of Black social, cultural, and religious organizations for cultural socialization of Black children, build a cultural cohesiveness among the Black community. Education was to expand Black consciousness, to awaken their sense of unity and to challenge domination. On the surface, the "blackening" of curriculum meant a pedagogy of oppositional worldview--a worldview different from that of the dominant culture and a worldview that would enable Black people to see themselves and the world around them through the lens of racism and oppression. Is Black education, as the Brazilian educator/philosopher, Paulo Freire puts it, a practice of freedom? This is the primary interest behind this study. The central thesis of this study is that, in the late Sixties and early Seventies,

radical Black educational thought, which was strongly under the influence of Black nationalism, was predicated on the desire of blacks to foster a Black identity and the affirmation of "blackness." It was because integration was supposed to have failed. To the Black power advocates, the name of the game was power. Until the Black people had built a community of strength, the power relations would not change. Therefore, blacks must close rank. The radical blacks felt that integration was to deny one's own heritage, one's own culture and to hate one's own Black skin. The blackness of the Black people would be submerged. Blacks should be sustained psychologically by the bonds of their cultural heritage. Black power called for the repudiation of the "Euro-Western" sensibility" and the appreciation of blackness. A young, disillusioned civil rights activist, Jean Smith, said "We must become conscious that our blackness calls for another set of principles, principles on whose validity we can depend because they come from our own experiences" (p. 217). Alvin F. Poussaint, a Black psychiatrist, stated:

The Negro suffers from many problems of identity and negative self-image because of the racism, discrimination, and segregation in American life. The civil rights movement has generated some changes, but integration as presently practiced does not seem to offer the mass of Negroes a solution to problems of negative self-concept. ... token integration into "white institutions" may lead to greater identity crises for Afro-Americans. "Black consciousness" movements appear to be able to contribute a great deal

to the Negroes' sense of identity and self-esteem, and could mobilize the black community for positive political and social action. The development of "black consciousness" could serve as an alternative and supplementary approach to the building of the Negroes' self-image along with the present drive toward complete racial integration (pp. 101-102).

It was hoped that Black consciousness would provide Black people with a kind of vitality that would enable them to emerge from "the depths of oppression and rise to self-determination, control of their destiny, and finally, complete liberation." The call for Black studies and "blackening" the curriculum represented a paradigm shift in Black educational thought. This signified the departure from the tradition of education for integration and assimilation and the embarkment on the quest for "ethnic self-hood." Black education charted a new course and added a new leaf to its annals. This theme will be discussed more fully in the chapter on "Black Nationalism and Black Education."

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows:

- A. American Education and Its Critics;
- B. Black Historical Experience and Their Struggle for Education;
- C. Black Nationalism and Black Education; and
- D. Summary and Conclusions.

The Chapter on "American Education and Its Critics"

presents a brief overview of American revisionist criticism as well as Black criticism of American mainstream education and its practices. The intent is to debunk the myth that American public schools provide equal educational opportunity to children and advance democracy and equality. The revisionist critics contended that public education was not the "great equalizer" as claimed to be but was an instrument of keeping the subordinated class in its place. Public education was controlled by the dominant class and served the economic, political and social interest of the dominant class. The Black critics unaminously condemned public schools, particularly those in urban centers, for failing to educate Black children. Some were vocal that American education had failed to foster a positive Black identity among Black children, and that the education was irrelevant to the needs of Black people because "they are being taught from a white perspective, from invalid premises, and in terms of inimical value systems." Standard textbooks ignored or demeaned the contributions of Africans and Black Americans. Some criticized the educational testing as a weapon the powerful and the privileged used to preserve the existing hierarchical social arrangement and that the public schools not only failed to motivate Black children to learn but created an inferiority complex among Black children. Some

were critical that blacks had not been meaningfully and significantly involved in decision-making such as textbook selection. In short, public education discriminated against the minority, the poor and the powerless. In "Black Historical Experience and Their Struggle for Education," we trace the ideological origins of Black education in the context of the historical experiences of Black people. The blacks were enslaved and suffered the cruel process of de-africanization and dehumanization. They were stripped of their African heritage and languages and treated not as human beings with feelings but as pieces of property. Black womanhood and manhood were violated as slaves were treated as subhumans and reproductive animals. An elaborate theory of biological inferiority based on color was constructed to support an ideological system to justify slavery. In order to maintain the "Peculiar Institution", legislation was enacted to legally prohibit blacks from obtaining an education. Blacks had viewed education as power and as a means of deliverance. Education became the "forbidden fruit" and blacks were all the more determined to get it. They had devised numerous schemes to learn to read and write. For the slaves, the act of learning to read and to write was a political act of resistance. Blacks' struggle for education amply demonstrates that education is a

politically contested terrain and Black educational thinking is rooted in their political struggle for freedom and to regain their manhood and womanhood and human dignity.

The chapter on "Black Nationalism and Black Education" forms the backbone of this dissertation. It involves content analysis of Black literature on education in the late Sixties and early Seventies. It attempts to develop themes and derive elements or characteristics of Black educational ideology from the literature analysed. The discernible elements are educational colonialism, community control of schools, Black Studies movement and the Black University movement. Militant blacks viewed the Black inner city as a colony. "Concentrated by housing patterns, isolated by freeway systems, castrated by the socio-economic structure, inhabitants of the central city are as effectively colonized as any 19th century British outpost" (Williams, 1974:1). The Black children of the inner city was subjected to a subordinating and dehumanizing educational process. In schools, there was a power struggle among the students, the teachers and the administrators. The concept of community control of schools was probably related to blacks' perception of the inner city as a colony. The inner city residents with a low-degree of education were particularly dissatisfied with the

way they were being treated as Negroes and experienced a high sense of powerlessness. The concept of community control of schools was an expression of demanding the redistribution of power. We examine in depth what the concept of community control of schools meant to groups of blacks with different political persuasions and also examine on what political principles the concept of community control of schools was predicated. One of the most celebrated educational events of the late Sixties was the demand by Black students for Black studies programs on white campuses. The demand for Black studies programs coupled with the demands for open admissions and separate living facilities for Black students sent a shock wave through many campuses. Though the demand for Black studies program controlled by blacks was controversial, it was met rather expeditiously. Nevertheless, serious question was raised about the program. Was it a political forum for political indoctrination or an educational program for the dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of scholarship? The Black University movement was a different side of the same coin as the Black Studies movement. The Black University movement was primarily aimed at reforming the "Negro colleges." As did the Black student movement in the Twenties, the Black University movement not only attempted to blacken the curriculum in the predominantly



Black colleges but also to get rid of the white influence and control of the colleges. Literature on these subjects is examined in the context of Black nationalism. Ideological positions on education assumed by Black groups of different political persuasions are compared and contrasted.

In the final chapter, I shall attempt to answer the question posed in the title of this dissertation: Is education for assimilation, integration or liberation? The bulk of literature on Black education in the post Civil Rights era points to a rejection of the traditional strategy of gaining equality through assimilation or integration. Black Power advocated self-determination through group strength based on ethnic solidarity and ethnic cultural identity. Concomitantly, radical Black educators and students called for an education that would forge a Black identity and would lead to legitimizing Black historical experiences and cultural heritage in school curriculum. It is an education of liberation through the affirmation of blackness. Radical blacks asserted that Black ethnic and cultural differences must be recognized and respected. I will build my conclusion on the theoretical framework of cultural pluralism.

## CHAPTER II

### AMERICAN EDUCATION AND ITS CRITICS

The argument for universal free school as stated by Horace Mann, the Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, in his 1846 annual report to the Board has been echoed again and again by layman as well as educators. What Horace Mann said about education has since become the article of faith in education for many Americans. Here is what Horace Mann said about common education and its effect on the state and the individual:

In later times, and since the achievement of American independence, the universal and ever-repeated argument in favor of free schools has been that the general intelligence which they are capable of diffusing, and which can be imparted by no other human instrumentality, is indispensable to the continuance of a republican government. . . . Again, the expediency of free schools is sometimes advocated on grounds of political economy. An educated people is always a more industrious and productive people. Intelligence is a primary ingredient in the wealth of nations....(Mann, p.336).

Since then many have spoken of the same theme with a variation. For instance, President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address expressed the importance of education to Americans in the following words:

Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. Our requirements for world leadership, our hopes for economic growth, and the demands of citizenship itself require the maximum

development of every young American's capacity, the mind is our fundamental resource.

Most recently, Governor James Hunt of North Carolina told the State Commission on Education for Economic Growth which he chaired that:

I recall businessman Garza Baldwin's comment in Asheville that "a well-trained, intelligent, highly motivated workforce is the most valuable resource any business can have." I agree and add that a well-trained workforce is the most valuable resource any state can have. Garza's comment points out the central focus of this commission: Our economic growth and prosperity depend upon the success of public school (1985:389).

Most Americans have faith in education and believe that educated young people are better equipped to "get ahead" in the world than the uneducated. Scholars and journalists often quote statistics to show that high school graduates earn more than those without a high school diploma, and that college graduates earn considerably more than high school graduates. Americans believe that schools transmit knowledge and skills to the young. They also strongly believe that the universal education of the young is essential to the well being of the state. Universal education is looked upon as the cornerstone of a democratic society upon which rests the knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom of all the people. The educated will be able to think for themselves and make free choices rather than submit to authoritative compulsion. Beside transmitting knowledge and skills, acculturating and

socializing the young, building and preserving the political and economic systems, public education has been idealized for providing the opportunity for social mobility and improving the quality of life, and cultivating the individual potential. For instance, Roy E. Larsen, Chairman of the National Citizens Commission for the Schools, said "To me as a first generation American, the public schools literally translated into reality the American ideal of the equality of opportunity." He continued "So the dream of equality of opportunity through universal free education is real to me in very practical terms." (Excerpted in James Monroe Hughes. (1960). **Education in America**. New York: Harper & Row, p.3) No doubt, there are persons who, like Mr. Larsen, have made it and enjoyed a piece of the American pie. On the other hand, there are many who have never realized their American dream at all through the route of public education. They have been stranded in a dead end road in the land of opportunity. Robert Campbell vividly describes the multitude of blacks, Puerto Ricans, and poor white migrants from Appalachia stranded in the slums of the cities in this way:

Unhappily for virtually all these pilgrims the trail to the Promised Land came to a dead end in a teeming, squabbling tenement. The dream had not only been deferred; it had quite literally evaporated. Our big-city ghettos were not the

gress to opportunity the new arrivals had expected and that earlier bands of immigrants had successfully negotiated. Instead they proved to be prisons which turned into steaming pressure cookers of despair, cauldrons that occasionally blew a lid during one hot summer or another, reflecting the terrible forces beneath the surface phenomenon (p.4).

### REVISIONIST CRITICISM

Campbell rightly points out that for many ghetto residents the American Dream is nothing but a pie in the sky; they and their children have never made it through the route of public education. Public education as a mechanism of great equalizer of opportunity and social and economic mobility is more a myth than a reality. And this myth is probably put to rest by Colin Greer. In his **The Great School Legend: a Revisionist Interpretation of American Education**, Greer challenges the long standing faith in the American school system and debunks the myth that "the public school did great and marvelous things for poor people in the past" and that "even if the miracles the public schools actually performed in the past were few, they could easily perform one now" (p. 153). Of course, the public schools have not performed the miracle. For Greer, the ideology of equality of educational opportunity was created to mask the public school's real function which is "to select out individuals for opportunities according to a hierarchical schema which runs closely parallel to

existing social class patterns" (p. 152). They act to retain the class structure. However, the public schools had been and are sustained by the notion of providing equal educational opportunity. In reality, as pointed out by Greer, public schools have been operated on the notion of scarcity. He says "The assumption that there must always be losers, that achievement is proven only in competition is deeply ingrained in them." He continues:

The public school is the place in our society where the dualism between scarcity and optimism is theoretically resolved. But scarcity defines reality there as elsewhere in a society which so deeply believes in the inevitability of scarcity. ... The ultimate dualism for the school, its elitist reality amid its egalitarian rhetoric, is resolved in the only way it can be, once we assume the constancy of the economic order--by treating erosions in the stated expectation of performance as isolated cultural phenomena (pp.36-37).

The elitist reality or the meritocratic system of the school is maintained by the development of ostensibly scientific criteria for testing to winnow the chaff. Thus amidst the rhetoric of equal educational opportunity, "the public school selects winners and losers, more losers than winners, for it is on the effective exclusion of large numbers that the security of an affluent community depends" (p. 37). Of course, the losers are themselves blamed for not taking the opportunity offered them or the failure is explained away by the theory of genetic defects or the biological inferiority of certain groups of the people.

Greer adds that "The school's continuity with the past was to be found in the fact that it reflected and reinforced what had been from the beginning the restrictive class nature of society. It supported class distinctions and was expected to socialize children for their places in world" (p.64). Formal education has been--from its beginnings--an agent for defining and limiting American community (p. 48). He further states:

The public school was not primarily designed to free the lower-class family from its low self-esteem and advance its members in society. It was an apparatus designed to control most of them, to safeguard society. Indeed, the relation of the poor family to the early public school is reminiscent and a precursor of the more dysfunctional relationship of the poor inner-city public school to the promise of public education. The view of the school as an agent of social regeneration is ...unjustified" (p. 55).

In fact, public schools are designed to repress blacks and other non-white minorities while enhancing the growth of a professional establishment. Geer says "But there was no pretense of seriously offering mobility to the blacks. The society had decreed the economic marginality of blacks. Their proper fate was to remain a reserve labor force, "cheap muscle" and " fringe service workers" (p. 136).

In similar vein, Michael B. Katz in his study of educational reform in Massachusetts in mid-nineteenth century suggests that the appeal for public schools was always couched in terms of social mobility. In **The Irony**

of **Early School Reform**, Katz argues that the reformers of education in Beverly, Lawrence and Groton in Massachusetts who promoted the new public school expansion, did not seek to widen the educational base in the interest of equalizing opportunity and increasing mobility. Instead their efforts reflected a desire to shape and channel an increasingly chaotic environment. Their pleas for public high schools were pleas for new instruments of social control which would restore the unities and social connections destroyed by urbanization and industrialism. They sought greater concentration of power, not to facilitate financial and social equality, but to spread costs over a broader base and take initiative away from the local district. Katz's case study of educational reform in Beverly and Groton shows that the working class formed the core of opposition to expand public education. The reform was imposed by the dominant class (pp. 89-92). Katz

writes:

Educational reform and innovation represented the imposition by social leaders of schooling upon a reluctant, uncomprehending, skeptical, and sometimes, as in Beverly, hostile citizenry. Social and cultural antagonisms that delayed and made difficult the achievement of innovation could not be simply erased after new schools had been built. From on high the school committees, representing the social and financial leadership of towns and cities, excoriated the working-class parents. They founded schools with a sense of superiority, not compassion. ... School committees hoped to serve their own ends and the ends of status-seeking parents that supported them; one of



those ends involved the unification of urban society. Ironically, thier ideology and style could not have been better designed to alienate the very people whom they strove to accommodate in a more closely knit social order. In making the urban school, educational promoters of the mid-nineteenth century fostered an estrangement between the school and the working-class community that has persisted to become one of the greatest challenges to reformers of our time" (p. 112).

In his *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: the Illusion of Educational Change in America*, Katz states "This was a class system of education. It provided a vehicle for the efforts of one class to civilize another and thereby ensure that society would remain tolerable, orderly, and safe" (p. 9). Commenting on the contemporary American education, Katz says "Certain characteristics of American education today were also characteristics nearly a century ago: it is, and was, universal, tax-supported, free, compulsory, bureaucratic, racist, and class-biased" (xx). Katz further comments:

Urban public school systems present a curious amalgam of inherent structural and ideological defects; it is no wonder that they have failed. They have not reformed society; they have not won the allegiance of the poor and the black; they have not bound Americans to each other in affection and respect. They have been erected first and foremost upon a soft, evasive intellectual base; they have depended on a continued reluctance to compare their actual and official functions or their stated and operative purposes. They have developed organizational structures that moved them ever farther away from interaction with communities they served, and, finally, they have even refused to accept responsibility for educating anybody successfully in anything. Once granted a captive audience, they have had little need to succeed; it has been easier to develop a battery of excuses that place the

blame for educational failure outside the school and on the home" (pp. 112-113).

The school bureaucracy is more concerned with "efficiency in organization" and shunned "originality and spontaneity" (p. 91).

Katz's criticism of the failure of public schools is echoed by Charles E. Silberman in his **Crisis in the Classroom: the Remaking of American Education**. Silberman then an editor of **Fortune** was commissioned by Carnegie Corporation to serve as the Director of the Carnegie Study of the Education of Educators, and **Crisis in the Classroom** was the result of the study. Silberman holds that "The failure (of the public schools) is not new; it is one the United States has tolerated for a century or more. The public school never has done much of a job of educating youngsters from the lower class or from immigrant homes" (p. 54). He continues to say "...on almost any measure, the schools are still failing to provide the kind of education Negroes, Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Appalachian whites--indeed, the poor of every color, race, and ethnic background--need, and deserve. It would be a serious mistake to assume that the schools are succeeding with the rest of the population" (p. 62). In fact, Silberman finds the classrooms are dull, repressive and most children found it necessary to play the educational game and tolerate the imposition by school

authorities. Silberman suggests "schools can be humane and still educate well. They can be genuinely concerned with gaiety and joy and individual growth and fulfillment without sacrificing concern for intellectual discipline and development" (p. 208).

It must, nevertheless, be pointed out that though both Katz and Silberman agree on the failure of the public education to serve children of the lower income groups and the minorities, they differ on the root of the problem and their recommendations for the solution. Silberman accepts mindlessness as the root of America's educational problem. "If mindlessness is the central problem, the solution must lie in infusing the various educating institutions with purpose, more important, with thought about purpose, and about the ways in which techniques, content, and organization fulfill or alter purpose" (p. 11). For Katz, the problem lies in the bureaucratic structure and educational reform must involve "radical changes in educational structure" (1971, p. 145).

Radical or revisionist critics of contemporary American education go a step further than Silberman and indict the public schools for doing a bad job well. The schools are perpetuating the status arrangements on which the society has come to depend for its stability and such order as it possesses; and they are doing so precisely by

the kinds of stultification and trained incapacity. One of the radical critics, John Holt, charges that "there is still a lot of cruelty in them (the public schools)" (1969, p. 16) and the schools "are bad places for children." He describes school children as prisoners. "To keep kids in school who would rather not be there costs the schools an enormous amount of time and trouble, to say nothing of what it costs to repair the damages that these angry and resentful prisoners do whenever they get the chance" (1969, p. 29). Holt has expended a lot his energy and writings to combat the practices in the public schools and show teachers how to get around the regulations or practices in the schools.

Holt emphatically declares in the opening sentence of his *Instead of Education* (1976) "This is a book in favor of doing--self-directed, purposeful, meaningful life and work--and against "education"--learning cut off from active life and done under pressure of bribe or threat, greed and fear" (p. 3). He is against "education" because "education" involves bribing, scaring, and shaming children into learning what someone else had decided they ought to know. He adds "the essential social function of School is ranking--that is, grading and labeling, putting children into pecking orders, dividing them into winners and losers" (1976, p. 157). He suggests that "a child in a situation

that he experiences as humiliating, threatening, and painful, cannot and will not learn what the teacher is trying to teach him, or if he does, will forget it in a day or two ...This is why people can learn only when they come boldly, confidently, and eagerly to the learning" (1976, p. 13).

He feels that what we learn is determined by "the quality of our experiences, the satisfaction, excitement or joy that we get or fail to get from them" (1976, p. 13).

Holt's position on education is best summarized in an open letter he wrote to a Dr. Bliss. The letter is included in *The Underachieving School*:

...I think children learn better when they learn what they want to learn when they want to learn it, and how they want to learn it, learning for their own curiosity and not at somebody else's order. I believe that learning would be greatly improved if we could completely or at least largely abolish the fixed curriculum in its present sense. I do not believe that testing and grading form any inherent or useful function in learning; in fact, they corrupt and impede the learning process. I am altogether opposed to any kind of so-called ability grouping in school. I think that in many more cases than not it is the act of instruction itself that impedes learning and nowhere else more than in the field of reading; in short, I feel that children would learn to read better and more easily if they were not taught. I think we need to find ways to get more people into the schools who are not teachers. I do not think it is helpful to have children spend all their time with people who have no other concerns than children. I would like to see streams of people coming into the schools who are there to talk about their outside life and work in the world. I would also like to see children encouraged and helped to use the resources of the world outside the school to further their learning. I believe that

compulsory school attendance no longer serves a useful function, either to schools, teachers or students, and that it should be done away with or greatly modified. I think we have made education, which should be something that helps young people move into the world and do useful work there, into an enormous obstacle standing in their way, and I think we need to find ways to remove that obstacle. In short, I am opposed to all kinds of credential requirements as preconditions for doing work. I think we should remove every possible obstacle between any child and any gainful or useful contribution he wants to make to society. Everything we say and do tends to separate learning from living, and we should try instead to join them together... (pp. 204-205).

Holt further suggests that the schools may teach submission to authority, but they cannot teach morality. Why not? Because schools' rules and regulations never give students an opportunity to make serious choices involving moral judgment. He explains if the forced education is done away with, the student' dependence on the teacher is eliminated and the responsibility of learning is placed on the student. The underlying theme of romantic critics is that education should foster personal freedom. Paul Goodman, a social critic, is more adamant on this point. He said "on the whole, the education must be voluntary rather than compulsory, for no growth to freedom occurs except by intrinsic motivation. Therefore, the educational opportunities must be various and variously administered" (1972, p. 29). He says "If our present high schools, junior colleges, and colleges reflected the desire, freedom, and future of opportunity of the young, there

would be no grading, no testing except as a teaching method, and no blackboard jungle. In fact, we are getting lockstep scheduling and grading to the point of torture. The senior year of high school is sacrificed to batteries of national tests, and policemen are going to stand in the corridors" (1980, p. 27). For Goodman, education should muster independent thought and expression, rather than conformity. And forcing the nonacademic to attend school breaks the spirit of most and ferments alienation in the best (1972, p. 141). Besides, school methods are simply not competent to teach all the arts, sciences, professions and skills the school establishment pretends to teach.

If the schools are bad places for children in general, they are dangerous place for the children from the lower-income families and the minorities. Ray C. Rist in his study of urban schools comments that the current institutional arrangements in this society favor the affluent and discriminate against the poor, and that "the single most influential variable to which the teachers responded was the social class background of the students" (1973:242).

Rist's observation is strongly supported by the expose of the teaching practices and punitive measures meted to the children of the slum schools in Boston by Jonathan Kozol in *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the*

**Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools.** The slum schools as described by Kozol have greater resemblance to prisons and mental institutions than schools portrayed in textbooks. In fact, one of the teachers described the slum school in which Kozol taught as the zoo. "This place isn't a school. It's a zoo. And those (students) are the animals" (p. 43).

Kozol demonstrates how the practices and attitudes of classroom teachers are dominated by the policies and postures of the social system. For example, the Art Teacher who displayed her deprecation of the products of her Black pupils and of the pupils themselves by exhibiting drawings that had been done by white pupils of previous years did not need to question the significance of her act because the school system and the social system support it in spirit. The self-righteous Reading Teacher who relaxed rules for white pupils that were enforced rigorously for Black pupils felt justified in doing so because the system sanctioned a double standard and treatment. In spite of the fact that **The Boston Teachers' Handbook** advises against inflicting corporal punishment "when it might aggravate an existing physical impairment" and forbids "violent shaking or other gross indignities," Kozol reports that physical punishments have been regularly administered to Black pupils and one pupil has been admitted to the hospital for



treatment because of severe beating.

The subtitle of Kozol's book "The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools" is justifiable. The children are treated like "animals" and subjected to physical and mental or psychological abuse. The artistic spark displayed by Stephen was mercilessly quenched. Drawing was probably the only solace in life for Stephen, an orphan, but his drawings were publicly ridiculed by the Art Teacher. Stephen was literally killed by the Art Teacher.

In the slum school, the devotion to bureaucratic rules and regulations have been transformed into absolutes which are no longer relevant to the educational task of the school. Pupils in these schools have atypical educational needs and problems which demand atypical educational programs. Instead, as Kozol reports, punishment is quickly meted out but treatment is slow to come or it does not come at all. Kozol writes "Yet the school offered him nothing and he had to humble himself to plead with me. One of the saddest things on earth is the sight of a young person, already becoming adolescent, who has lost about five years in the chaos and oblivion of a school system and who still not only wants but pleads to learn, as the boy was doing" (p. 46). And the victim is to be blamed. Kozol notes "There was nothing wrong with his

motivation, and there was nothing wrong in his home or homelife either. It was the public schools, pure and simple, which had held him back and made the situation of his life pathetic" (p. 46). He further says "The blame, in almost all cases, is immediately placed upon the child's background and his family. Then, but only after it has divested itself prior responsibility, does the school administration come forward to profess a willingness to do what it can" (p.180).

Kozol was strongly advised not to have any real interpersonal relationships with his pupils and not to deviate from the prescribed instructional materials. He was dismissed for teaching and passing out a mimeographed copy of *Ballad of the Landlord*, a poem by Langston Hughes.

Herbert Kohl's *36 Children* and James Herndon's *The Way It Spozed to Be* are essentially in the same category as Kozol's *Death at an Early Age*, carrying the detailed records of "miseducation" of the slum children and some innovative teaching practices designed by them. The three books complemented each other, but they differed in tone. The tragic story in *Death at an Early Age* is told in subdued anger. *36 Children* sparkles with happy moments, and the story in *The Way It Spozed to Be* is no less tragic than in *Death at an Early Age* but it is told in a comic tone.

Kohl and Herndon clearly show how a teacher abandoned the usual classroom methods and developed an informal class where children could work on their own, where they were offered choices about what to do, and where in fact they generated a good deal of the curriculum themselves including an extraordinary outpouring of free writing. This testifies to the creative energy of these Harlem children. Kohl's reflects "as usual the children led me. I have found one of the most valuable qualities a teacher can have is the ability to perceive and build upon the needs his pupils struggle to articulate through the every reaction" (p. 32).

These books also show that a teacher can learn to become a liberator and much of Kohl's story is about the liberation of children's talents through the written word. "All of them ... seemed to become more alive through their writing." Sadly, as one of Kohl's pupil remarks "Mr. Kohl, one good year isn't enough" (p. 206). Indeed some of them lost interest in learning and doing what they showed talent in when they were back to the old repressive and joyless classroom.

The books clearly indicate that the creative talents of many pupils are suppressed by the repressive school structure and the attitude of the personnel. Kohl says "the most frequent epithet they used in describing the

children was 'animals'. After a while the word 'animal' came to epitomize for me most teachers' ambiguous relations to ghetto children--the scorn and the fear, the condescension and unpredictability" (p.187). One thing utmost in the mind of the school administrator is "control", "order" and "free from trouble". The system is at fault for its insensitivity to the needs and the experience of ghetto children and whose failure can be partly put on the shoulders of the teachers.

The books also support John Holt's contention that a child, no matter what his background, will learn what interests him. In one of Herndon's classes, for example, the kids on their own made up something they call slambooks. Here is how Herndon describes the attitude of the teachers in his school toward the pupils and how the pupils react:

It's not my purpose or even desire to criticize these teachers--they were as good or better than most and they had a difficult job--but frankly I could never come to terms with their attitude. They knew a certain way, or ways, to teach. They knew how to get control of the class and, that established, some ways to present the material they thought important. The control didn't work consistently because the kids were not easily threatened, having little to lose. Promises were fairly successful at the beginning of the year, but their power steadily declined as the kids saw through them or were disillusioned about their value. The material which was so important, which had to be 'covered,' was supposed to lead toward understanding, broader knowledge, scientific method, good citizenship or, more specifically, toward better writing, speech, figuring, grammar, geography, whatever it was. But actually what was happening was that they were

presenting the students, every day, with something for them either to do or not-do, while keeping them through order from any other alternative. If a kid couldn't or wouldn't do his assignment, he had only the choice of not-doing it, of doing nothing. Almost every teacher admitted that this last was the choice of half of the class on any given day.

The kids who chose to do the assignment seemed rarely to benefit from it; even if they did the speller conscientiously, their written work remained badly spelled. The result was that these teachers faced, every year, the certain knowledge that the first day of school was the best they could hope for, since the progress and morale of the class could only be downhill. The only question left was whether or not they could hold out.

... Since their teaching methods were right in other schools, they argued, it must be the fact of 'deprivation' which was at fault here. ... what to do? The first and best thing, they all knew, was education. With education would come better skills, with skills would come better jobs, with better jobs would come middle-class incomes and the attendant middle-class mores, values and ideas of order. ... But how were they to get education, The Tribe, if the education they were getting right here and now wasn't working? How get these skills (values, ideas of order) if the methods used to teach them weren't producing any skills by and large? I hate to keep saying this but the inescapable fact is that they weren't working and that therefore the rest was simply nonsense (pp. 80-81).

Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer carry the criticism of the public schools (in fact, all types of schools) to a new level. Reimer pronounces "The School is Dead" and Illich calls for "Deschooling Society." In the late sixties, Illich and Reimer were colleagues at the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC), a revolutionary study center in Cuervernaca, Mexico.

Central in Illich's concern is the

institutionalization of values and demands which prevent men from realizing themselves as human beings. "Institutionalization of values leads inevitably to physical pollution, social polarization, and psychological impotence: three dimensions in a process of global degradation and modernized misery" (pp. 1-2). Schooling is the process employed by society to institutionalize values and demands, and curriculum has always been used to assign social rank" (p. 17) Consequently, instead of equalizing chances, the school system has monopolized distribution of opportunity (p. 17). Illich explains that "the public is indoctrinated to believe that skills are valuable and reliable only if they are the result of formal schooling. The job market depends on making skills scarce and on keeping them scarce, either by proscribing their unauthorized use and transmission or making things which can be operated and repaired only by those who have access to tools or information which are kept scarce. ... Schools thus produce shortages of skilled persons" (pp. 128-9). Schools produce scarcity through the function of selection and enforce the value system of the dominant class of the society in the same manner as the Medieval Church did through her Inquisitors. Deschooling is, therefore, at the root of any movement for human liberation. Illich contends that educational revolution should be guided by the

following goals:

1. To liberate access to things by abolishing the control which persons and institutions now exercise over their educational values.
2. To liberate the sharing of skills by guaranteeing freedom to teach or exercise them on request.
3. To liberate the critical and creative resources of people by returning to individual persons the ability to call and hold meetings--an ability now increasingly monopolized by institutions which claim to speak for the people.
4. To liberate the individual from the obligation to shape his expectations to the services offered by any established profession--by providing him with the opportunity to draw on the experience of his peers and to entrust himself to the teacher, guide, adviser, or healer of his choice (pp. 149-150).

In order to achieve these goals, Illich proposes the establishment of four learning networks such as 1. Reference Services to Educational Objects, 2. Skill Exchanges, 3. Peer-Matching, and 4. Reference Services to Education-at-large.

Illich and his former colleague, Everett Reimer will abolish the school structure. Reimer makes a substantial case against public schools. For him, the old hopes that public education would bring about equality, freedom, progress and efficiency are all dead. It perpetuates inequality, since all educational resources are committed to a hierarchical graded system, from which, at various stages, children drop out, branded with different value-labels according to the time they have served within it. "School has become the universal church of a technological society, incorporating and transmitting its

ideology, shaping men's minds to accept this ideology, and conferring social status in proportion to its acceptance" (p. 19). He adds:

School domesticates--socially emasculates--both girls and boys by a process much more pervasive than mere selection by sex. School requires conformity for survival. If learning and curriculum of the school were the principal criterion, this might still not be so bad. ... The actual survival criteria are much worse. ... the ability to beat the game ... is mainly what successful students learn in school. ... Beating the game is one form of conformity (p.18).

Reimer feels that "education should not be separated from work and the rest of life, but integrated with them. Educational environments should be protective only to an unavoidable degree. Education should not, primarily, prepare for something else nor a by-product of something else (p. 89). Like Illich, he also proposes learning networks to replace schools.

Praising Illich for not making the mistake as many other educational reformers do by treating the system of schools as if it existed in a social vacuum, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis criticize Illich for ignoring the economic force affecting schooling. They suggest that "but if schooling is a preparation for work and a central aspect of the reproduction of social relationships of production, the elimination of school without the transformation of economic life would inevitably lead to a situation of social chaos, but probably not to a viable



mass movement toward constructive social change" (p. 261). They add that "educational change must contribute to a fundamental democratization of economic life (p. 263).

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis in **Schooling in Capitalist America** demonstrate that, despite liberal hopes, education does not serve as a panacea for social inequalities. They hold that the roots of inequality are not in the educational system at all but in the capitalist economy. What education does accomplish for the economic system is to reproduce the structure of authority relations in the workplace from one generation to the next. The schools, in short, socialize a compliant labor force for the capitalist economy. The key to educational reform, Bowles and Gintis believe, "is the democratization of economic relationships: social ownership, democratic participatory control of the production process by workers, equal sharing of socially necessary labor by all, and progressive equalization of incomes and destruction of hierarchical economic relationships" (p. 14).

The kind of educational system Bowles and Gintis would like to see is "an educational system which, in the process of reproducing society, vigorously promotes personal development and social equality" (p. 265). Such an educational system is possible only when the economic life

underwent a revolutionary change. They suggest:

The core of a socialist society is the development of an alternative to the wage-labor system. This involves the progressive democratization of the work-place, thus freeing the educational system to foster a more felicitous pattern of human development and social interaction. The ironclad relationship between the division of labor and the division of social product must also be broken: Individuals must possess, as a basic social right, an adequate income and equal access to food, shelter, medical care, and social services independent of their economic position. Conversely, with the whip of material necessity no longer forcing participation in economic life, a more balanced pattern of material, symbolic, and collective incentives can, indeed must be developed. Essential in this respect is the legal obligation of all to share equitably in performing those socially necessary jobs which are, on balance, personally unrewarding and would not be voluntarily filled. An educational system thus freed from the legitimation of privilege could turn its energies toward rendering the development of work skills a pleasant and desirable complement to an individual's life plans (p. 267).

They term this approach as the dialectical humanism "largely inspired by the Marxist concept of personal development through the dialectical interaction between individuals and their environments. In this approach, the educational system is judged by the way it resolves the basic contradiction between the reproduction needs of the community and the self-actualizing needs of students and, more narrowly, its inevitable reflection in the contradiction between teacher and student" (p. 271).

The basic theme of Bowles and Gintis is that the structure of relations in the workplace determines the way schools attempt to develop social roles for youth--schooling

shapes minds to fit social relations outside the school. Bowles and Gintis' economic determinism has drawn strong reaction from what Martin Carnoy terms as the critical autonomists including Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, Carnoy himself and others. The critical autonomists hold that schooling does not simply correspond to the structure and practices of work, but has its own dynamic rooted in the struggle over ideology. The school has some autonomous space.

Though agreeing with the critical argument that the educational system reproduces class order and social inequality and that schools are institutions of social control, Giroux contends that schools are cultural sites fully implicated in the process of ideological struggle. In **Theory and Resistance in Education**, Giroux contends that "human behavior is rooted in a complex nexus of structured needs, common sense, and critical consciousness, and that ideology is located in all of these aspects of human behavior and thought so as to produce multiple subjectivities and perceptions of the world and everyday life" (p. 146). In the ideological struggle, there is the dialectical interplay of hegemony and counterhegemony. Thus Giroux sees that there is a space for resistance by students and/or by teachers to the educational system.

The same argument is further developed in **Education under Siege** which Giroux coauthored with Stanley Aronowitz. They

state:

In resistance accounts, schools are relatively autonomous institutions that not only provide spaces for oppositional behavior and teaching but also represent a source of contradictions that sometimes make them dysfunctional to the material and ideological interests of the dominant society. Schools are not solely determined by the logic of the workplace or the dominant society; they are not merely economic institutions but are also political, cultural, and ideological sites that exist somewhat independently of the capitalist market economy. Of course, schools operate within limits set by society, but they function in part to influence and shape those limits, whether they be economic, ideological, or political. Moreover, instead of being homogeneous institutions operating under the direct control of business groups, schools are characterized by diverse forms of school knowledge, ideologies, organizational styles, and classroom social relations. Thus, schools often exist in a contradictory relation to the dominant society, alternately supporting and challenging its basic assumptions. For instance, schools sometimes support a notion of liberal education that is in sharp contradiction to the dominant society's demand for forms of education that are specialized, instrumental, and geared to the logic of the marketplace. In addition, schools still strongly define their role via their function as agencies for social mobility even though they currently turn out graduates at a faster pace than the economy's capacity to employ them" (p. 72).

Aronowitz and Giroux urge educators to construct a public discourse allowing students and others to learn and practice the skills for democratic participation necessary for a critical understanding of the wider political, social, and cultural processes that structure American society (p. 212). Teachers as the transformative intellectuals should redefine "the notion of power, cultural politics, really useful knowledge and a number of other categories ..." The task "does not mean debunking existing forms of schooling and educational

theory; it means reworking them, contesting the terrains on which they develop, and appropriating from them whatever radical potentialities they might contain" (p. 161). Aronowitz and Giroux contend that the alternative public philosophy of education would cast teachers in the role as "intellectuals and moral leaders rather than mere technicians"; and students "as critical thinkers and active citizens rather than simply future participants in the industrial-military order"; and "schools as centers of critical literacy and civic courage rather than merely training sites for occupational positions in the corporate order" (p. 206). However, the authors feel that in order to achieve the goal of radical educational reform, public discourse alone is not enough. Teachers should form alliance with the new social movements.

Similarly, Michael Apple sees that schools have a significant degree of "relative autonomy" which allows room for resistance by students and teachers. In his **Education and Power**, he refutes his own earlier position on the theory of cultural reproduction and Bowles and Gintis' 'correspondence theory' of education. The theory has many political weaknesses that overlook the capacity of students and teachers for resistance in schools. He adds "if we see culture and politics as providing sites for struggles, then counter-hegemonic work within these spheres becomes important. If cultural form and content and the state (as well as the economy) are inherently

contradictory, and if these contradictory, and if these contradictions are lived out in the school itself by students and teachers, then the range of possible actions is expanded considerably" (pp. 166-67). He sees school as a contradictory state apparatus reproducing and producing knowledge, ideologies and other contradictory tendencies, thus he suggests "strategies and action on a variety of fronts: within schools and universities involving curriculum, democratizing technical knowledge, using and politicizing the lived culture of students and teachers, etc.; and outside the school involving both educational practices in progressive labor unions, political and feminist groups, and so on, and in political action to build a mass socialist and democratic movement in the United States" (p. 167).

Aronowitz and Giroux see schools as site for ideological struggle and resistance, Apple describes school as a contradictory state apparatus, and Martin Carnoy uses a different term to describe it as a site of social conflict. He says that "The dynamic of the educational system, I suggest, can best be understood as a condensation of a much wider social conflict inherent in capitalist development...The conflict emerges from the nature of capitalist production, its inequalities of income, and its control over work processes and one's own labor. These inequalities and lack of control generate struggles by subordinate, relatively powerless

groups for greater equality, economic security, and power over social decision" (1984, p. 19). Like Apple, Carnoy sees the schools play a contradictory role: on the one hand, they reproduce the social relations; on the other hand, they occupy the ostensible role to improve subordinate groups' social position by making relevant knowledge and certification for participation available to these groups. Carnoy argues that "this tension between reproducing inequality and producing the greater equality is inherent in public education, just as it is inherent in all institutions structured according to class, race, and gender within a society in conflict. The basis of this conflict is not ideology as such but ideology as it relates to the concrete reality of social position, material gains, and political power" (1984, p. 22).

Ira Shor demonstrates in **Critical Teaching and Everyday Life** that educational institutions have been powerful in the capitalist drive to gain economic, political and cultural dominance. Schools impede critical thinking in many ways: they distort or ignore working class history; they encourage blind obedience to authority; they glorify competition and penalize cooperative behavior; they track students into menial jobs; and they promote the myth that success depends upon individual effort. Shor further contends that community colleges are organized to "warehouse" young people for whom the economy cannot provide jobs. However, he believes that

the community colleges also open up "critical spaces not available in other spheres" (p. 22). He sees the liberal arts component of the curriculum has the potential to awaken to their oppression as members of the working class in a capitalist society.

### BLACK CRITICISM

Now I turn to the Black criticism of public education. Black criticism of public education is based less on theoretical ground but more on practical experience. The blacks are more concerned with "low-yield teachers, inept administrators, problem-oriented children, dilapidated buildings, poorly designed curricular models and limited financial support." Some also focus their attention on the compensatory diagnosis and prescription of the 1960s for education for the disadvantaged. They contend that these programs faulted for being based on erroneous perceptions and presumptions. They consider school systems, not Black children, as being disadvantaged, through prevalence of an essentially unchanged racism. Practically all Black critics see racism as the root of the educational crisis. As Kozel and Herndon have shown racism permeates the public school systems from school board all the way down to classroom teachers, C. Eric Lincoln, a sociologist, comments that "In our society, the socialization process has prepared white



children to continue the privileged traditions of the established white hegemony, while black children have been programmed for social and economic oblivion" (1969, p. 222).

Gordon L. Berry, an educator, sees that the compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged are based on the biased perceptions of the blacks and other minority groups and on the white middle-class values. He writes:

In general, my approach to the questions does not begin with how different minority group children and their parents are because it has been this "different doctrine" that has brought to the inner-city a rash of watered-down and do-nothing programs. Many of these programs have also been operated by people who "Love" with a capital "L" black and Chicano children but failed to teach them how to read and count. ... There have been people and projects who have dared to begin with a negative premise that black Americans, Spanish-Americans and native Americans (Indians) are disadvantaged and therefore we need to try a gadget, tickery, or mechanical manipulation in order to compensate for their disadvantages. We have seen too many articles and television programs indicating that black people have low aspirations for their children and "they" are not interested in schools. The tragedy is that a large number of projects seem to operate from a criteria based on how disadvantaged the children are or what minority groups "ain't got" (p. 165).

Instead of incorporating the principles of democracy and human rights as contained in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights into the socializing process of the American educational system so that both Black and white children realize their potential and participate fully in a democratic society, Isaiah E. Robinson, Jr., President of the Board of Education, Manhattan Burrough in 1971, contends that "in reality, the schools perpetuated a society that was elitist,

racist, conformist, repressive, authoritarian, status-conscious, middle- and upper-class oriented, and white male chauvinistic" (p. 12). He holds that the American school is instrumental in developing the rationale and mechanism through which segregation, discrimination and oppression has been accomplished (p. 4). He continues that "it is plain from the evidence that education for Black children is no longer merely inadequate, it is now almost hopeless" (9). He says "all available evidence corroborates the existence of two systems. Classrooms faithfully mirror the racial bias, economic discrimination, and overt and covert types of social discrimination found in the larger society. Discrimination is incorporated into the classroom by numerous methods such as "tracking," "ability grouping," or "incentive promotions," all of which serve to separate white and Black students. Thus, the schools have made certain that future positions in finance, commerce, industry, and government will be filled by whites" (p. 12).

He continues that "the entire school milieu is imbued with a muddy kind of racial and class morality, replete with all its prejudices and false virtues. Consequently, if social class and race are considered together, it is possible to gain greater insights into why teachers are unable to reach and teach Black children. They expect Black children to fail, and the children fulfill that expectation" (p. 13).

Robinson quotes the comment of a school teacher, Eleanor Burke Leacock, on the different expectation of teachers of Black and white students regarding academic achievement and behavior and how these expectations serve to teach Black students not to learn. The name of the game is self-fulfilling prophecy. The teacher transmits the following message to Black children in myriad ways: "This is your place in society, act, perform, talk, and learn according to it and no more." Thus he gets no more and no less than he expects from his students (p. 14). Anita F. Allen, president of the District of Columbia Board of Education, 1970-1971, seems to have little faith in the public schools to educate black children and has been frustrated by the resistance to change by the educational bureaucracy. She says that "the public school systems in our large urban areas have failed to provide even minimal education, and there is little reason to believe that improvements generated from within the system will come soon enough or be significant enough to reverse the present cycle of retardation" (p. 58). She feels probably the majority of the paid professionals in our school system do not even believe that children in their classrooms can learn; therefore, they do not try to teach them" (pp. 69-70). She does not believe change in public schools will come soon because "the fact is that it is the absolute resistance of the bureaucracy that is the

primary obstacle to change (p. 69). She sees the educational bureaucracy as "truly self-perpetuating, omniscient, omnipotent. It counts on being able to outlast any superintendent and any board member and it generally can" (p. 69). For the blacks, it is too much to hope that the public school systems will improve the quality of education for Black children. The school systems have not sincerely and seriously analyzed the cause of the failure of the educational system but hastily take on some gimmicks and shift the blame on the Black children. In examining the new literature on education of the Black children, Edward K. Weaver, Dean of School of Education, Atlanta University, writes:

The new literature has been written too hastily. The problem of educating black ghetto children is being brought to the attention of our people at this time partially as a cover for the poor quality of education which has long been the fate of low-incoming and minority-group children. The deprivation theory places the burden on the black children and the effort to denigrate the black family, and especially the black mother, is a systematic effort to free the school systems from accepting responsibility for the miseducation of black children. The neglect of the children of the poor still continues, while superior education, facilities, and opportunities are provided for white middle- and upper-class children and youth. This means a widening gap between the black ghetto child and middle- and upper-class white children, and results in a life-long handicap to the black child by freezing him into low-class status. Cultural deprivation of the black people has been a conscious policy of the white racists and their dupes and stooges on the boards of education for more than a century. Cultural deprivation is still the major factor in the education of the black child (pp. 60-61).

Educational programs based on the cultural deprivation theory have not helped the Black ghetto children. Blacks

have seen through the deprivation theory and it is nothing more than a way of putting the blame on the Black people. Doxey A. Wilkerson, Professor of Education at Yeshiva University and later at Bishop College, contends that "suffice it to say that evidence mounts to prove that the 'cultural deprivation' hypothesis is bankrupt. Like its predecessor, the doctrine of 'genetic inferiority,' it is untenable as an explanation for the prevailing academic retardation among children from the ghetto. When provided with learning experience appropriate to their developmental needs, these children, despite their impoverished background, do learn effectively. Their academic failure must be attributed in large measure to inappropriate learning experiences" (p. 344).

Wilkerson points out the experimenters comment that one reason the disadvantaged child "does poorly in school is because that is what is expected of him." "In other words," comments Wilkerson "his shortcomings may originate not in his different ethnic, cultural and economic background but in his teachers' response to that background" (p. 345). Thus, Grace Lee Bogg, an activist, feels that "year in and year out, millions of black children have been turned off, pushed out, beaten, bored, and embittered by culturally deprived teachers who look upon our children as little animals" (p. 192).

Black critics attack the public education from different angles and with different backgrounds and ideological

persuasions, and yet, as mentioned earlier, all agree in one aspect, that is, racism is the underlying cause of the educational failure of Black children. Blaming the poor education for the Black children, Earl Smith points out "The Racists love to confuse the issues. Busing is not the issue. First it must be understood that the entire Boston Public School System must be overhauled. The ruling class which controls that system through its all-white school committee, does not send its children to public schools. In and around Boston there are many, many private schools which they utilize. It is our black children who suffer at the hands of these racists" (p. 39).

William H. McClendon (1974) also charges that the country public schools are strongholds of white racism. He contends "if the educational institutions of this country had been directed towards providing adequate educations for blacks then the white racist system would have failed because blacks would undoubtedly have brought an end to their subjugation and oppression long ago" (p. 17).

The Black critics feel that the greatest harm the public education has done to Black children is to deprive them of knowledge of self. Their cultural heritage has been totally ignored or distorted. Margaret Burroughs writes:

If the Negro child is short changed by being set apart in a segregated school, it is found that he has been doubly harmed when the teaching materials are examined relative

to their treatment of him.

... The biased presentation of his cultural contrition has harmed the Negro child in many ways. There is a direct connection between the question of a positive image for the Negro American and the program to aid the poverty stricken and culturally deprived. Negroes are culturally deprived and poverty stricken in the sense that they are lacking knowledge of self (pp. 31-32).

Similarly, the editor of **Black Thesis**, a student newspaper of Tuskegee Institute, Earnest Stephens also speaks of the inadequacy of the existing educational systems to meet the needs of Black students. He sees the blacks are culturally deprived in the sense that they know little of their rich cultural heritage, have little racial pride, and often look with contempt at their own less fortunate, uneducated brothers and sisters (p. 137).

L. P. Beveridge contends that blacks must demand equal treatment in school rooms as well as in the school books. She says "the improvements in the quality of education brought about by slight but hard won progress in desegregation to date will bear bitter fruit if there is no corresponding change in the content of education" (p. 164). She continues "The importance of Negro history in combating the ideology of white supremacy and furthering the freedom movement has been recognized by substantial segments of the community" (p. 171). She suggests that the proper treatment of Black history, especially in public school is "a political rather than cultural or educational problem" (p. 171-172). It is to be solved by political means.

On the other hand, Milton R. Coleman, then a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and the Chairman of the Alliance for Black Students, suggests a cultural approach to education for the blacks. He writes:

The concern of African-American educators must be first with education and only secondarily with those structures set aside for educational activities (i.e., schools). This is because the goal is a relevant and productive education for our people. Education has no absolute standards and can therefore not be limited by any predetermined or already extant systems or structures. Rather education is an experience in concentrated enculturation which always takes place in the most feasible and culturally expedient location (p. 33).

Coleman feels that the concern of the Black educator must not be to integrate the Black student into a basically dysfunctional educational system but, rather, to work towards its destruction as a source of Black oppression.

### SUMMARY

In summary, I would venture to say there are more similarities than differences between the radical critics and the black critics even though the Black critics are nationalistic and the radical critics pivot their criticism from the standpoint of hierarchical class structure of American society. Both groups contend that education is controlled by the dominant group of the society. The Black critics would add the adjective "white" to the dominant group. The content of education reflects the ideology, values, and



the needs of the dominant group. The socialization process of the school molds citizens who will submit to the authority of the state and function as docile and loyal workers in the workplace. The socialization process indoctrinates people into an acceptance of their social position. Both groups see that the educational system has not eliminated racism and poverty and has little to offer in the way of social mobility. The Black critics, especially, feel that the task of obtaining equality of educational opportunity by the black, or any other minority group for that matter, obviously is not an isolated problem. It is only one aspect of the larger task of assuring all citizens the opportunity of participating equally in the pursuit of the American dream. In other words, the educational crisis is more political, economic, and social in nature than educational. The Black critics tend to see that individual liberation through education is closely tied to stages of social, political, and economic liberation as a group. Nevertheless, both groups also see the schools are long in blaming children of the urban ghetto and low-income families for their failure in schools and short in blaming the shortcomings of the school practices and curriculum. The Black critics are particularly critical of the educators' attitude that Black children are "unteachable" and believe that the low expectation of Black children by teachers has had hurt the Black children. They also contend that the

theory of cultural deprivation is another strategy of putting the blame on Black children by the educators. Black critics are vocal on the fact that the rich heritage of and contributions by the Black people to the country have been ignored or slantingly represented in school textbooks. Thus Black children have been deprived of a sense of their history. This leads to an identity crisis and alienation. With the exception of Milton Coleman, the Black critics generally do not go as far as Illich and Reimer to call for the abolition of school. Coleman suggests a cultural approach to education and holds that the school structure is secondary to education. I cannot ascertain whether he is influenced by Illich and Reimer as his article does not carry a bibliographic citation. Both the radical and the Black critics seek alternatives to the public school for educating the children. The Black critics question the usefulness of public schools in educating Black children, but their faith in education as the key to their future is not diminished. The faith is strongly rooted in slavery. This shall be fully discussed in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER III

## BLACK HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND THEIR STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION

### A TRADITION OF RESISTANCE

The experience of the Black Americans is rooted in slavery. The collective historical memory of slavery is to a great extent defining their world view. Cedric Clark, a Black psychologist, suggests that slavery "has, more than any other single event, shaped the mentality of the present-day black American. It is, in a word, the most relevant event in the history of black Americans" (p. 7). Vincent P. Franklin, a Black historian, also holds that "The slave background of the Afro-American has had a profound influence upon many aspects of the contemporary black culture" (1978, p. 113).

Recent revisionist Black scholars on slavery challenge the traditional view of slave as a happy-go-lucky sambo, infantile, ignorant, and acquiescent. Revisionist Black scholars agree that blacks generally resisted rather than acquiesced in slavery and the inferior status forced upon them. They document direct confrontation and active resistance by slaves. Resistance is one of the central themes of slavery. Vincent Harding, a Black historian and an activist in the Civil Rights Movement in the Sixties,

maintains that the Black struggle for freedom and dignity began in their captivity on African soil. He writes "Thus it was on the edges of our continent--where some of us gulped down handfuls of sand in a last effort to hold the reality of the land--that the long struggle for black freedom began" (p. 31). In his book, **There is a River**, Harding employs the river as the central metaphor of a long struggle for freedom that unites Black Americans as a people. He says "In those days--as in all other times--most participants in the movement toward freedom were not really organized. Rather, the mainstream of the river was filled with innumerable individual acts of protest and rebellion" (p. 40). Black resistance took many forms from passive resistance or personal defiance to the open violent rebellion, and they fought by all possible means available to them. James H. Dorman and Robert P. Jones (1974) in **The Afro-American Experience** note that there were detailed records of fifty-five mutinies on board slave ships and brief mentions of 100 other incidents between 1699 and 1845 (p. 80). They add that "The slave captains remained in constant fear of revolt and mutiny, at least until their ships put to sea and got clear of the African coast; then the chance of mutiny at sea were not as great." The chance might not be great but the resistance never ceased in the Middle Passage. "Rebellion, suicides, and in a few cases capture of the vessel occurred in sight of the new land" (Harding, p. 25).

Not only were the slave ship captains in constant fear of slave mutiny and revolt but also the slaveholders in colonial time and later in the Southern slave states. Their fear was not unfounded. Herbert Aptheker in his **American Negro Slave Revolts** finds that historical records show evidence of 250 slave revolts or conspiracies of revolt. He comments that "There is considerable evidence, in the newspapers of the day, of extensive white fear of uprisings" (p. 162). Joseph Cephas Carroll in his **Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800-1865** maintains that "Like the French Revolutionists, the Negroes felt that they could accelerate the rate of progress, and hasten the ripening of history. They believed that they could do for themselves what others were unwilling, and had not the courage to do for them. Hence there were attempts at Insurrections throughout the slave period ... While there were many failures, the attempts at insurrection were frequent enough to keep the south in constant fear of such direful consequences from this source as to create a real problem of slave control" (p. 12).

Despite frequent rebellions or conspiracies of revolt, most slaves, however, did not participate in the open, organized uprising. As Harding has mentioned, the river of struggle was fed by numerous individual acts of resistance. Practically all slaves resisted the slaveholders one way or another. The resistance consisted of slow-down of work, self-

mutilation, sabotage, stealing and cheating, running away, etc. Above all, many slaves turned to religion or Christian God for inner strength to face the grim reality. John W. Blassingame (1972) writes:

Religious faith often conquered the slave's fear of his master. The more pious slaves persisted in attending religious services contrary to the order of their masters and in spite of floggings. In this test of wills the slave asserted that his master could inflict pain on his body, but he could not harm his Soul. After administering a few floggings, most masters gave up and allowed the slave to go to church when he pleased. Clearly, religion was more powerful than the master, engendering more love and fear in the slave than he could. William Webb's reaction to conversion was similar to that of many slaves: "As soon as I felt in my heart, that God was the Divine Being that I must call on in all my troubles, I heard a voice speak to me, and from that time I lost all fear of men on this earth (p. 75).

The slave turned to the Christian God but rejected the religious instruction from the slaveholder and the white missionary. The slave master stressed obedience and submission as the most important commandments. Thomas L. Webber (1978) writes "Once the omnipotence of God and the fateful importance of obeying His will had been imparted, the next task of plantation religious instruction was to teach slaves what God intended for them as Black persons under slavery. Slaves were taught that it was God's design, as decreed by Holy Scriptures, that they, as the sons and daughters of Ham, be the servants of whites into eternity. The life of a hewer of wood and a carrier of water was not to be thought of as a curse, however. Rather it was to be

recognized as a blessing in disguise; God's means of providing a road to salvation for the pagan African" (p. 49). A Black man recalls his grandmother who was a slave had said that she would never read the Gospel according to John because her master and white preacher often quoted John to teach slaves to obey their master. Slaves often challenged the teaching of slaveholders. Webber points out Whites demanded docility and compliance; blacks, however, rebelled at every turn and used the slave quarter community for their own survival and larger education. Webber adds that "The primary conclusion which grows from the study of education in the slave quarter community is that most of the values, attitudes, and understandings that whites taught their slaves were rejected by the members of the slave community" p. 246). Albert J. Raboteau (1978) also maintains that "In prayer, religious slaves kept in touch with their 'in world' where they could develop a scale of values and fixed points of vantage from which to judge the world around them and themselves. In this inner, religious world the primary value and fixed point was the will of God. And in opposition to the slaveholders' belief, the slave believed that slavery was surely contrary to the will of God" (p. 309).

Their religious faith, their value system, and group solidarity and identification sustained the blacks during their slavery. John Blassingame points out "As long as the

plantation black had cultural norms and ideals, ways of verbalizing aggression, and roles in his life largely free from his master's control, he could preserve some personal autonomy, and resist infantilization or unflattering stereotype calling for abject servility. The slave's culture bolstered his self-esteem, courage, and confidence, and served as his defense against personal degradation" (p. 76).

Gayrauch S. Wilmore in **Black Religion and Black Radicalism** (1983) suggests that the Nat Turner revolt greatly heightened the suspicion that religion was a primary factor in slave uprisings. Governor John Floyd of Virginia blamed the Turner Revolt on the blacks' reading the Bible. Black preachers had turned the knowledge of the Bible into conspiratorial purposes (p. 32). Wilmore maintains that from the beginning of slavery blacks had made a persistent effort to free themselves and there was a deepseated longing for deliverance and a seizing upon every rumor that might suggest that it was at hand. He states "The point here is that in the numerous slave revolts prior to 1800, religious factors of one sort or another were frequently present. Sometimes visionary whites, foreigners to their own society's values, were involved. At other times, conjurers or witch doctors, who apparently were sometimes in the background, were called upon to provide inconspicuous supporting services. At still other times black preachers--unordained and illiterate men of



extraordinary intelligence--kept the pot boiling by relating slavery to white immorality, and freedom to Black salvation through Jesus Christ" (p. 49). Was it not the fact that God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt? They asked.

Vincent Franklin in **Black Self-Determination** advances the thesis that the blacks had developed a culture that stressed resistance to slavery and freedom and the culture sustained the quasi independence or self-determination of Black community. The thesis is well supported by Lawrence Levine's study of Black folklores, music, and folk religious beliefs. Lawrence Levine in **Black Culture and Black Consciousness** (1977) stresses the theme of Black self-respect and defiance of the white master and white bosses through their creative power. Slaves frequently satired and criticized the whites in their song, humiliated the whites in their tales, used music in their tales as a device to get around the whites, and they "simply refused to be uncritical recipients of a religion defined and controlled by white intermediaries and interpreters." Slaves often confronted white preachers about the morality of slavery and about human freedom. Slaves created a sacred universe "as a serious alternative to the societal system created by southern slaveholders." Levine observes that "Slave music, slave religion, slave folk-beliefs--the entire sacred world of the black slaves--created the necessary space between the slaves and their owners and

were the means of preventing legal slavery from becoming spiritual slavery. In addition to the world of the masters which slaves inhabited and accommodated to, as they had to, they created and maintained a world apart which they shared with each other and which remained their own domain, free of control of those who ruled the earth" (p. 80). Apart from uprising and escape, slaves had no political means to oppose slavery. Thus they turned to their inner creative power to oppose the Peculiar Institution and to cope with the harsh reality of slavery. One of the coping mechanism is the animal trickster stories. And the most well-known animal trickster story is the Br'er Rabbit cycle. In its essence, Br'er Rabbit in the stories is a small and weak animal but he overcomes adversity by outsmarting with his wit and guile the larger, stronger animals. These animal stories were the symbolic assault of the high and mighty. Levine says "In the exploit of the animal trickster, slaves mirrored in exaggerated terms the experience of their own lives" (p. 121).

The analysis of the animal stories, Levine comments:

...documents the enduring identification between black storytellers and the central trickster figure of their tales. Brer Rabbit's victories became the victories of the slave. This symbolism in slave tales allowed them to outlive slavery itself. So long as the perilous situation and psychic needs of the slave continued to characterize large numbers of freedmen as well, the imagery of the old slave tales remained both aesthetically and functionally satisfying. By ascribing actions to semi-mythical actors, Negroes were able to overcome the external and internal censorship that their

hostile surroundings imposed upon them. The white master could believe that the rabbit stories his slaves told were mere figments of a childish imagination, that they were primarily humorous anecdotes depicting the "roaring comedy of animal life." Blacks knew better. The trickster's exploits, which overturned the neat hierarchy of the world in which he was forced to live, became their exploits; the justice he achieved, their justice; the strategies he employed, their strategies. From his adventures they obtained relief; from his triumphs they learned hope (pp. 113-114).

Another portion of slave folklore consists of slave trickster stories. These human trickster stories, like the animal trickster stories, emphasized "the tactics of trickery and indirection, took the same delight in seeing the weak outwit and humiliate the strong" (p. 131). However, there is a difference. Levine explains "Their greatest point of departure was that human trickster stories were more restricted by the realities of the slaves' situation. It was in their animal trickster tales that slaves expressed their wildest hopes and fears. The human trickster might win his victories, but they were always less spectacular than those of his animal counterpart--triumphs of the spirit more than of the flesh. He could outwit his master again and again, but his primary satisfaction would be in making his master look foolish and thus exposing the myth of white omniscience and omnipotence" (pp. 131-132.)

Levine has amply demonstrated that lacking the political means to oppose slavery, slaves creatively resorted to other means available to them to express covert

or overt resistance to slavery and to gain some independence from the elaborated control imposed by the slave system. Slaves learned to maneuver from their position of weakness. Levine observes "Once again the lesson was clear: the environment did not have to be accepted docilely; it could be manipulated and controlled to some extent at least" (p. 67).

### EDUCATION, A VEHICLE OF DELIVERANCE

Blacks not only strongly believed in the gospel message of deliverance but also in education as a vehicle of deliverance. Vicent P. Franklin in **Black Self-Determination** (1984) states that many blacks came to embrace the Protestant's belief that the way to achieve salvation and personal deliverance was "to know the Word of God and live it." This belief became a strong motivation for blacks to learn to read and write. Booker T. Washington in his autobiography **Up From Slavery** also noted that immediately after the Civil War many older Black men and women flocked to night school or Sunday School and with great difficulty learned to read, for their last wish was to be able to read the Bible before they died (**Three Negro Classics** pp.44-45).

According to W.E.B. Du Bois, the blacks also connected knowledge with power. The blacks "believed that education was

the stepping-stone to wealth and respect, and that wealth, without education, was crippled. Perhaps the very fact that so many of them had seen the wealthy slaveholders at close range, and knew the extent of ignorance and inefficiency among them, led to that extraordinary mass demand on the part of the black laboring class for education" (**Black Reconstruction in America**, p. 641). Du Bois also suggests that another motivation of the Black masses yearning for education was that "The very feeling of inferiority which slavery forced upon them fathered an intense desire to rise out of their condition by means of education" (p. 637). Vincent P. Franklin also states "In numerous ways, Afro-Americans came to understand that wisdom and knowledge were associated with freedom. An important part of the oppression of enslavement was depriving Afro-Americans of knowledge of their condition, and thus the ways to change it. But the desire for literacy and "book-learning" was often stronger than the prohibitions and persecutions" (1984, p. 161). Indeed there are strong evidences in the slave narratives to support the above observations. A 90-year-old ex-slave, Victoria Adams, told the WPA interviewer in 1937 at Columbia, South Carolina that "White folks never teach us to read nor write much. They learned us our A, B, C's, and teach us to read some in de testament. De reason they wouldn't teach us to read and write, was 'cause they was afraid de slaves would write their

own pass and go over to a free county. One old nigger did learn enough to write his pass and got 'way wid it and went up North" (George P. Rawick, ed. 1972, v.2 pt.1 p.11). Many ex-slaves told the WPA interviewers that slavemaster would "skin them alive" if he caught any of his slave trying to learn to read and write or warned the slave with the threat that he would "chop their fingers off." The following example perhaps is illustrative of most slaveholders attitude towards the blacks' learning. An ex- slave woman narrates that "Young missy Betty like me and try larn me readin and writtin' and she slip to my room and have me doin' right good. I larn the alphabet. But one day Missy Jane catch her schoolin' me and she say, 'Niggers don't need to know anything.' and she lams me over the head with the butt of a cowhide whip" (Rawick, 1972, v. 5, p. 78). No one understood the tranforming power of education better than the slave masters. The most telling example was provided by Frederick Douglass, the Black abolitionist, in his autobiography. When he was seven or eight years old he was sent to live with Mr. and Mrs Hugh Auld, the brother of his old master Colonel Lloyd's son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld, in Baltimore. Douglass described Mrs Auld as "a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings" and she undertook to teach young Douglass the ABC's, and to spell words of three or four letters. Douglass said:

Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out

what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master--to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontent and unhappy (p. 58).

What David Walker stated in his **Appeal** that "for colored people to acquire learning in this country, makes tyrants quake and tremble ... The bare name of educating the colored people, scares our cruel oppressors almost to death" is not an exaggerated statement. To deny the blacks the opportunity to an education is to deny them the instrument to know and to change their condition. Again, Douglass' experience will illustrate the point. The first book (**The Columbian Orator**) acquired by Douglass deepened his hatred of slavery as he read and memorized the speeches by Chatham, Sheridan, and Fox in behalf of human rights, and he began to understand his position. He was a victim of oppression, and if these great men were right, it was wrong that he or any man should be doomed to slavery. Douglass described the result of reading **The Columbian Orator** in this manner:

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of catholic emancipation...what I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. ... It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched

existence, and wishing myself dead but for the hope of being free...(pp.42-43).

Book learning changed Douglass' consciousness and his worldview and raised his hope for freedom. At the least, he hoped learning to read and write would enable him to write himself a pass so that he could move more freely. And he did. A slave by the name of Williams did the same. He had carried a pass written by himself which read: "Permit the boy Emperor to pass and repass, and oblige Mr. Williams (Blassingame, 1977, p. 621). Writing themselves a pass so that they could move more freely motivated slaves to learn to read and write. Perhaps an example of education as a means of empowerment is best seen in the story told by a slave by the name of Sella Martin. When he was ten years old, Sella Martin was an errand-boy in a hotel, where he had the opportunity to see the guests read newspapers. Martin said: "For a long time I could not get it out of my head that the readers were talking to the paper, rather than the paper talking to them. When, however, it became a reality to me, I made up my mind that I would accomplish this feat myself" (Blassingame, 1977, p. 710).

With perseverance, Martin learned to read. One Sunday afternoon, he was invited by three older slaves with the pretext to pick wild grapes in the woods. While in the woods, one of the slaves pulled from his bosom a newspaper and asked Martin to read. Martin was surprised that they had found out



he could read and he was more surprised to find out that he could read a little and made some sense out of what he had read in the lead article. It was about "Henry Clay, an abolitionist." Martin described his feeling in this manner: "What I read, or pretended to read, gave the most intense satisfaction, and awakened the wildest hope about freedom among hearers, and elevated me to the judgment seat of a second Young Daniel among them" (Blassingame, 1977, p. 711). Slaveholders strongly believed that the institution of slavery would be endangered by extending education to blacks. Slaves must be kept ignorant. In order to maintain the myth that blacks were inferior and incapable of learning, the colonies and later the slave states enacted legislation to prohibit the education of blacks. In 1740, South Carolina banned the teaching of slaves to read and write. The enactment stated:

That all and every Person and Persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach, or cause any Slave or Slaves to be taught to write, or shall use or employ any Slave as a Scribe in any Manner of Writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write; every such Person or Persons shall, for every such Offence, forfeit the sum of One Hundred Pounds current Money (West, 1972, p. 10).

In the third decade of the nineteenth century following the publication of David Walker's **Appeal** calling the slaves to rise to throw off their yoke of slavery, the Nat Turner's uprising and the heightened agitation of the abolitionists, the Southern slave states tightened their control of slaves. The

legislatures of these states re-enacted the slave code with more stringent repressive measures. Even the free blacks were denied the opportunity of education. However, in the face of unsurmountable barrier and the risk of severe punishment, blacks were not totally deterred from acquiring an education. Like Douglass, Sella Martin and many others through sheer determination and ingenuity they taught themselves to read and write. In some cases, they were aided by slaves who could read and write or by the whites, especially the children of the slavemasters. It was recorded that there were Black underground schools at Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina, for instance, for free Black children and slave children. (Woodson, 1968, p. 128).

It must be pointed out that it would be a gross error to leave the impression that the blacks in bondage were totally denied the opportunity to learn to read and write. As Carter G. Woodson in **The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861** had amply shown that a number of individuals, religious organizations, and benevolent societies did make a sincere effort to provide education to the free blacks and those in bondage. Notably among them were the Quakers, the Society for the Propaganda of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Manumission Society, the Phoenix Society, the Spanish and French Catholic priests and to a lesser extent, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Baptists, especially during the

Revolutionary period. Woodson emphatically stated that religion was a strong factor in the progress of the blacks (p. 55). Carleton Mabee (1979) in his study of Black education in the New York state points out that the Anglican church was interested primarily in religious indoctrination whereas the Quakers focused on education as a means of preparing slaves for freedom (p. 10). And "the white abolitionists, especially those of the later immediate variety, deliberately educated black leaders, including preachers and teachers" (Mabee, 1979, p. 33). Moreover, the immediate abolitionists carried out their advocacy of interracial education (p. 34). However, the motive of the Colonization Society to provide education to blacks was to prepare them for transplanting them to Africa, particularly to Liberia (Woodson, 1968, pp. 6-7). The colonization project was strongly rejected by the Black National Convention Movement (Bell, 1969, proceedings of 1833 Convention, pp. 5-6). Some slaveholders in colonial times believed that some education would improve the efficiency and productivity of slaves, they provided some rudimentary education to their slaves (Fleming, 1976, p. 20).

Undoubtedly, whites assisted blacks in their early education but blacks, having a strong faith in education, made great effort to provide education to their young. As early as 1812, a group of blacks in Albany, New York, pulled their resources together to purchase a piece of land for building a

school and also in other parts of New York state blacks established schools for their children. These prompted Carleton Mabee to observe that "Considering that blacks at this time were only just emerging from slavery in the state, their educational efforts provide a remarkable record of both their enterprise and their faith in education" (p. 49).

Similarly, Jacqueline Jones in **Soldiers of Light and Love** observes that "Denied the opportunity to learn to read and write by law, slaves had nevertheless recognized the symbolic and practical significance of literacy. After emancipation, going to school became a political act as well as a means of personal edification. Black people joined together to establish schools and hire teachers for old and young alike, and their collective effort represented both defiance to white authority and an expression of community self-interest" (p. 3). Educational effort is an act of resistance. Vincent Harding has emphasized and re-emphasized the theme that blacks sought their own freedom through their own struggle. It is not only in the case of slaves in the South but also the case with the free blacks in the non-slave states. The Colored Convention Movement at the national and the state level before the Civil War period bore testimony to blacks' struggle for education and freedom.

#### **THE CONVENTION MOVEMENT AND EDUCATION**

Though the Black National Convention Movement in the Northern states was interested primarily in obtaining political and civil rights, practically every convention held since 1830 insisted upon the prime importance of education. At the conclusion of the 1831 National Convention held at Philadelphia, the Convention issued an address to the Black freedmen stating: "In conclusion, the Convention would remind our brethren that knowledge is power, and to that end, we call on you to sustain and support, by those which are devoted to our instruction and elevation..." (Bell, Proceedings of the 1831 Convention, p. 15). The blacks not only saw education as a means to advance humanity and combat racial discrimination but also embraced education for its intrinsic value. The Convention Address issued by the second National Convention held at Philadelphia in 1832 states: "If we ever expect to see the influence of prejudice decrease, and ourselves respected, it must be by the blessing of an enlightened education. It must be by being in possession of that classical knowledge which promotes genius, and causes man to soar up to those high intellectual enjoyments and acquirements, which place him in a situation, to shed upon a country and a people, that scientific grandeur which is imperishable by time, and drowns in oblivious cup their moral degradation" (Bell, Proceedings of the 1832 Convention, p.

34).

With slight variation in tone and wordings, the succeeding national conventions and state conventions stressed the importance of education for the social well being of the Black race. Education was a very important avenue for blacks to claim economic, political and social rights due to them. The 1853 National Convention's position on education illustrated this point. The report of the Committee on Education stated: "When we are called upon to consider the subject of Education with reference to ourselves, and to ask what kind of an institution would best benefit us, the answer comes in the light of the announced doctrine, namely, one that would develop power; and that kind of power most essential to our elevation" (Bell, Proceedings of the 1853 Convention, pp. 30-33).

The theme of education for equality emerged again and again in the national and the state conventions. The 1851 state convention of New York posited that "It's all important that they become educated; without education we cannot hope to be emancipated from the bondage of involuntary degradation, which we are placed under by the cruel and malicious system of prejudice and caste" (Foner & Walker, 1979, p. 73).

In the face of the sweeping of the Black Law across the free states to strip off whatever rights the freedmen had, the 1843 Michigan Black State Convention

adamantly expressed the desire of blacks to gain freedom and equality through education. The Committee on Education chaired by Willis R. Wilson stated:

As education is the great rampart in protecting Human Liberty, we should as an oppressed people, encourage it to its fullest extent. As the ball of oppression is now about to burst, let us arouse to a sense of our duty. With our crippled minds we see the season of reflection has come. Therefore let us exert ourselves--let us cultivate our minds, and we may yet glean a rich harvest for ourselves and posterity. To do this, let us lay the corner stone with a mutual desire for a general diffusion of knowledge, based on the principles of Human Liberty and Equal Rights. By so doing, we will increase our individual happiness and prosperity, by improving the minds of our people, and elevating the standard of Liberty, raise ourselves up and take our stand with the well informed (Foner & Walker, 1979, p. 190).

Similarly, the 1855 Black State Convention of California stressed that education was freedom and it was necessary for the well-beings of the Black people. The Convention's address stated:

No people have become truly illustrious, great and powerful, who did not make learning the subject of especial attention. ... As of nations, so of communities and individuals, knowledge gives to its possessors a power and a superiority over the uncultivated, real, and substantial. The ignorant must give place and yield to the intelligent and educated; ... True intellectual culture gives to men power over themselves, opens a knowledge of the laws of life, disposes them to respect the rights of all, and to the practice of justice and virtue. ... We are under the most solemn obligations to have our children educated; ... it cannot be denied, ignorance has been the cause, chiefly, of our sufferings. We must seize upon every opportunity to acquire knowledge, to educate the head, the hands, the heart, for the duties, necessities and responsibilities of life (Foner & Walker, 1980, p. 129).

It was the collective thinking of the blacks then

that education was a strong safeguard against the race slipping back to servitude. Without education, they would be treated as "things" and not human beings. To the blacks, education meant freedom and freedom, education. The blacks not only advocated education for equality but also demanded equal education and opposed to segregated schools for Black children. The 1849 Black State Convention of Ohio in an address to the citizens of the State stated "We asked for school privileges in common with others, for we pay school taxes in the same proportion" (Foner & Walker, 1979, p. 233). The 1851 Black State Convention of New York opposed segregation in education and it called upon its constituents "to discountenance, in every practical way, the erection or maintenance of separate schools for colored children" on the grounds that "any system of common or high school education, which teaches superiority of races, or create distinctions based upon complexional differences, is opposed to the true interest of all classes by inflating the one with the false notions of their greatness, and crushing the other by such influences, as teaches them submission and inferiority" (Foner & Walker, 1979, p. 54). Blacks in other states such as Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, California, and the New England states expressed the same sentiment. The 1858 Convention of the Colored Men of Ohio held at Columbus went a step further. It passed resolution protesting



against taxation without equal representation in public office, trial by jury and "an equal education to their youth," and urged "the colored people of every city and school district to petition the Legislature to repeal all such laws" (Foner & Walker, 1979, p. 334). The Ohio State Convention's stand on education was more militant than any of the previous convention either at the state or the national level. Practically all the previous conventions couched the theme of education in the language of morality, economic and social uplifting.

During the antebellum years, blacks in the non-slave states had no doubt devoted a great deal of their energy to struggle for equality of education, but they had not lost sight of self-help. The 1853 convention reminded Black people that "we must open our own avenue" (Bell, Proceedings of 1853 Convention, p. 22). Under the leadership of Frederick Douglass, blacks attempted to establish an "Industrial College where colored youth can be instructed to use their hands, as well as their heads--where they can be put in possession of the means of getting a living--whether their lot in after life may be cast among civilized or uncivilized man" (ibid, p. 37). Combining book learning or classical studies with learning a trade and skills was a theme running through practically all the conventions. The 1855 Convention's position on this topic was typical. The proceedings stated "Thus we believe that our

demand for a variety of employments is only limited by the trade themselves. Again the plan of an industrial school combines the mental culture with mechanical training." The project to build a Black college in New Haven failed largely because of white opposition to higher education for blacks. Through the years, the Black National Convention Movement unceasingly encouraged blacks to have education and the Movement regarded the increase in the numbers of Black schools in the nation as a sign of improvement for blacks. Now I will turn to the Southern conventions in the post-belleum years. Like their Northern counterparts, the Southern Conventions endorsed public schools as a major goal during the Radical Reconstruction. The newly emancipated slaves everywhere asked for a school or established one with their own effort as soon as they had found a roof over their heads. The importance of education was emphasized again and again in all the Southern conventions. The slogan was education, education, and education. For instance, the address issued by the 1865 Tennessee Black State Convention stated "We want your cooperation in the schools. The political cry used to be agitate, agitate, agitate. I say, "educate, educate, educate" (Foner & Walker, 1986, p. 122). Echoing their Northern brethren, the 1865 South Carolina Black State Convention unanimously adopted a resolution stating that "Knowledge is power, and an educated and intelligent people can neither be

held in, nor reduced to slavery; ... we will insist upon the establishment of good schools for the thorough education of our children throughout the State; that, to this end, we will contribute freely and liberally of our means, and will earnestly and persistently urge forward every measure calculated to elevate us to the rank of a wise, enlightened and Christian people" (Foner & Walker, 1980, pp. 289-90). It is generally acknowledged that the Freedmen Bureau, Northern philanthropists and religious organizations especially the Congregationist's American Missionary Association (AMA) had plunged into the task of providing education to the newly emancipated slaves. However, recent studies of Black education in the South indicate that the education provided by Freedmen aid societies was "not merely inadequate" but utterly inappropriate" (Butchart, p. 9) Besides, the motive was not purely educational and blacks even preferred their own schools to schools established by AMA (Jones, p. 111). Blacks had made a tremendous effort to help themselves educationally. W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter Woodson credited blacks for their efforts to bring about public education to the South. Apart from "the natural thirst for knowledge common to all men," blacks "had seen power and influence among white people always coupled with learning" (**The Atlanta University publications no. 6, p. 24**). Thus the blacks had a good reason to make personal sacrifice to establish schools. They realized that

the newly gained freedom was imperfect and that they lived in a hostile social environment and there were forces seeking to destroy whatever liberty they had. Black leaders and educators cherished the hope that a quality education could effect for the Black race a more perfect freedom.

However, the rising tide was against blacks in the South after the Congressional Reconstruction and the compromise of 1877. Henry Allen Bullock describes the education for blacks after the Radical Reconstruction as "the great detour: a transition to Negro education" (Bullock, 1967, p. 60). The detour was the industrial education which was designed and encouraged by Northern industrialists and was accepted by the Southern whites.

### **INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION, A POLITICAL COMPROMISE**

For Bullock as well as other scholars who study the Black education, industrial education was a political compromise of the Northern industrialists-philanthropists and the Southern whites. Bullock writes:

The idea of a special kind of education for Negroes, championed by a few individual educators from the North and South, eventually spread to become the basic ideology of the Negro system. Northern and Southern leaders, realizing that an equalitarian approach to the development of educational opportunities for the Negro American was not acceptable to white Southerners, joined forces to save for the former slaves what could be salvaged. At the close of the nineteenth century an organization that came to be known as the Conference for Education in the South, and which was to meet annually seventeen consecutive times in all, came into being under

their leadership. In creating this organization they accepted the caste system imposed by the South and built within it an educational structure of their own (p. 89).

The industrial education was built upon the model of Hampton Institute founded by General Samuel Armstrong of the Freedmen Bureau in 1868. The core of Hampton Institute's industrial education program was manual training, a preparation in rudimentary trades, religion and military drill for men and domestic work for women. Bullock comments that once again the South found its chief ideologist in General Armstrong. The advocates of industrial education believed that vocational education would open wide to the blacks various opportunities in agricultural, mechanical and household industries. Vocational education not only would render the blacks self-supporting but it would make them valuable, thereby giving the South a labor force of great potential wealth.

August Meier observes that Armstrong's outlook had a strong appeal because it was couched in philanthropic and paternalistic terms of uplift that saved the conscience of conservative Southerners and of Northerners--many of them former abolitionists. Meier adds that the industrial education also couched in "the platitude of the day--in terms of laissez-faire and the gospel of wealth, of uplifting backward races not really equal to whites ... of self-help, morality, and economic independence--that appeal to the

average middle and upper-class American" (Meier, 1966, p.89).

The most prominent and ardent Black advocate of industrial education was Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) who was described as "a star student" of General Armstrong. Washington's chance to spread the gospel of industrial education for blacks came in 1881 when he was recommended by General Armstrong to start a school for blacks at Tuskegee, Alabama. Through Washington's ingenuity and perseverance, the hard work of the students and staff, and the enthusiastic contributions in kind and labor and moral support of the black community, the Tuskegee Institute was built from scratch and with little money.

Totally submerged in the Hampton tradition, Washington was puritanical and strongly believed that through hard work, thrift, and moral character and cumulation of wealth, blacks would eventually win the acceptance by the Southern whites and would also win their political and civil rights. He believed that blacks would gain their proper place in America through their wealth and economic power. His philosophy of life was reflected in his educational endeavor. His position on education was best shown in his reply to his critics in the following passage:

I would not confine the race to industrial life, not even to agriculture, for example, although I believe that by far the greater part of the Negro race is best off in the country districts and must and should continue to live there, but I would teach the race that in industry the

foundation must be laid--that the best service which any one can render to what is called the higher education is to teach the present generation to provide a material or industrial foundation. On such a foundation as this will grow habits and thrift, a love of work, economy, ownership of property, bank accounts. Out of it in the future will grow practical education, professional education, positions of public responsibility. Out of it will grow moral and religious strength. Out of it will grow wealth from which alone can come leisure and the opportunity for the enjoyment of literature and the fine arts. (**The Negro Problem**, pp.17-8).

In the same piece, "Industrial Education for The Negro," Washington wrote: "Our knowledge must be harnessed to the things of real life. I would encourage the Negro to secure all the mental strength, all the mental culture--whether gleaned from science, mathematics, history, language or literature that his circumstances will allow, but I believe most earnestly that for years to come the education of people of my race should be so directed that the greatest proportion of the mental strength of the masses will be brought to bear upon the every-day practical things of life, upon something that is needed to be done, and something which they will be permitted to do in the community in which they reside." (**The Negro Problem**, p. 17)

He further mentioned that "It seems to me that too often mere book education leaves the Negro young man or woman in a weak position." He added "Almost from the first Tuskegee has kept in mind--and this I think should be the policy of all industrial schools--fitting students for occupations which would be open to them in their home communities" (**Ibid**, pp.

23-4).

It was Washington's doctrine of accommodation that he was accorded the role of spokesman for blacks. He was literarily catapulted into the leadership position overnight by his speech at the Atlanta Exposition in 1895. In the speech which was hence dubbed as the Atlanta Compromise, Washington said: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." It was a symbolic metaphor which probably was most appropriate to symbolize his political and social stands. He further qualified the theme by saying: "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing" (**Three Negro Classics**, p. 149).

Washington won the trust of the ruling class in the South and the heart of the philanthropist-industrialists of the North. He was more convinced that his form of industrial education of training blacks to become farmers, mechanics, carpenters, brick-layers, and domestic servants would be acceptable to and not antagonize the Southern whites and would carve a place for blacks in the service industry in the community.



Washington's promotion of industrial education and his counseling of economic respectability instead of political and social equality had drawn support as well as opposition among the blacks. Among his most vocal critics and opponents were the editors of *Boston Guardian*, William Monroe Trotter (1842-1892) and George W. Forbes (1864-1927). Trotter denounced Washington as the "worst enemy of his race" for acquiescing to the disenfranchisement of the blacks in the South and editorially urged his readers to "condemn this idea of reducing a people to serfdom" (Broderick and Meier, 1965, p. 27). Forbes bitterly declared that "it would be a blessing to the race if the Tuskegee school should burn down" (Quoted in Manning Marable's *W.E.B. Du Bois* p. 45).

Another bitter critic of Washington was Ida Wells Barnett (1862-1931), journalist, and civil right activist who wrote:

Industrial education for the Negro is Booker T. Washington's hobby. He believes that for the masses of the Negro race an elementary education of the brain and a continuation of the education of the hand is not only the best kind, but he knows it is the most popular with the white South. ... That one of the most noted of their own race should join with the enemies to their highest progress in condemning the education they had received, has been to ...[college educated Negroes] a bitter pill. ...The result is that the world which listens to him and which largely supports his educational institution, has almost unaminously decided that college education is a mistake for the Negro. They hail with acclaim the man who has made popular the unspoken thought of that part of the North which believes in the inherent inferiority of the Negro, and the always outspoken southern view to the same effect (Emman Lou Thornbrough, (ed.), 1969, *Booker T. Washington*, pp. 120-21).

Barnett added that she did not object to industrial education per se but "by sad experience" she knew that industrial education would not stand a Black man in place of political, civil and intellectual liberty. She objected "to being deprived of fundamental rights of American citizenship to the end that one school for industrial training shall flourish." To her, this "seems like selling a race birthright for a mess of pottage."

Washington's most formidable critic was W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963). Du Bois, a Massachusetts-born free black, was educated at Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee and in 1895 obtained the Ph.D. degree in history from Harvard University. He then went to Berlin, Germany for further studies. Later he established himself as a top ranked sociological researcher and scholar at Atlanta University. He led a group of Black intellectuals to form the Niagara Movement in 1906 to oppose Washington's program and to struggle for civil rights for blacks. In 1909-1910, the Niagara Movement joined efforts with the white liberals to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), to agitate for the constitutional rights of the blacks overtly and covertly to oppose Washington. Du Bois was the editor of *Crisis*, the organ of NAACP. Du Bois advanced the theory of leadership of the Talented Tenth by which he meant "The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men." Like

Barnett, Du Bois did not object to industrial education per se. He, however, criticized Washington for making his program "a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to over shadow the higher aims of life" (**Three Negro Classics**, p. 246). In his essay "The Talented Tenth," Du Bois wrote:

If we make money the object of man-training, we shall develop money-makers but not necessarily men; if we make technical skill the object of education, we may possess artisans but not, in nature, men. Men we shall have only as we make manhood the object of the schools--intelligence, broad sympathy, knowledge of the world that was and is, and of the relation of men to it--this is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true life (**The Negro Problem**, pp. 33-34).

As we have mentioned above, Du Bois did not object to industrial education per se, but was strongly against industrial education to the exclusion of higher education and liberal learning for blacks. He insisted that college education was necessary for some if not all blacks for the talented must have the opportunity to develop their potential. He also mentioned that even the schools of industrial education needed teachers trained by colleges of liberal education.

Du Bois did not belittle Washington's contribution of providing industrial training for blacks but he condemned Washington for de-emphasizing political power and civil rights. In a chapter entitled "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" in **The Souls of Black Folk** (1903), published two

years after Washington's *Up from Slavery*, Du Bois suggested that (1) the encouragement of Black business was doomed to failure without the ability to defend what was achieved through political power, (2) the support for self-respect was undermined by "submission to civil inferiority," and (3) the deprecation of higher learning was coupled by the fact that industrial schools were staffed, to a large degree, by the college trained.

The controversy over industrial education was formally ended by the Amenia Conference held a year after the death of Booker T. Washington. In 1916, over 200 prominent blacks representing all points of view met at the summer home of Joel E. Spingarn (1875-1939), the chairman of the Board of Directors of NAACP at Amenia, New York. Among other things, the conferees decided that "The conference believes that all forms of education are desirable for the Negro and that every form of education should be encouraged and advanced" (Broderick & Meier, 1965, pp.60-610.) Nevertheless, the controversy over industrial education occupies an important place in the annals of Black education and interest in the subject has not subsided.

In later years, another prominent Black educator and scholar, Carter Godwin Woodson (1875-1950) judged the industrial education was of little value to the blacks and that what blacks learned in the industrial training were

outmoded techniques. In his *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1933), Woodson wrote:

Such industrial education as these Negroes received, then, was merely to master a technique already discarded in progressive centres, and even in less complicated operations of industry these schools had no such facilities as to parallel the numerous processes of factories conducted on the plan of division of labor. Except what value such learning might have in the development of the mind by making practical applications of mathematics and science, then it was a failure (p. 13).

Recent revisionist and nationalistic Black scholars condemned the industrial education and Washington's program in harsher language. Donald Spivey bluntly calls the industrial education "schooling for the new slavery." He comments "The basic idea underlying the educational philosophy of Hampton Institute was the more efficient exploitation of the labor, to fitting the Negro in his place. The General [Armstrong] professed that through Hampton, Southerners could save themselves from a vast vagrancy and secure for themselves a supply of the best labor in the world" (Spivey, 1978, p. 22).

Spivey labels Washington as a "slave-driver," commenting "His [Washington's] role was like that of a black overseer during slavery over his fellow slaves, worked diligently to keep intact the very system under which they both were enslaved" (p. 66).

Allen B. Ballard argues that the philanthropists injected "funds into Black education on Southern terms, about which

there was no equivocation: the education of Blacks should not in any way endanger the political, social, and economic hegemony of Southern whites" (Ballard, 1974, p. 16).

Criticizing Washington for using his influence to divert philanthropic assistance from Black institutions of different persuasion, Robert G. Sherer says "While [William Hooper] Councill [head of the Normal School at Huntsville, Alabama] believed that blacks primarily needed literary education, he turned to industrial training, 1883-1893, to get money from the Peabody, Slater, and Morrill Funds to keep his school open" (Sherer, 1977, p. 43).

Bullock sees the industrial education as a great detour in the history of Black education. Industrial education became the special education for blacks. He comments: "Special education was more than a series of public schools and colleges. It was even more than the system of industrial education to which most of the public schools were turning at that time. It was a way of life to which Negroes were exposed for the purpose of perpetuating their caste condition, and the schools were to serve merely as the formal channel of this educative process" (pp. 147-48). He further contends that "The caste system was brutal in its power to make every Negro think of himself as a "colored person." One mechanism through which this power operated effectively was social isolation" (p. 153). The caste system was maintained by disenfranchising

the blacks, and the Jim Crow laws based on the doctrine of "separate but equal." This doctrine of "separate but equal" was endorsed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the **Plessy v. Ferguson** in 1896 which held that it was constitutionally permissive to maintain a regime of racial segregation if the services a state provided were equal. In fact, discrimination against blacks in the allocation of public funds for education grew steadily as time passed. (Harlan, 1958, p.255-56). Moreover, the subordination of blacks was maintained by white terror and violence. Historical record indicates that from 1889 to 1918, 2,472 Black men and 50 Black women were lynched by white mobs. The white supremacist groups, especially the Ku Klux Klan literally took the law into their own hands (National Association for Advancement of the Colored People, 1969, p. 7).

Segregation was a way of life for the blacks in the South as well as in the North. Blacks were restricted in housing, employment, education, and public facilities. The only difference was that the segregation in the South was sanctioned by law whereas that in the North was de facto. Generally speaking, the blacks in the North fared no better than those in the South. For instance, in 1849 the Massachusetts Supreme Court in **Roberts v. The City of Boston** established the precedent for racial segregation in public education. The following year the Ohio Supreme Court in **The**

State, ex rel., etc. v. City of Cincinnati et al upheld the city of Cincinnati's right to establish separate schools for educating Black children (West, 1972, pp. 40-46). The Convention Movement, especially at the state level since the 1850s explicitly sought equal education as well as suffrage rights and the right to serve in jury. However, the discrimination intensified after World War I with the massive migration of Southern blacks to the industrial centers in the North (Mohraz, 1979: xiii). It was this total subordination of blacks which prompted Du Bois to organize Black intellectuals to fight for civil rights for the blacks. Paradoxically, forced racial segregation defeated the very purpose of special education --a steady supply of trained, docile labor force and the interracial accommodation. Bullock points out that because of the forced segregation, there was a growing need for professional and technical services provided by the blacks for themselves. The Black colleges were quick to respond to this growing need by diversifying their program to include literary and professional fields (Bullock pp.164-65). Out of these Black colleges, the "Talented Tenth" as envisioned by Du Bois emerged. The blacks were subordinated but they never totally submitted. A subcurrent of resistance flowed incessantly. As Meier points out even Washington, the foremost advocate of racial accommodation, covertly assisted financially the fight for civil rights (1966, p.



113-14). Raymond Wolters documents in *The New Negro on Campus* (1975) "The challenge to racism on the campus broke forth with unprecedented force during the 1920s" (p. 16) "Far from being grateful for the financial aid that government and secular philanthropy had showered on the vocal schools," writes Wolters, "the black students, professors, and alumni of the 1920s were bitter with resentment and feared that the higher aspirations of the race had been sacrificed in order to obtain money from the powers that ruled" (p. 17).

Hovering over the Black college rebellion of the 1920s was the spirit of Du Bois. His advocacy of civil rights and liberal learning for blacks struck a resonant cord among Black students and intellectuals of the decade. Wolters points out that Du Bois as the editor of *Crisis* widely publicized the student revolts and even instigated the rebellion at Fisk, his alma mater. Wolters concludes that:

The black college rebels of the 1920s demanded self-determination so that they might develop 'a class of thoroughly educated men according to modern standards.' Imbued with the belief that Negro colleges should develop a Talented Tenth that would lead the struggle for emancipation of the race, the black collegians demanded home rule and an elevated curriculum that would prepare them for full participation in American life. Whatever the intentions of the founders and patrons of the black colleges may have been, many black students and alumni of the 1920s were engaged in a deliberate effort to establish institutional bastions for the assault on segregation and white supremacy (p. 341).

College was but one front that led the assault on racism and white supremacy. The Black press followed the tone set by

Chicago Defender and became more and more militant. It "became the main channel through which racial protest was expressed and the most militant agitator that the community possessed." Black protest organizations grew up with the press. The most noted organization that fought segregated schools was the NAACP. Since the 1930s, the NAACP had led a series of legal campaigns against segregation and to gain equal educational opportunities for blacks. The NAACP attacked the legality of the "separate but equal" doctrine. The legal battle was long and hard but the NAACP had successfully demolished segregated public education at the graduate and professional level. Its crowning victory came in the now famous *Brown et al v. Board of Education of Topeka et al* in 1954. The U.S. Supreme Court held that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

#### SUMMARY

The history of Black struggle for education is a history of resistance to white oppression and hegemony. The core of white oppression is racism. Jacqueline Jones rightly observes that the Black educational endeavor is a political act, a defiance of white authority. As Vincent Harding has shown Black resistance began the very moment when they became captive in Africa. The resistance had never ceased and took

many forms and shapes as illustrated by Blassingame, Levine, Raboteau, Webber, and Wilmore. Apart from open rebellion, the slaves challenged the slaveholders in their daily activities and through their songs, storytelling, and religious worshipping. Leslie Howard Owens (1976) comments:

Slaves did not take abuse passively. And to accuse them of docility because they did not constantly rebel against slavery is misleading. As the years passed, slaveholders' responses to bondsmen necessarily hardened in response to mounting concern for their own lives. Slaves attacked bondage at its core. And their deeds compelled tighter physical controls and more laws which, designed to restrict slave behavior, thus recognized its complexity. Slaveholders knew that there was more to fear than an occasional Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, or Nat Turner. A plantation's authority could quickly change form, if not hand (p. 105)

As the numerous slave narratives have shown, slaveholders viewed the denial of education to slaves as a very important means to control slaves and to keep the "Peculiar Institution" intact. Slaves saw knowledge as power and education as a means to independence and freedom--freedom from white control. Jacqueline Jones further observes that after the Civil War blacks saw schools they built with great sacrifice for their children as "a type of institution building that symbolized their spiritual independence of whites at long last" (p. 111). Black struggle for education is a struggle to debunk the myth of racial inferiority, to gain their manhood, and to uplift the race from degradation. Frederick Douglass' letter to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), the authoress of *Uncle*

Tom's Cabin outlining the plan for an industrial college for Black youths and seeking her financial support in 1853 very well summed up the view of free blacks and the Convention Movement on education. In the letter, Douglass stated that "I assert then that **poverty, ignorance, and degradation** are the combined evils; or in other words, these constitute the social disease of the free colored people of the United States." He continued:

To deliver them from this triple malady, is to improve and elevate them, by which I mean, simply to put them on an equal footing with their white fellow countrymen in the sacred right to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." I am for no fancied or artificial elevation, but only ask fair play. (Woodson, 1969, p. 654).

The free blacks in the North were persistent in their quest for equal education. The proceedings of the many Black conventions showed they pursued education for intellectual and moral growth. However, they had not lost sight of the importance of learning trades and skills in order to make a living. In fact, learning the various mechanic arts was stressed by Douglass in his letter to Harriet Stowe. Douglass' letter also illustrates blacks then had a strong faith in "the promise of democracy" and they had a vision of an egalitarian society free of political discrimination and racial prejudice. The mainstream of Black struggle was to integrate or assimilate into the American society. On the other hand, blacks were race conscious and the educational effort was to elevate the race as a whole. Raymond Wolters

documents in **The New Negro on Campus** that blacks wanted to use college for racial upward mobility and for the development of Black leadership. The alumni, students, and faculty demanded a respectable liberal arts curriculum and a larger Black representation on faculties, administrations, and boards of trustee. They rejected the paternalistic attitudes, industrial-vocational orientation, overly moralistic regulations and racist habits of many administrators, trustee, and faculty members. Du Bois contended that it was time that Black colleges should be controlled by blacks. During the same period, in the literary field emerged the Harlem Renaissance, which expressed a strong sense of racial pride in earthy and militant terms against both white and Black establishment. A decade later, another noted Black educator and historian, Carter Godwin Woodson, charged that blacks were miseducated in America. The schools and colleges failed to provide Black youths a knowledge of and respect for themselves. Instead the education made the Black students feel inferior and hate themselves. It failed to foster a Black identity. In **The Mis-education of the Negro**, which was published in 1933, Woodson commented that "In history, of course, the Negro had no place in this curriculum. He was pictured as a human being of the lower order, unable to subject passion to reason, and therefore useful only when made the hewer of wood and the drawer of water for others. No thought was given to the

history of Africa except so far as it had been a field of exploitation for the Caucasian" (p. 21). He said that the education did the black little good "because it has been worked out in conformity to the needs of those who have enslaved and oppressed weaker peoples." He added that:

For example, the philosophy and ethics resulting from our educational system have justified slavery, peonage, segregation, and lynching. The oppressor has the right to exploit, to handicap, and to kill the oppressed. Negroes daily educated in the tenets of such a religion of the strong have accepted the status of the weak as divinely ordained, and during the last three generations of their nominal freedom they have done practically nothing to change it (xii).

Woodson felt that blacks should develop and carry out an education of their own. His advocacy of studies of Black culture, history, and literature predated the demand for Black Studies curriculum by Black students in the late Sixties and the Seventies. Woodson spent his entire professional life in the study and the promotion of Black culture. He organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) and began the publication of the **Journal of Negro History** in 1916. Ten years later, he inaugurated observance of Negro History Week in February (now the Black History Month). In 1921, he organized the Associated Publishers to publish books on blacks.

The manifestation of Black nationalistic tendency in education is noted by Carleton Mabee as well as Jacqueline

Jones. Mabee shows that in New York blacks resisted to abolish Black schools when the public education authorities refused to hire Black teachers in the mixed schools. Jones notes that blacks in Savannah, Georgia fought to keep control of their schools. In 1865, the Black State Convention of Pennsylvania heatedly debated on a resolution "that colored children make greater advancement under the charge of colored teachers than they do under white teachers, therefore we consider it to be our incumbent duty, ... to see to it, that our schools are under the charge of colored teachers" (Foner & Walker, 1979, p. 149).

Perhaps the strongest expression of Black nationalism was found in the mass movement led by Marcus Garvey in the 1920s. A transplanted Jamaican, Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) attracted a large following in the United States with its program of instilling racial self-help, self-determination, and inspiring racial love and self-respect. (Pinkney, 1976, p. 44). Garvey's protest movement was considered the greatest Black mass movement in American history but it was short lived. However, Vincent Franklin contends that the basic ideological thrust of Garveyism found its way to the Civil Rights-Black Power movement in the 1960s. Franklin feels Garvey added a most important element of self-determination to the Black value system which consists of "resistance to oppression, freedom,

education, and advancement." And leaders of the Civil Rights movement in the Sixties used the "core values" of resistance to oppression, freedom, self-determination, education, and black responsibility for black advancement" to appeal to the masses "to end second-class citizenship and Jim Crow." Nevertheless, the Supreme Court's decision in the **Brown v. Board of Education** paved the way for the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 and thus ushered in the Civil Rights Movement. Our attention shall now be focused on the black educational thought in the post civil rights era.



## CHAPTER IV

### BLACK NATIONALISM AND BLACK EDUCATION

The "I Have a Dream" speech of Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered at the March to Washington on August 23, 1963, epitomizes the spirit and the essence of the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement in which the blacks sought the rights to share the American dream. The most revealing passage of the speech contains these words:

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow. I still have a dream. I have a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character (Schulke, 1976:218).

The March to Washington probably marked the peak of the non-violent Civil Rights Movement. An undercurrent of Black nationalism was gathering strength. In fact, in the same speech, Dr. King had sensed the frustration of the Black people who were becoming more militant. He warned that if the

nation returned to business as usual she would awake to find that "the whirlwinds of the revolt will continue to shake the foundation of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges." Indeed the nation was shakened by the racial riots in the hot summers of 1966, 1967, and 1968.

Nevertheless, Dr. King adhered to his philosophy of nonviolence and counselled "We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plain of dignity and discipline." His counsel would soon seemed to be out of step with the trend as the temper of the times leaned toward the militant Black nationalism. And the man who was riding the wave of the trend then was Malcolm X (Malcolm Little), the most forceful spokesman of the Nation of Islam and who was credited for resurrecting Black nationalism.

Malcolm X proclaimed that the blacks were awakened to a Black revolution. In his famous "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech, Malcolm X said "Black people are fed up with the dilly-dallying, pussyfooting, compromising approach that we've been using toward getting our freedom. We want freedom now, but we're not going to get it saying "We Shall Overcome." We've got to fight until we overcome" (p. 38) He added "Civil rights for those of us whose philosophy is Black nationalism, means: "Give it to us now. Don't wait for next year. Give it to us yesterday, and that's not fast enough" (p. 33). He defined Black nationalism as 1) politically, the blacks

should control the politics and politicians in their own community; 2) ecocomically, the blacks must control the economy of the community; and 3) socially, the blacks must rebuild their own community to satisfy the needs of the Black people.

Soon after "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech, Malcolm X, on April 8, 1964, spoke on "The Black Revolution" at the Militant Labor Forum in New York City, announcing that "We are actually fighting for rights that are even greater than civil rights, and that is human rights" (p. 51). The term Black Revolution would soon become a household word.

Robert Staples, a Black sociologist, holds that it was Malcolm X who provided the groundwork for Black liberation in the ensuing years.

Staples summarizes twelve basic ground rules that Malcolm X believed the Black people should follow in the course of their struggle. They are:

- 1) Black people can gain freedom only through resolute struggle. This counteracts the idea that freedom will eventually come naturally.
- 2) The government is a racist government and is not going to grant freedom. Black people will have to gain their freedom by themselves.
- 3) Gradualism is a hoax, and cannot lead to equality. Blacks should demand their freedom yesterday, not tomorrow.
- 4) Blacks must expose and oppose Uncle Toms. Negroes who support the system are also enemies of the Black community. This reflects the beginning of class approach--opposition against oppression, not against

a single racial group.

- 5) The Black liberation struggle must rely principally on Blacks and be under their control.
- 6) Strategy and tactics must be determined by Blacks. White liberals, in particular, must not dominate in the decisions as to the thrust of Black revolutionary struggle.
- 7) Blacks must develop their own leadership class which will be responsive to the desires and needs of the Black masses.
- 8) Internationalism: Unity among all colored peoples, who constitute a majority of the world's population, to fight U.S. imperialism and racism. The plight of American Blacks, then, is a human rights issue.
- 9) Blacks must oppose both the Democratic and Republican parties. They both help to sustain the racist system responsible for the oppressive conditions of Afro-Americans.
- 10) Alliances are possible only when there is first unity among Blacks. Until Blacks have gotten themselves together, they cannot form alliance with groups opposed to racial and class oppression. When joining other groups, Blacks must have equal status in the alliance.
- 11) Blacks must reject nonviolence as a response when under attack. They must employ active self-defense when confronted with violence, which will be initiated by the white ruling class.
- 12) The freedom of Blacks must be obtained by any means necessary. Blacks should not use unnecessary means, but the means employed should be dictated by their efficacy and expediency (pp. 415-6).

The Black protest movement took a dramatic turn toward Black nationalism in the summer of 1966. Stokely Carmichael, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC), joined other civil rights leaders in the James Meredith March Against Fear in Mississippi after Meredith was

shot by a sniper. Arriving at Greenwood, Mississippi, Carmichael addressed a large gathering of poor blacks with a call: "What we need is black power." The crowd responded enthusiastically. Carmichael used the term "black power" against the advice of Martin Luther King, Jr. who had suggested the term "black consciousness" or "black equality." With the help of the mass media, the term "black power" spread like wildfire to the four corners of the nation and beyond her borders. It became the rallying cry of Black youths. Thus, the Black Power Movement was born.

Later, attempting to clarify the concept of Black power, Carmichael delineated what he meant by Black power to the Senior Editor of **Ebony**, Lerone Bennett, Jr., Carmichael stressed the following points:

- 1) Black Power is a declaration of independence. It is a cry for self-discovery, self-naming and self-legitimation. We are demanding four things of Black people:
  - a) That they stop being ashamed of being black.
  - b) That they move into position where they can define what freedom is, what Black nationalism is, and what power is.
  - c) That they move to build an independent power base around Blackness.
  - d) That they move to build independent political, social, economic and cultural institutions.
- 2) Black Power is a demand that Black and white people recognize and actualize the power potential of Black Americans.
- 3) Black Power is an attempt to instil pride in Black Americans.
- 4) Black Power is a developing program that will

ultimately be defined in action by Black Americans.

- 5) Black Power is not an end, but a means to transformation of American society.
- 6) Black Power is a call for the Black middle class to come home (Bennett, 1966:28-29).

Bennett described the young Black leader this way: "Carmichael walks like Sidney Poitier, talks like Harry Belafonte and thinks like the post-Muslim Malcolm X" (p. 26). Carmichael stressed that "Like the Irish in Boston, we must demand the right to organize the way we want to organize. Black power is a demand to organize around the question of blackness. We are oppressed because we are Black. We must organize around that question" (p. 27). Carmichael further delineated that:

The key issue--the only issue--in America is power. The reason the Negro is in the position he's in today is not because he's not integrated, but because he doesn't have power. Integration as presently defined obscures the real problem which is the need for a power base in the black community. Integration as presently defined heightens the sense of inferiority of black people. Integration always means going to a white school because the white schools are 'good' and the black schools are 'bad.' Or from a black neighborhood into a white neighborhood because that neighborhood is better. If integration means moving to something white, if moving to something is 'better,' then integration is a subterfuge for white supremacy. Integration never speaks to the problem of what happens to the black school or the black community after two or three people move out 'to integrate.' That's the problem we must force America to speak to; that's the problem Black Power speaks to (p. 27).

Carmichael then co-authored with Charles V. Hamilton, a professor of political science at Columbia University, **Black Power: the Politics of Liberation in America**. The authors

view the blacks as colonial subjects in America because "politically, decisions which affect Black lives have always been made by white people--the "white power structure" (pp.7-8). The authors urge the blacks to redefine themselves and call for a new pattern of Black political action based on explicit principles of the rejection of white values and group solidarity. They argue "The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: **Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society**" (p. 44). They hold that the coalition between the strong and the weak was a myth for it "ultimately leads only to perpetuation of the hierarchical status: super-ordination and subordination" (p. 76). They, however, accept the idea of coalition between the poor blacks and the poor whites. They reject the concept of nonviolence which the blacks can ill afford and the whites do not deserve. They oppose integration, for the blacks must seek new and different forms of political structure to rid the society of racism. Black people must also see themselves as part of a new force closely related to liberation struggles around the world.

Nationalistic sentiments dominated the Black political scene from 1963 to 1973. The reformist character of the Black protest movement ended and the blacks rejected the

American dream as defined by the whites and were galvanized into a powerful social movement known as the Black Power Movement or the Black Revolution. In his study of contemporary Black nationalism, Alphonso Pinkney, the author of **Black Americans, Poverty and Politics in Harlem, The Committed: White Activitiest in the Civil Rights Movement**, classifies Black nationalism into the economic, the cultural, the revolutionary, the religious, and the educational nationalism. This indicates the ideology of Black nationalism is embraced by a broad spectrum of Black people. A corp of young Black intellectuals took up Black nationalism enthusiastically and seriously. Nathan Hare, a sociologist at Howard University and later the Director of the Afro-American studies at San Francisco State College, says: "To think black is to live black. ... To think black is to question whiteness and its values and the contradictions and irrationalities of white society" (1969:13-14). John Henrick Clarke, historian and the associate editor of the now defunct **Freedomways** and the president of the African Heritage Association, an organization of specialists in African and Afro-American studies, writes:

In a formal sense the concept of Black Power started in the nineteenth century, concurrent with the many attempts to restore Black men to an honorable place in history. ... Black Power means no more or less than the right to determine your own destiny, starting with the control of your own communities. Until the essential manhood of a people is respected, no power in their hands is effective (1969:14).



James Turner, associate professor and director of Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, holds that "Black Nationalism has sought to crystalize ambiguous and troubled race feelings into a definite racial consciousness to create a corporate self-awareness and collective response based on shared values (1971:11). Ron Karenga, the founder of US Organization and an advocate of revolutionary cultural nationalism, maintains that Black power gives a political reality to the Black people. He says "We are cultural and physical reality, but we do not exist politically" (1973:8). He goes on to say:

In the Sixties we began to define and accept ourselves and to negate the historical monopoly the oppressor had on our minds. And we actually changed reality by this defiantly proud acceptance of ourselves. But that was only a beginning: **we must now move from the mere announcement of our existence to building and protecting the basis for it.** And that basis must be a political one, one of power; power to defend and develop, to create and expand. In a word, we must come into political existence by becoming a power recognized and respected beyond the confines of community, a power conscious of its historical tasks and committed to the revolutionary ethic and aspiration of the comprehensive and continuing transformation of society and ourselves (p.9).

Karenga sees Black power as a strategy for liberation. The key element in this strategy is to secure power to protect the interest of the Black people and to develop their potential and "to transform and transcend this society of which we have become willingly or unwillingly a real and recognizable part" (p. 14). He criticizes the integrationists for failing "to deal with the question of power and its

central function in substantive social change" (p. 10). He adds:

Advocates of liberation argue that neither full integration nor separation is feasible or in the historical interest of our people, that there is a dual historical character to our identity and that our historical tasks rising out of this identity demand that we struggle collectively here in the U.S. to free ourselves from those repressive relations and other realities that limit, deny, and deform our creative capacities as a people. Thus, the call and push for Black Power is first and foremost to realize our will to be free, creative and productive in the U.S.; for only then can we truly extend ourselves and meaningfully insert ourselves in the world struggle for human freedom and peace (p. 15).

Pinkney observes that there are three major elements which formed the basis of contemporary Black nationalist ideology. They are unity, pride in cultural heritage, and autonomy (1976:6-7). In the surge of Black nationalism, there was a call for celebration of Black experience and for the study of Black culture. Education was accorded a prominent place in this effort. Historically, as we indicated in earlier chapters, the Black people have viewed education as a major tool to combat racism, for social uplifting, and to gain social justice and freedom. A messianic mission was assigned to education. Education is an extension of political struggle. The struggle of desegregation of public schools paved the way to the Civil Rights Movement. The NAACP in its efforts to eradicate segregation had first strategically chosen to knock down the walls of segregation in education.

First, the organization tackled the most vulnerable part--the graduate and professional schools as in the cases of **Gaines v. Canada** (University of Missouri), the **Sweatt v. Painter** (the law school of University of Texas), and the **McLaurin v. University of Oklahoma**, then to secure equitable educational facilities, equal salaries for teachers, and equal length of school terms, and finally, the frontal assault against the public schools. The legal battles culminated in the **Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education** case and were crowned with an unprecedented victory. Education played a prominent role in the civil rights struggle and its was called to play an even greater role in the Black national liberation movement. Historian John Henrick Clark observes that the Conference of Afro-American Educators, which met in Chicago in June, 1968, "shows the best potential of becoming a nationwide force to affect change in the educational system" (1969:18). At the Conference, Donald Freeman defined education as related to Black people:

What we understand by education is the application of all one's knowledge for the benefit of the collective which in turn will benefit each individual within the collective. To this end what must constitute a basic part of one's education is the understanding of people rather than things. We realize that once people understand themselves, their knowledge of things is facilitated, that the exclusive knowledge of things does not guarantee knowledge of people and in fact contributes to the erosion, disintegration, and destruction of the creativity of man. Therefore, education must (1) teach Black people who they are, (2) teach Black people what they are fighting for, (3) teach Black people who they must identify with, (4) teach Black people where their

loyalty must lie, (5) teach Black people what must be done, (6) teach Black people how to do it, (7) teach Black people that the destinies of all Black people are inseparately linked together whether we are in North, Central, or South America, the West Indies, Europe, Asia or Africa (Clark, 1969:18).

One of the basic tenets of contemporary Black nationalism is the emphasis on Black values and the rejection of the value system of the white society or the values of the middle class. Thus, developing a shared value system for the blacks is an important task for the cultural nationalists. Ron Karenga argues "we must develop values in the expanding framework of a national community and create out of the confluence and synthesis of old and new values, a system reflective of and responsive to the collective needs and nature of our struggle. Only in this way can we achieve the moral and political unity and authority we need to liberate ourselves" (p. 13). The value system developed by Karenga is called the Kawaida which expounds the following principles:

**Umoja** (Unity - To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

**Kujichagulia** (Self-Determination) - To define ourselves, and speak for ourselves, instead of being defined, and spoken for by others.

**UJIMA** (Collective Work and Responsibility) - To build and maintain our community together and to make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.

**Ujamaa** (Co-operative Economics) - To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit together from them.

**Nia** (Purpose) - To make as our collective vocation the

building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

**Kuumba** (Creativity) - To do always as much as we can, in the way we can in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it.

**Imani** (Faith) - To believe with all our heart in our parents, our teachers, our leaders, our people and the righteousness and victory of our struggle (Baraka, 1969:54).

Ameer Baraka (LeRoi Jones) argues that the value system is necessary for the purpose of liberating "our soul, mind, and body" (p. 55), and to raise Black people to "our traditional greatness" (p. 57). He added:

When we say "revolution" we mean the restoration of our national sovereignty as a people, a people, at this point, equipped to set new paths for the development of man. We mean the freeing of ourselves from the bondage of another, alien, people. We are not warring upon our own society among ourselves. These pigs are no kin to us. We are trying to destroy a **foreign oppressor**. It is not "revolution" but **national liberation** (p. 56).

The central theoretical assumption of Black nationalism is that the Black people must effect a psychic separation from the idea of whiteness before they can ever be truly free or liberated. This is more so for Black cultural nationalism than political nationalism. The political nationalists stress the importance of community control; blacks must control and own their stores, schools, housing, recreation facilities and all other agencies that affect their lives and the money flowing in and out of the Black community. The cultural nationalists hold that identity and power are the

means to self-determination and liberation. Ron Karenga, one of the chief exponents of cultural nationalism, sets forth his thought in **The Quotable Karenga** declaring that "We must free ourselves culturally before we succeed politically" (1968:164) and "There must be a cultural revolution before the violent revolution. The cultural revolution gives identity, purpose and direction" (p. 168). For Karenga, politics comes from culture. Thus, he sees that the main task of Black nationalists is "to Think Black, Talk Black, Act Black, Create Black, Buy Black, Vote Black, and Live Black" (p. 165). He concludes that "Blackness is the ultimate reality" for Black people adding that "Our society may be American, but our values must be Afro-American" (p. 165). The values are rooted in the African heritage. "We don't borrow from Africa," he says, "We utilize that which was ours to start with" (p. 166).

Similarly, for Ameer Baraka, Black power is "Our total consciousness, Black oriented" (1968:119). He argues that the failures of the civil rights and Black power organizations are due to the fact that they "make very little reference to the totality of Black culture" (p. 122). For Ameer Baraka, politics is an extension of culture and "Our only freedom will be in bringing a Black Culture to Power" (p. 123).

On the other hand, Black power for revolutionary nationalism, as represented by Huey Newton and the Black

Panther Party, stands for "people's power." And people's power equates socialism. When asked to make a distinction between cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism, Newton states:

Revolutionary nationalism first is dependent upon a people's revolution with the end goal being the people in power. Therefore, to be a revolutionary nationalist you would by necessity have to be a socialist. ...The Black Panther Party, which is a revolutionary group of black people, realizes that we have to have an identity. We have to realize our black heritage in order to give us strength to move on and progress. But as far as returning to the old Africa culture, it's unnecessary and not advantageous in many respects. We believe that culture itself will not liberate us. We're going to need some stronger stuff (1970:491).

The ultimate goal of the Black Panther Party was to "destroy both racism and capitalism."

At this juncture, we must make it clear that not all the Black people embraced Black nationalism or Black power, or national liberation (all these terms seem to be used interchangeably). For instance, Roy Wilkins, then the Executive Director of NAACP, declared "We of the NAACP will have none of this" (1966:354). He added:

No matter how endlessly they try to explain it, the term "black power" means anti-white power. In a racially pluralistic society, the concept, the formation and the exercise of an ethnically tagged power means opposition to other ethnic powers, just as the term "white supremacy" means subjection of all non-white peoples. In the black-white relationship, it has to mean that every other ethnic power is the rival and the antagonist of "black power." It has to mean "going it alone." It has to mean separation (p. 354).

Martin Luther King, Jr., Chairman of the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), did not reject the concept of Black power outright. Unlike Roy Wilkins, Dr. King spoke approvingly, at least rhetorically, of Black power. He said "First it is necessary to understand that Black Power is a cry of disappointment. ... Second, Black Power, in its broad and positive meaning, is a call to black people to amass the political and economic strength to achieve their legitimate goals. ... Finally, Black Power is a psychological call to manhood" (1967:32-38). In spite of his approving rhetoric, Dr. King opposed Black power on philosophical ground or on strategical ground. He said "Beneath all the satisfaction of a gratifying slogan, Black Power is a nihilistic philosophy born out of the conviction that the Negro can't win. It is at bottom, the view that American society is so hopelessly corrupt and enmeshed in evil that there is no possibility of salvation from within. Although this thinking is understandable as a response to a white power structure that never completely committed itself to true equality for the Negro and a die-hard mentality that sought to shut all windows and doors against the winds of change, it nonetheless carries the seeds of its own doom" (p. 44).

Against this brief outline of the characteristics of Black nationalism and the concept of Black power, we proceed to examine the elements of the dominant Black educational ideology of this period and the interrelationships between the



political and the educational ideology.

### **EDUCATIONAL COLONIALISM**

The Black nationalists had applied the colonial model to explain the conditions of Black people in the United States. The blacks are seen as a colonially subjugated people in the United States which is totally dominated by whites. The prosperity of the country was built on the blood and sweat of blacks who were totally denied the benefit of their labor (O'Dell, 1966:124). The Black power struggle is essentially a struggle for decolonization, self-determination and development (O'Dell, 1967:10). The colonial model is also applied to the field of education.

Black scholars who have applied the colonial model to examine education for Black people in the United States argue that the educational process has been essentially the subordinating process or the process of mind-control. The blacks have been dehumanized, de-Africanized and convinced that they are inferior.

Michael Martin maintains that the process of depersonalization vis a vis colonial educational policy requires that the colonizer convinces the colonized of his innate incapacity to rule, govern and learn. He says "The effect, then, of colonial education is to dehumanize the colonized: to imbue him with pernicious sentiments and

complexes of inadequacy and uncertainty; to alienate him from his world and his fellow beings; and to socialize him so that he can assist the colonizer in the management and exploitation of the colony" (1975:10). He adds that "children are methodically indoctrinated with the false values of American society, and their spontaneous desire to learn about the world and communicate with their fellow students is suppressed or invalidated" (P. 10).

Alphonso Pinkney observes that "it is quite likely that the oppression of Afro-Americans could not have succeeded to the extent it has in the United States if the educational system had not operated to promote and sustain Black subordination. For a people who have been forced into a caste-colonial situation, control of the education of their youth is crucial for the oppressor if the system is to be maintained" (1976:177).

Michelle Russell, then a graduate student at Brown University, argues that the relationship of blacks to America has been that of colonials. One of the most insidious forms of this colonialism is the educational system which tries to make blacks abandon their heritage and become mirror images of whites. Black studies, controlled and maintained by whites, she maintains, is simply the newest form of colonialism. The only education which is relevant is that which teaches blacks to change their colonial status, gives them lessons in self-

defense, and provides the tools to serve the Black community. She also charges that the whites have appropriated Black art, music, and literature and commercialized them. She adds "And at every step of the way, stratify our culture, make it static, elevate it to a plane higher than life, abstract it so as to negate all those ingredients of struggle which have until now made it an arena of black decolonization and liberation" (1971:56).

She contends that the American educational system has become so sophisticated that the whites do not have to perform the task of controlling the blacks. The task is performed by the Black colonizers.

Along a similar line, Jomills H. Braddock, a sociologist at University of Maryland, College Park, argues that the traditional Negro college is politically, economically and socially a colonial institution. He writes: "Thus, we see that Negro colleges, like their white counterparts, have as their basic aim the transmittal of white Western values and attitudes while at the same time they are bent on destroying all vestiges of non-Western cultures" (1978:27).

Patti McGill Peterson contends that colonialism not only can but does operate within the United States. She analyzes the way in which education is used in the United States to "colonize" the blacks. She confines her study primarily to the period from approximately 1890 to 1925.

She maintains that cultural dominance is inherent in colonialism. The Southern whites conceded that the Negro had to be educated but the white had to rule. The Northern philanthropic funds were working within the framework of Southern traditions, educating the blacks according to the wishes and the limits set by the Southern whites (p.147). She adds that both Thomas Jesse Jones, the educational director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Booker T. Washington, the founder of Tuskegee Institute, believed firmly in the idea that Black man's education had to be adapted to meet the needs of his environment. The concept of "educational adaptation" would be reflection of the social, economic, and political conditions in which he lived and not a force for changing them. "In this sense the Afro-American's education would contribute heavily to his further subjugation or 'colonization'" (p. 154). Commenting on the study of Negro education in the South conducted by Jones and commissioned by the Phelps-Stoke Fund in corroborating with the U.S. Bureau of Education, Peterson points out that "It gave strength to the idea that the overwhelming majority of blacks were to form the South's laboring industrial and agricultural classes. The question of segregated education was never raised. The report justified and indeed promoted vocational education purely in terms of its spiritually uplifting or character-building qualities and its importance to Southern industry and

agriculture" (pp. 155-56). The report stressed that the rural education was essential to the successful development of the Southern states.

Peterson makes a very important point that "Colonialism must in large part be defined by those who perceive themselves to be colonized" (p. 157). Her contention can be sustained by the writings of many blacks. Here are some examples of the Black perception of the function of American education.

An increasing number of Black Americans perceive public education as an instrument which has been used by society to disenfranchise and demean them (Scott, 1971: 426).

The Afro-American was and is educated to serve that society (the colonies, the fledgling democracy, the technological world power) as a subordinate without benefit or dignity (Johnson, 1970:199).

In our society, the socialization process has prepared white children to continue the privileged traditions of the established white hegemony, while black children have been programmed for social and economic oblivion (Lincoln, 1969:222).

... only a minute percentage (1 percent) of all monies spent for education ever finds its way into the black community. What we have operating here is a colonial educational system where the goods and services are being supplied to the colony by outsiders (devils). Outsiders reap the benefits (\$) and privileges (pensions and other goodies) of this system and all the colony receives is a yearly flow of functionally illiterate youths who fulfill the need of cheap labor force and for Vietnam War cannon fodder. The primary motive of the devil's miseducation system is economic, and let us never forget this fact (Campbell, 1970:29).

When servants are educated at all they are educated to serve, but never to share power. This is the basic delimma in black education. Black people were not brought to this country to be given education,

citizenship, or democracy--they were brought to this country to serve, to labor, and to obey (Clake,1973: 17).

...The general American public at no time had any serious intention of providing, in private or in public schools, institutions that had the capacity of preparing this population for full citizenship; and the vast majority, in any generation since the founding of the Republic--and even before--never was so prepared. Certainly this is one of the chief reasons why this population has not been able to maintain full citizenship; it had been brutalized, degraded, dehumanized, and uneducated, by every instrument of the culture and society (Bond, 1934: 308).

Black educators who subscribe to Black nationalism seek to restructure the educational system to free blacks from subordinated status, or decolonize Black children. Peterson holds that "the emergence of Black Power is a 'decolonization' phenomenon" (p. 157). Preston Wilcox, founder and president of the Association of Afro-American Educators, submits "Education for blacks is essentially a retooling process: rehumanization, re-Africanization and decolonization" (1970a:11). He further asserts that education for Black humanism must recognize:

1. All black children are human and educable.
2. Blacks hold in common African descendancy and victimization by white institutional racism.
3. To subscribe to racism and capitalism is to participate in one's own destruction and that of his own people, the largest oppressed class in America.
4. Education which effectively overlooks the aspirations and technical survival requirements of the black masses is irrelevant.

5. Education for blacks is essentially a retooling process: rehumanization, re-Africanization and decolonization; i.e., authentic black men enjoy only one kind of freedom as a conceptual whole; a respect for native cultural differences, a resistance to all kinds of oppression, and recognition of one's right to defend his right to become who he wants to become as long as the expression of that right does not demand the oppression of others.
6. Black men have a right and an obligation to define themselves and the terms by which they will relate to others.
7. Education must become a process that educates for liberation and survival--nothing less (1970a:10-11).

Wilcox further emphasizes that "Ultimately the education of Black people must free them from psychological dependence on others; it must teach them to think and act on their own. This ability does not rest solely on intellectual talents but on one's ability to rid himself of a need to be controlled by those who have power" (p. 14).

The position of Black nationalists toward the American education is best summed-up by Lerone Bennett. He says, "In white-oriented schools, we are educated away from our rhythm, away from our people, away from our soul" (1971:25).

### **COMMUNITY CONTROL OF SCHOOLS**

If the call for Black power is "a reaction to the failure of white power," then the emergence of the concept of

community control of schools is prompted by the sense of powerlessness of the Black community. In the words of Kenneth B. Clark, noted psychologist and author of **Dark Ghetto** and **Prejudice and Your Child**, it was a strategy of despair, a strategy determined by the broken promises of the white community. The Black parents were angered and frustrated by the failure of the public school systems, particularly the urban schools, to educate their children. There was a wide gap between the cognitive skills of Black children and white children in the same grade level. In fact, the Black parents were helplessly watching the schools slowly strangle their children to death academically. The children's creativity was rooted out of them. This was well documented by Jonathan Kozol, Herbert Kohl, James Herndon and others.

The noted case of community control was the IS 201 Complex in Harlem, New York City. Rhody A. McCoy, who had commanded national attention as administrator of the controversial Ocean Hill-Brownsville experimental school district (not including IS 201) and a founder of the Institute for the Advancement of Urban Education, graphically described the conditions at the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district that set the stage for the call for community control. Here is McCoy's picture of the district:

The educational conditions in New York City's Ocean Hill-Brownsville district are deplorable. The six elementary school buildings are obsolete, overcrowded firetraps. The teaching staff is 50 percent substitutes with a higher



than 30 percent yearly turnover. Of the 58 percent of the students who are academically below level about 6,000 are three or more years behind. No experienced principal has ever been assigned to fill a vacancy in this district; only new ones, who gain experience through trial and error, get trained, and then leave. Parents have been deceived, degraded, and denied information or redress of their grievances by teachers, principals, and other administrators while their children have consistently maintained a pattern of failure. Moreover, any real community involvement in the schools has been discouraged by school personnel, though the failure of students in school has been blamed on the parents. ... (1970:169).

Practically speaking, the same condition can be seen in any inner city ghetto.

According to Kenneth B. Clark, the parents of the district were forced to take matters into their own hands. Initially the parents were demanding desegregation but their demand was repeatedly stalled and the promise to desegregate the schools was broken again and again. Clark said he was present at 110 Livingston Street [headquarters of the New York City Board of Education] when the official of the Board rejected the demand by saying that it was impossible to desegregate the schools because the white parents did not want their children exposed to the horrors of the Harlem. When the parents of IS-201 were told of the same thing, they replied, "To hell with you. To hell with your desegregation ... Give us these schools. We will take desegregated schools and we will run them our way. Obviously, you don't give a damn about our children. But, we do. We will protect them" (Clark, 1973:81).

In response to the continued failure of the "white educational establishment", the Black parents and community leaders demanded control of their own schools. Since effective integrated education was not available, one parent told the Board that they prefer to choose:

a segregated school that will deliver quality education, the kind that will assure our children the opportunity to advance in the world. Given the problems of teacher attitudes, bureaucracy, and all of the failure to achieve proper education in the other schools in the community, the only way we can see of achieving this goal is for the parents and community to have a real role in the selection of staff, the determination of program, and the evaluation of the education in the schools (Newby & Tyack, 1971:204).

Apparently, the concept of community control of schools did not grow out of a Black political theory but it was forced upon the Black urban community by reality and as a response to the failure of the educational establishment. It is no wonder that the concept of community control of schools received support across the ideological lines in the Black community even though it has since become a key component of Black nationalism. For example, the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the moderate branch of the major civil rights organizations, adopted strong community control resolution at their 1969 national conventions. Both organizations rejected the view that community control was a separatist program. The main NAACP resolution, for example, reads in part:

We strongly support the concept of community control of

public schools, particularly in the big city systems of the North and West, as a means of achieving fundamental changes in the schools and insuring accountability. ... We do not believe that community control and desegregation are inherently incompatible or in conflict unless they are made to be by the advocates, white or black, of racial separation (McSwine, 1974:9).

Whitney M. Young, Jr., then the executive director of National Urban League, wrote:

There is a deep and abiding faith in the black community that in the face of all obstacles a decent education is the ticket to success. Black parents believe a decent education can be obtained if the right decisions are made and those decisions will only be made if they have major control over them. They are weary of being presented new packages that do not reflect the realities of life in the ghetto, the varieties and the beauty of cultural heritages, or the complexities of neighborhood life (1969:286).

Young felt that community control was nothing new and was not as revolutionary as it sounded. White suburbanites had control over school boards and the school budget. Thus they took it for granted and claimed to be exercising their constitutional rights. When the Black community in the ghetto of Harlem, Watts, or Roxbury asserted their rights, "they are accused of militant propagandizing and making trouble." Young argued that "Community control is essentially a redistribution of power to the people most directly affected by decisions. In large city systems a set of powers are assigned to the local community. Powers that are imperative to effective community control are allocation of human and material resources. In this way the community

has the clout needed to develop an educational structure and process that will be responsive to the needs of the local community and accountable to it for its success" (p. 286). He emphasized that "the point is that parents would make the major decisions affecting their children, just as white middle-class parents do" (p.287). Moreover, he argued that community control also fulfilled a prime requirement of democracy--maximum citizen participation, and represented a way to give people a choice (p. 287).

Albert Van, in his presidential address to the Afro-American Teachers Association of New York City, contends that "a brief reflection on the role that schools play in this society should provide enough evidence to make blacks realize that they must begin to control their own destiny; they must control the forces that mold the minds of their youth, they must rule the schools" (1971:231)

Vann then gives the specific reasons why blacks must control their schools:

- So that we can survive.
- So that we can liberate others (their minds) to ensure our survival.
- So that black people can become psychologically, economically, and politically independent.
- So that black children can develop self-worth and dignity through knowledge of their history and culture and through the image provided through current community leaders and teachers.
- So that teaching personnel will be **accountable** to the community, and, therefore, must really teach if they want to maintain their jobs.
- So that curricula, books, literature, and other materials will be relevant to the life experiences

and needs of the black child and provide additional motivation to learn.

So that the contracts, jobs, and money that are controlled by those who control school systems will be kept in the black community.

So that we can equip our young to adjust to changing power relationships or prepare them to fight for survival, or both (pp. 231-232).

Vann views education as a major tool in blacks' struggle for freedom. And education for blacks will not become a reality (in a school setting) until Black people control their own school systems. For Vann, the question of education for Black people in America is a question of life and death. It is a political question, a question of power (p. 233).

What does community control entail? It means the community will have the right to hire and fire teachers, to select teaching materials, to control budget, to determine standards, and to formulate education policy that will affect their children. John Henrick Clarke observes that "When community control is added to decentralization, a whole new area of power is defined" (1969:19). By demanding community control, the Black people are demanding a new relationship to school systems--to claim the right and responsibility to make decisions affecting the lives of their children. They want meaningful participation in educating their children. John Henrick Clarke sees the new relationship between Black community and schools in this way:

... what community control boils down to is simply this: are we or are we not going to let Black people and Puerto Rican people really tell teachers what to do?

Especially, tell white teachers what to do? And so on. That is really what this whole thing boils down to, and we may as well face up to it (1969:83).

This ushers in a new phase of blacks' struggle for better education. They abandon their quest for quality education through integration. They are seeking quality education through self-determination (Boggs, 1970:191). Robert C. Maynard, a Black journalist observes that the belief in community control "coincides with a widely held black nationalist belief that black Americans have reached a point where they want to go it alone, having as little as possible to do with whites and confining their political activism to gaining total control of the land and institutions that surround and serve them" (1970:104). Maynard further comments:

Black nationalism has other goals at the community level, principally concerning commerce and the police. But schools are being focused upon as all important to the fostering of the ethic of black pride and black self-determination since a people who seek their liberation from a colonialist system must control what is being taught to their young. Because the foundation of the nationalism is that blacks are a nation within a nation, it rejects the notion that integration is synonymous with equality. It agrees that demanding a place for black children in a white school system is an admission of inherent black inferiority (1979:102).

Black revolutionary nationalists see community control of schools more than just effective teaching and quality education for Black children. The struggle for community control of schools is a struggle to gain control over future of Black children and an essential tool for nation-building

(Stanford, 1971:29). Max Stanford, a national field chairman of RAM (Revolutionary Action Movement) during the sixties and who worked closely with Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, James Forman and Robert Williams in founding Black liberation projects, hoped the community controlled schools would be the training base for young revolutionary-nationalists. He writes in the **Black Scholar**:

If the black revolution is to grow and continue, these [black] students must be trained in revolutionary-nationalist theory, practice, and organization and must be geared to carry the revolution on. The black revolution will then become an inter-generational revolution, its new cultural dynamic producing the cultural value of the next generation. The struggle for community control of schools is therefore a **struggle to nationalize schools in the black community**. In order to make education relevant to black folks, schools must become black nationalist training centers. Education for black children must be black nationalist education, a black nationalization of the educational system. This is what black studies means to black children (1971:29).

Leslie Campbell, a Black activist teacher in New York City urges that the community controlled schools must not operate on "the sound educational principles." "Sound educational principles" means that they are operating "in the same manner as their former masters." Campbell says "If we really want education for our children, we must discontinue imitation of the devil's systems and begin to build anew. Discard all the old books and materials, the old traditions, old subjects, and old methods of instruction" (1970, 30). He urges Black teachers to

further the goals of Black power and prepare "our youth for their role in moving toward nationhood" (1970:23).

For Black nationalism proponents, the issue of community control of schools is no longer a struggle for quality education alone, it has become a political one. Community control is a step in the direction of redistribution of power. It means an expression of political self-determination of the Black community. For Milton A. Galamison, a Brooklyn, New York minister and community leader who had served on the Board of Education of the New York City, comments that the community control of schools means "the black community determined that the Black people would no longer suffer the twin evils of segregation and colonialism" (1968:313). Bartley L. McSwine, then a graduate student in Educational Sociology at the Claremont Graduate School and a staff associate in the Teacher Education Program, contends that:

The community control phase of self-determination speaks to the correction and reversal of this psychological damage done to black people by a society which has consistently rejected their full participation as well as their acquisition of power. Concomitantly, it speaks to severing a physical dependency rooted in a psychological dependency with the result--a healthy body-politic for all (1974:12).

McSwine had hope that community control would call for an existential restructuring of values in Black community and the implementation of community control will mean "nothing less than the physical and mental liberation of black Americans from economic and psychological dependency. It



suggests a new parameter of freedom based upon an interpretive framework rooted in the experience of oppression" (p. 14). This is probably what Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in their **Black Power** term as a new form of struggle. This form of struggle "is emphasizing race in a positive way: not rule over others but to overcome the effects of centuries in which race has been used to detriment of the black man" (p. 167).

For many moderate Black scholars, community control of schools means effective teaching based on the cultural heritage of Black children. Education builds on the strength of the Black experience. It also means that school personnel and teachers must place the interest of the Black children before their own careers. For instance, M. Lee Montgomery, Director of Urban Affairs at Temple University, Philadelphia, argues that what [black] parents are really concerned about is the development of human potential and the liberation of the human spirit (1970:50). Therefore, parents want to be partners with teachers in the education of their children. This desire has three major facets. The first is the desire to have their cultural differences recognized and appreciated. The second is the development of a genuine sense of community among teachers, students, and parents. Finally, Black children desire and need to be loved for themselves and be a vital part of all activity (pp.49-50). According to Montgomery, the sad

thing about the ghetto schools is that the parents have been treated as "ignorant, stupid, harassing, ill-tempered, and don't understand a thing about educating children," and information about schools and their children has been withheld from them. When the ghetto parents want to change the situation and talk about community control,

They mean not only physical control, but more importantly the control of information and learning for the liberation of the human spirit. In brief, the battle is for the minds of our children. We express our concern for our survival as an ethnic people in a battle of who controls the minds of our children. Thus, it becomes very very clear that no parent wants to see his child develop into an inhuman being (p. 51).

Black scholars also hold that community control of schools means an education built on the strength of the Black community. Norma Jean Anderson, an educator, comments "I think these individuals were saying that we as a group know what is best for our children; we know where the failure lies" (1970:64). Similarly, Chester Davis, a Senior Research Fellow in Education at the institute of Black World in Atlanta, Georgia comments on the dynamic of an education fashioned by the community to meet the needs of their children in this way:

I stress education fashioned by people who know the children and the community precisely because outsiders tend to see only the so-called pathology of the Black community and have found no strengths upon which learning can be based. Black people know the strengths of their community institutions because they have them. They know what can motivate their children and can shape this knowledge into instructional forms. This knowledge can,

in fact, create the basis for a turning inward of the whole approach to education and using the Black community as the "core" of the educational process (1970:47).

And he believes the Black community has rich resources especially the oral tradition and that students can investigate the history of the institutions of the community. The students will be immersed "in the continuity and vitality of their own past, a past which with its positives and negatives, places them firmly in a dynamic and ongoing historical stream and gives them the identity and knowledge which are necessary for the struggle that lies ahead" (p. 49).

For Charles E. Wilson, a New York writer and educator, the movement for community control is not just a struggle of Black versus white or local community versus the Board of Education, "it is a struggle between an educational bureaucracy versus the forces pushing for educational democracy."

Learning from his involvement in the "decentralized demonstration district," Wilson says the people in the district "recognize that decentralization alone cannot and will not produce the quality education for the children of this (New York City) or any other city, because the "decentralized district" as conceived by the present educational establishment, will show a tendency to provide the same old tired unappetizing type of education children now endure. He continues:

The people of the 201 Demonstration District have learned that this city's educational system must encompass what America can be --a democratic, truly representative society of the people, by the people and for the people. This city and many cities require an education system which lives what it teaches and practices what it preaches. To achieve this the system must make a 180 degree turn. Thus community control is the next step that must be taken. It is a second step, but an important step that other parts of this city and many other cities should and must consider if public education is ever to be revitalized. It is a step towards democratizing and revolutionizing one of this society's basic institutions, the school. And if this task cannot be begun, New York City cannot make a reconnection to learning. Without a reconnection for learning, the belief that America is being transformed into an urban nightmare may be more than belief (p. 406).

Historians Mary Frances Berry and John W. Blassingame assert that community control of schools was wrecked because of white fears that it would increase Black power and liberal fears that it would increase racial segregation. Milton A. Galamison argues that the United Federation of Teachers [under the leadership of Albert Shanker] played a significant role in defeating the community control legislation. Galamison writes:

The United Federation of Teachers which had its own decentralization plan demanding the ouster of the Board of Education joined in a disgraceful alliance with the Board of Education to defeat the community control legislation. Secondly, both the Board of Education and the UFT attacked the community control concept on the pretext they were concerned about those aspects of the plan which inadvertently created segregated school districts. It was a pernicious and sinister response to a meaningful issue. It was blatantly cynical and hypocritical effort to keep the Black community under the heels of education and union forces which had long since violated their right to function in the Black community. ... One unmistakably evident truth that hardly needs mentioning is the truth that neither the Board of

Education nor the UFT is really concerned about segregated schools in the ghetto community. They are concerned about the prospect of community control and power (1968:315).

Mario Fantini, educator and involved in the New York City community control project as a representative of Ford Foundation, holds that "militant Negro demands for participation in control is actually a means of greater connection to society, precisely opposite from the connotations of separatism usually associated with black power."

### BLACK STUDIES

To many blacks, particularly the nationalism proponents, educational struggle is a political struggle (Chrisman, 1970; Turner, 1969, 1970). The demand for Black studies in colleges and universities by Black students is an extension of the Black power movement, or Black liberation movement, to the campuses. The demand for Black studies, in some ways, is parallel to the movement for community control of schools. The ghetto Black parents opted for community control of schools because the educational establishment dragged its feet in desegregating the urban public schools and failed to provide quality education to their children. Black students in the white universities complained of the irrelevance of the university curriculum to their life experiences (Browne, 1970:86). James McGinnis charges that

"the educational system continues to inculcate negative attitudes of self-worth, to delimit aspirations, and to produce a sense of powerlessness and helplessness in black students" (1973:29). In both cases, the crux of the matter is white racism. According to Andrew Billingsley, an assistant vice-chancellor for academic affairs at University of California, Berkely, the basic cause of the Black student revolt and the demand for Black studies is racism because blacks have been systematically excluded from all aspects of university structure and the daily operations. Other contributing factors are traditionalism, political conservatism, political liberalism, bureaucracy, and intellectual arrogance on the part of the university. However, Billingsley suggests that it was the ideology of a variety of Black nationalism providing the impetus for student revolt (1970:128-31). Black pride and Black consciousness are the prime moving force behind the demand for Black studies. A changing Black mood coupled with the changing composition of Black students on white campuses produce the revolt on the campuses and the demand for Black studies.

James Turner, then a Ph.D. student at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois and later the director of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, in an article in **Ebony** assessing the Black

student movement, says that "central to the new black student movement is the quest for new values and definitions that are meaningful and appropriate for black people, and which will give substance and significance to their lives" (1969:138). Turner points out that many Black college students are not worried about making it in the system but instead are determined to change it (p. 137). Turner further explains that:

Colleges today are getting an unprecedented number of black youth from urban, working class communities. These students refuse to adjust themselves to the rules of success defined for them by white men. They have definite ties and commitment to the people from which they come. The contemporary black student passionately resents the idea of obtaining a college degree as a means to escape the black community and refuses to renounce his cultural life styles or to remain politely moderate on questions relating to the systematic subordination of black people in America. His concern is for much more than personal identity; for by attempting to know and define himself, he is trying to discover the answers to the future of black people--that are hidden in the present (137).

Many of these young people came to question the legitimacy and validity of white normative values and institutions to their lives. They were challenging the value systems of the mainstream society. They were seeking an education for empowerment and knowledge and skills that would enable them to tackle the problems faced by the Black people. They were determined, as more and more blacks were determined, that their Black heritage should be used as a means for the

liberation of Black people. Black people were seeking self-determination that "black people decide among ourselves that we want to recognize our heritage and common interest and culture and live and work together to build something superior, of which we can be proud, and in which we exercise control over the institutions which affect our lives most intimately (Billingsley, 1970:133). Thus, the manifesto of April, 1968 of the Black students at University of California made it very clear what they were demanding, and for whom. The manifesto states in part:

As students on the white college and university campuses of America, we have learned something which we choose never to forget. WE ARE NOT WHITE. WE DO NOT WISH TO BE WHITE. WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE WHITE PEOPLE IS OFTENTIMES WORSE THAN BAD FOR US. The young black people of America are the inheritors of what is undoubtedly one of the most challenging, gravest, and [most] threatening sets of social circumstances that [have] ever fallen upon a generation of young people anywhere in history. We have been born into a hostile and alien society which loathes us on condition of our skin color. ...Sentenced to inane, subservience, and death, from our beginning, many of us came to regard our beautiful pigmentation as a plague. ... We act now because we realize, beyond any doubt, that our "souls," i.e., that which is all and the end of us, has been stifled to the point that we can no longer bear it. We have been forced to the point where we must (and will) insist on those changes that are necessary to our survival. There is nothing less to settle for and nothing less will do... We have found a kind of self-discovery which has snatched our minds from the rank of a historically insignificant, persecuted minority and placed us among the world's majority populace, which is crying from one end of the earth to the other that "we are." We are decided that we alone can define ourselves, that we are beautiful despite the white negative concept of us, that we have a history, an art, and a culture that no race or nation can stamp out our "souls" no matter the intensity of this foolish effort.



We must therefore ask with unrelenting insistence that our future education be radically reformed. We demand a program of "BLACK STUDIES," a program which will be of, by, and for black people. We demand that we be educated realistically; and that no form of education which attempts to lie to us, or otherwise miseducate us, will be accepted (Quoted in Billingsley:143-144).

Black students on other white campuses also made similar demands for a curriculum related to Black experiences. For instance, the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College in its position paper declares in part:

In the black community one of the most blatant forms of oppression is the irrelevant or destructive, educational experience of its youth, from elementary school to junior high and high schools, and finally in colleges. There is a denial of the legitimacy of cultural expression among black people, socially, culturally and economically. No atmosphere for self-learning exists in black schools. ...There is little in any curriculum which starts with black people as a specifically cultured people. So there is no wonder that black children lose interest at an early age. In high schools and colleges, Black students who have already gone through a destructive learning process now have that process increased in intensity. The high school and college curriculums as a whole are irrelevant to the needs of non-white students (Quoted in Turner, 1969:138).

Similar sentiment was voiced by Black students at Cornell University and probably appealed to a wide audience. They stated:

It is our conviction, however, that the black experience is a sufficiently unique aspect of human history and social relations that its study will contribute mightily to our understanding of general human culture and experience; and that, if this were not the case, the problems associated with race in this country are so pressing and so little understood either by academics or by the general public that to perpetuate the subordination of the study and instruction of Afro-Americans to the classical university structure would constitute the perpetuation of the classical academic

inattention to the race problem and unwittingly academic compromise with prevailing social norms (Quoted in Billingsley:144).

The Black students at Northwestern University did not waste words in their demand for Black studies courses. They stated that "We demand that a Black Studies Course be added to the curriculum including studies in Black history, literature, and art. In view of the fact that Black accomplishments have been underplayed and Black history misconstrued, we demand to have the ultimate decision in the choice of professors to be hired to teach these courses. There is no doubt, that since they inevitably must be "Black" professors, no one on the administration is capable of adequately judging their qualifications" (*Integrated Education*, 33 p. 34).

It is noted the main complaint of the Black students at the white universities is that the education provided them is irrelevant to their needs. Roscoe C. Brown, Professor of Education at New York University said that it had been repeated so often that it sounded like a jargon. Brown, nevertheless, provided an insightful explanation of what was meant by irrelevance by Black students. Brown stated:

What the black students mean is that the curriculum should give them some insights about the black man's role in society and help them to develop those skills which will enable them to improve life in ghetto. Thus, the black students want courses in black art, black music, the economics of poverty and the economics of the ghetto. This does not mean that most black students want to go back to the ghetto as social workers or teachers. They want to become participating members of society in all of its aspects, and want to use their

knowledge to help black people in many ways. The present generation of black students is aware of those omissions in their education which if rectified might help them to improve the lot of all black people, not just themselves. The cry for relevance parallels a similar cry by the students activists in colleges all over the nation. Those students are vitally concerned with poverty, racism, war and injustice. They too, feel that the classical tools of scholarship have not been particularly helpful to them in dealing with these concerns. While they concede that a firm grounding in a variety of subject areas eventually might be helpful to them, the urgency of their youth and the urgency of the problems that society faces leads them to cry for more relevance in their education now (1969:31).

The Black students were determined to provide a purpose for their education, their desire was to develop professional and technical careers tailored to the needs of Black people.

The late Hoyt W. Fuller, then managing editor of **Negro Digest** later (**Black World**) defended Black studies saying that there was no necessary conflict between Black studies and traditional academic disciplines and they did not cancel each other out; "Black Studies, reasonably considered, would provide black students with an approach to the traditional disciplines which would leave their identity intact and provide them with a sense of direction firmly rooted in their own identity" (1974: 50). He held that the advocacy of Black studies were based on the assumptions:

- 1, that the American society is, first and foremost racist, and that Black people can "join it" only by accepting--in Carolyn Fowler's words--"a zero image" of themselves;
- 2, that insofar as the traditional academic disciplines are essential to a Black education, they must be approached from a perspective which takes into full consideration the plain realities of Black life; and
- 3, that the central imperative for Black people is education

for empowerment, the application of information and know-how to the solution of the everyday problems faced by Black people, including political oppression and manipulation and economic exploitation and subservience (p.88).

According to Nathan Hare, the first Director of Afro-American Studies at San Francisco State College, to have a few courses in the Black past is not Black studies. Then what is the content of Black studies as an academic discipline? Maurice Jackson, of the Department of Sociology, University of California at Riverside, has defined the meaning and scope of Black studies as follows:

Black Studies, simply put, is the systematic study of black people. In this sense Black Studies differs from academic disciplines which stress white experience by being based on black experiences. Black Studies is an examination of the deeper truths of black life. It treats the black experience both as it has unfolded over time and as it is currently manifested. These studies will examine the valid part that black people have played in man's development in society. In so doing, Black Studies will concentrate on both the distinctiveness of black people from, and their inter-dependence with other people. To develop this kind of knowledge, Black Studies must extend beyond the limits prejudice has placed on knowledge of black people...Black Studies, then, is not the study of black ethnic minority, however valuable that may be. An ethnic minority, by virtue being a minority, is by definition in a disadvantaged position which facilitates the characterization of black people as problems, as being essentially inferior, and so on. Black Studies, in contrast, is the study of black people with a history and a current position with many strong points, with both a rich heritage and a rich complexity, which can be sources of pride. It is the study of people who have done much more than survive under the more difficult and trying circumstances, in and out of slavery, in and out of the ghettos. Without assuming that achievement is the mark of a man, it can be said that some of the greatest achievements in this society have been those of black men like Frederick Douglass who moved from slave to diplomat and Presidential

Advisor, or the host of black men who stood for freedom in unfree circumstances.

The study of black people as an ethnic minority has comparisons between them and other ethnic minorities, so defined. One of many comparisons is that between black people and Jewish people which generally fails to recognize the Constitutional provision for the independent existence of religious groups but not racial groups. In many ways the differences between ethnic minorities are such that intensive independent study of each is warranted. For instance, black people constitute the largest minority in the country; they are distributed throughout the nation; they are the only group in the country to undergo slavery; they are the only group under jurisdiction of the Jim Crow laws, and so on. Furthermore, they have developed distinctive music, literature, and art forms. Finally, with the exception of black people, the unique features of other groups in our country refer to the lands of their ancestors--which is to say that many things black developed in this country (Quoted in Ford, 1975:5-6).

Jackson's definition has captured the spirit of the demand for Black studies by Black students but without their revolutionary rhetoric. However, many militant and nationalistic Black scholars have seen Black studies as far more than just a new, growing academic discipline.

For Vincent Harding, Director, Institute of the Black World, Black studies is a demand for "a total reassessment of the curriculum, especially those studies dealing with man and society and the nature of culture" (1969, p.143). Black students initially requested courses relating to their heritage, and then challenged the entire academic content. They were demanding a new definition of America and its institutions--"a total re-evaluation from a Black perspective" (p. 143). Harding further asserts that "Even in the realm of

science, the demand is now growing among black students for a new look at the traditional Western understanding of man's relationship to the orders of nature. ... In other words, they suggest that Western science is not the last word to define reality" (p. 143). Black studies also signified the search for autonomy on the part of Black students. "At a profound level," Harding argues, "it is a part of the world-wide struggle of the formerly colonized peoples to find the freedom and initiative which will make it possible for them to experiment with and control those things which deeply affect their own lives and futures" (p.145). The struggle for autonomy was also a sign of deep mistrust of the white universities.

Apparently, the demand for Black studies is more than an academic demand for courses relating to the Black experience. It is a political action as well. William H. McClendon, Director of Black Studies at Reed College, Portland, Oregon, points out that in their struggle for education, many blacks realize that "all education is unequivocally political and black education can ill afford to be less so" (1974: 15). According to the editor of **Black Scholar**, Robert Chrisman, "Politics is a cultural act and culture is a political fact" (1970:6). Similarly, James Turner holds that "Education always has a definite political function whatever the situation; for it provides individuals with identity, purpose and

direction" (1970:6). This leads Nathan Hare, the publisher of **Black Scholar**, to declare "Black studies will be revolutionary or it will be useless if not detrimental" (1970:2). Black studies are to be revolutionary in the sense that the Black studies are to become the tool of social change. Ronald W. Walters of the Black Studies Department, Brandeis University, contends that "It is the function of Black Studies to assist black people in the development of new values and new strategies for the kind of change which in some quarters must approach a complete revolution" (1970:139). Black studies must help the Black people to develop a new identity and to redefine their situation because Black people as a group "has been defeated, enslaved, colonized, oppressed, penetrated culturally, and dominated politically and economically by the other group." In order to enable the Black people to create "new dimensions in our thinking and an alternative social philosophy and political direction," James Turner urges that:

Black education must make students consistently conscious of struggle and commitment. Too often the question of cultural values and political ideology is only superficially perceived. It is necessary at this time to define our long-range goals, our immediate objectives in order to reach these goals, and put into operation the work needed to fulfill these immediate objectives. Black studies programs must develop Black youth with a revolutionary sense of identity. Therefore, any Black studies program which purports to be educating Black students for full participation in the American mainstream is counter-productive to Black peoples' needs for development and self-control. Moreover, it is essential to our liberation that Black youth are

motivated to resist--not accept--the mainstream of the system which oppresses and destroys our people (1970b:7).

Mike Thelwell of the University of Massachusetts contends that Black studies are to function as an intellectual offensive in the Black political struggle for liberation. It is because the Black experience is not merely one of political and cultural oppression, and economic exploitation, but also includes the psychological and intellectual manipulation and control of blacks by the dominant majority. He, therefore, holds that the most obvious and pressing imperative of the Black studies is:

the reexamination and rehabilitation of our cultural heritage and political history--African and American--from the intellectual colonialism that has been imposed upon it. This is merely the first responsibility. The next level of responsibility accruing to black studies is related integrally to "issues" raised by its white academic opponents and has literally to do with the decolonization of education in this country (1969:708).

Nathan Hare takes the similar position that the education blacks receive at predominantly white colleges is largely irrelevant to them. Colleges can no longer ignore the needs of the Black community and the ego needs of Black students. He maintains that courses in Negro history and in race relations are not Black studies but "Negro studies" or polka-dot studies. Black education must be based on both ideological and pedagogical blackness. He suggests:

... black studies may be divided into two basic phases: the expressive and the pragmatic-positivistic. The expressive phase is therapeutic (revitalizing the collective ego via courses in culture and history), while



the pragmatic-positivistic stage is utilitarian (providing skills with which to bring about the change desired in one's life circumstances). Even those who recognize the value of black studies in the expressive sense, do not realize that distinction and seek to keep us bogged down in the areas of art and religion and history. We must not become so preoccupied with history that we neglect to act to make our current history and eventual future (1971:13).

He also suggests that Black education is Black-community centered. The educational process must involve the Black community, transforming the community while educating and training the Black students. This would tend to increase the commitment of Black students to the community while simultaneously permitting them to "learn to do by doing." He further suggests that Black education should also move into the realm of natural science and study science with a Black perspective.

June Jordan, poet and essayist, insists that the universities must not only change their curricula, they must also establish Black studies programs controlled by blacks and revise their admission policies so that more Black students and other minority students can get a fair share of college education. And while blacks must become competent architects or engineers, they must also learn about themselves in Black studies programs. A Black can no longer become just a doctor, he must, according to Jordan, become a Black doctor, conscious of the pain and beauty of blackness. Black studies are to bring back the person. She writes:

The engineer, the chemist, the teacher, the lawyer, the architect, if he is black, cannot honorably engage in a career except as black engineer, black architect. Of course, he must master the competence: the perspectives of physics, chemistry, economics, and so forth. But he cannot honorably, or realistically, forsake the origins of his possible person. Or she cannot. Nor can he escape the tyranny of ignorance except as he displaces ignorance with study: study of the impersonal, the amorality of the sciences anchored by black studies. The urgency of his heart, his breath, demands the knowing of the truth about himself: the truth of black experience (1971:35).

Affirmation of blackness prompts Lerone Bennett, Jr., senior editor of **Ebony** to declare the coming of the "Age of Blackness" and at the Institute of the Black World, Atlanta, Georgia, he asserts that "Black Studies is the revelation of truth and the search for the true meaning of Blackness" (1971:20).

Bennett then defines "the true meaning of Blackness" as follows:

Let us say, provisionally, that Blackness is that universe of values and attitudes and orientations which rises, like dew, from the depth of our ancestral experience and pulls us toward the distant shores of our destiny. Let us say, provisionally, that it is also a totalizing and enveloping force, an ambiance, and a milieu. But let us also say that there are depths beneath the depths in Blackness and that the first challenge of Blackness is the challenge of defining Blackness (p. 20)

And this challenge requires the committed intelligence, energies, and resources of the whole Black community for "Blacks must define and control Blackness." He suggests that the black community moves to meet the challenge at six levels. They are:

... first of all, to create the basic tools, the organic conditions and possibilities, for in-depth work in the field of Black Studies. And by all this, we simply mean that we are trying to create the bibliographies, the card indexes, the tapes and the special collections of books and documents that will make further work possible and profitable.

... secondly, to create a new pool of clarifying concepts which will permit us to see and handle our own reality. In our opinion, the question of concepts is decisive. The overriding need of the moment is for us to think with our own mind and to see with our own eyes. We cannot see now because our eyes are clouded by the concepts of white supremacy. We cannot think now because we have no intellectual instruments, save those which were designed expressly to keep us from **seeking**, from pondering our history and our culture.

... thirdly, [to move] toward a new relation to the Black community, for we believe that the Black community must help define what an intellectual is and what intellectuals should do. Not only that: we believe that the Black community is an informal educational medium which must be utilized to transform the thinking and acting of Black Americans.

... fourthly, [to create] a new cadre of **organic** intellectuals who will live and think within a perspective of blood and pain and want.

... fifthly, [to raise] the whole question of the institutionalization of the Black experience. On this level, the challenge of Blackness is the challenge of making it more than a theme for rapping, the challenge of giving it visible body and form so that Black people can plug into it and absorb the energy we need to fulfill our purpose.

... finally, to redefine American experience in order to remake American society (pp. 21-23).

Blackness is a challenge to the value system of the mainstream society and is a new way to look at the world. Black studies are the instrument for social and personal change. It is a political struggle as much as an academic endeavor. Bennett asserts "We reject the traditional distinction between culture and politics. We say that struggle and scholarship, the streets and the classrooms,

demonstrations and images are--and must be--related" (p. 23).

Black Studies program is not a white syllabus by adding the words, "The Negro in," for instance "The Negro in Colonial Period" because "Blacks lived a different time and in a different reality in this country." The Black experience "is a radical re-appraisal of a society from the standpoint of the men on the bottom." Bennett adds:

And I am suggesting that Blackness confronts the cruel exigency by raising dangerous questions about the meaning of education in America. Blackness is a challenge to the educational system because it is impossible for an institution does not confront itself and re-evaluate what it is doing and what it has done to perpetuate racism and ignorance. And this requires a total confrontation with the **meaning** and the limitations of white-oriented education (p. 24).

Along a similar line, Preston Wilcox charges that many hastily launched Black studies programs are not for the benefit of the Black students but for the legitimation of white institutions of higher education because they have not taken "one step to de-colonize their core curricula" (1970:76). Thus, he suggests:

The thrust of Black Studies Programs must remain at the level of a movement. They must resist institutionalization and any partnership which is not pluralistic, humanistic in function, and integrally related to the liberation and restoration of all Black people. More than anything else, Black Studies Programs must be viewed as instruments for the development of the Black community (p. 77).

If Black studies program were to become an "academic discipline" for Black humanism, it must be concerned with "the

physical and mental health of Black people and a positive association with their own cultural heritage." And "importantly, it was to provide the framework on which new and substantive bodies of knowledge about the Black condition were to be linked. It would require that such issues as self-concept, reparations, cooperative and collective economic enterprises, psychological and political liberation, a re-ordering of given values be systematically addressed and understood" (p. 82). Wilcox suggests that a meaningful Black studies program must be based on a new social contract which involves the following points:

a) **The Powers-that-be in the white controlled institutions must get involved in overcoming the racist practices that benefit them in economic and educational terms to the disadvantage of Black and other minority group students.** Recall that most such institutions are organized as though we reside in an egalitarian society when, in fact, the democracy they espouse is a hypocrisy. Blacks are not treated as equals by whites because of the essential meaning of being non-black--in style, habits, behavior, etc. Part of the meaning of being white is to define Blacks as being inferior; an active manifestation of white superiority.

b) **The Black Studies Institute must be involved systematically in redefining, understanding and codifying the Black experience to ensure that a body of relevant and transmittable knowledge is developed.** This effort must involve the development of new definitions of old perspectives, an increasing reliance on Black self-accreditation and the planful use of instinctual understandings--such as self-concept, functional anger and the like. The old perspectives have assigned inhuman status to Blacks. The effort of Blacks to integrate with whites has led to a new level of white paternalism: white keep the real power; Blacks become acting colonial relations agents. Traditional Ivory Tower intellectualism is, in fact, a higher form of anti-intellectualism: it isolates theory from practice; separates apprehension

from comprehension, thought from action; and conceals the politics of social control behind a facade of "a political intellectuality" (p. 78).

J. Frank Yates, then acting director of the Afro-American Studies Program at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, contends that the core of American identity and ideology evolved after the Revolutionary War was essentially a slightly modified Anglo-Saxon value system. The definition of "American" consciously excluded non-English European influences and the incorporation of blackness was never considered. Nevertheless, Yates concedes that there is a duality of American ideology. One is official ideology incorporating all the ideals expressed in the country's official documents. The other is the "real" ideology providing the foundations for racial oppression. Though blacks have internalized aspects of the dual American ideology, there have always been the rudiments of a functional Black ideology in the Black communities. However, it has had to contend with tremendous odds for its mere survival, let alone growth for blacks control few instruments of communication and education. Yates holds that the ideology running through a society does much to determine how the people perceive themselves, the perspective from which they evaluate all issues, even the very alternatives they imagine. Thus, Yates, asserts that "the creation or development of a new ideology permeating the lives of black people is one of

the most important, if not ~~the~~ most important, issues facing us today" (1970:89). He continues:

It is incumbent upon those seriously committed to black studies to seek out the ideological positions that would be most beneficial to black people. Black thinkers, especially black psychologists, must aid in the development and transmission of the new black ideology. This is the challenge of black studies at this juncture. Unless it is met, we have simply added another "agency" to the pile and the next explosion will be just a bit stronger. Perhaps then we will deal with the gut issues of a black ideology and, ultimately, a truly "American" ideology (p.90).

William H. McClendon, Director of Black Studies at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, goes a step further. He argues that "Blacks were programmed by white racists from the beginning to be the property and the servants of whites. As a result they have never been a part of the self-determining peoples of this world." He urges that Black studies be developed into a major force to enable Black people to take control over their own lives. He delineates the importance of Black studies in this way:

Black Studies comes to grips with the various social science fabrications that were/are used to delineate alleged inferiority of the blacks. There is emerging now a rather clear understanding of the dominant society stereotypical tendency to find all other ethnic peoples as hyper-emotional, irrational, sexually irresponsible, and anti- or non-intellectual. But because of Black Studies students are now better able to evaluate from a liberating perspective the assorted materials pouring forth from all sectors of the white media treating everything black. They are able to recognize the contrast between the black experience and the white advantages and to understand the pathology of white society as being the basic reason for black people living in harsher environments and under greater internal stresses. Also historical, political and social

documentation clearly reveals the evidence as to why blacks enjoy America less and suffer from it more. Students in turn are developing more care and vigilance and are being taught more effectively to exercise discretion and prudence in using those strengths and resources which must be expended by all peoples whose aspirations are to free (1974:18).

For James R. Rosser, and E. Thomas Copeland, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Professor of African Studies at the University of Kansas respectively, the emergence of Black studies is a recognition of the fact that education has been dysfunctional with regard to the needs, interests, and aspirations of Black people. Thus, they contend that "the educational ideology, goals, and objectives of Black Studies must be illustrative, not only of emphasis on the revitalization of the black intellectual tradition, but also of a commitment to the eradication of weak egos, perceptions of incompetence, and educational skill problems in general" (1973:290). Black studies are envisaged as a means for Black people to define themselves and to "develop the tools for empowerment if they are to acquire the dignity that every human being is entitled to" (p. 293). They also feel that there is a definite research component in Black studies "to articulate twentieth-century Afro-desperation in terms of resources, means, and ends which will be functional for the development of black people." They add:

In this context, the research component must focus, in large part, on the mechanics of the immediate realities of the everyday suppression of the black masses. Only students and teachers in a balanced learning situation



can foster and perpetuate such a perspective. Realistically, Black Studies must be future-oriented and, therefore, must provide the medium through which strategies may be developed for defining and meeting the liberation, decolonization, and nationalization needs of black people (p. 293).

Johnella E. Butler, Chairperson of Afro-American Studies at Smith College, argues that if Black studies were to achieve the objective of liberating the sensibility of Black people, Black studies must be based on Paulo Freire's pedagogy which is the freeing of the cultural identity from the shackles of an imposed sensibility in order for humankind to mediate the world, put in motion the cultural process, thereby transforming reality and creating history. Oppression is then defeated and liberation occurs (1979:292).

Black studies have admirers as well as critics. Criticism leveled at Black studies are centered around three broad areas. They are 1) Black studies is political, not academic. Black studies departments or programs are accused of "politicizing" Black students and encouraging militancy and confrontations with the administration, while ignoring the need for "academic achievement;" 2) Black studies are intellectually bankrupt. Black studies programs have been accused of having no proper subject matter and of being merely an attempt to boost the collective Black psyche by glorifying Black history; 3) Black studies as reverse racism (Allen, 1974:6). Among the critics were Bayard Rustin, Martin Kilson of Harvard University, Sir Arthur Lewis, the West Indian

economist at Princeton University, Roy Wilkins of NAACP and a number of the old guard Negro administrators from Southern Negro colleges. Mike Thelwell described them as "on the right flank of the black community." The most outspoken and severe critic was Bayard Rustin, then executive secretary of the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund. Rustin raised some important questions about Black studies. This is the kind of questions which a person who takes Black studies seriously would ask. He asked:

Is Black Studies an educational program or a forum for ideological indoctrination? Is it designed to train qualified scholars in a significant field of intellectual inquiry, or is it hoped that its graduates will form political cadres prepared to organize the impoverished residents of the black ghetto? Is it a means to achieve psychological identity and strength, or is it intended to provide a false and sheltered sense of security, the fragility of which would be revealed by even the slightest exposure to reality? And finally, does it offer the possibility for better racial understanding, or is it a regression to racial separatism? The power--and also the danger--of "Black Studies" as a slogan is that it can mean any or all of these things to different people (Quoted in Ford, 1973:3).

Rustin later in an article entitled "The Myths of the Black Revolt" in the August, 1969 issue of **Ebony** answered his own questions negatively. He said:

But I am afraid that Black Studies, as it is presently conceived by its proponents on campus, will not correct these errors [The history of the black people has been scandalously distorted in the past, and as a field of study, it has been relegated to a second-class status, isolated from the main themes of American history and omitted from the historical education of American youth.] so much as compound them, for its primary purpose will be to further ends that are fundamentally

nonscholastic. It is hoped, first, that Black Studies will serve the ideological function of creating a mythologized history and a system of assertive ideas that will facilitate the political mobilization of the black community. Such an ideological undertaking would necessitate the substitution of a glorified version of black history for the present debased version but neither version seems unduly concerned with the discovery of historical truth.

It is also hoped that Black Studies will serve the political function of developing and educating a cadre of activists who conceive of their present training as a preparation for organizational work in the black community. One may feel-- as I do--that there should be more young Negroes engaging in activities designed to uplift their brethren, but to the extent that Black Studies is used as a vehicle for political indoctrination, it ceases to be a legitimate scholastic program....

There is, finally, the psychological function of Black Studies. It is hoped that by studying Negro history and culture, the self-image of young blacks will improve. Implicit here is the dual assumption that first, young Negroes have a negative self-image because second, they are ignorant of their history. If there is truth to either assumption then I entirely agree--they should devote many intensive hours to the study of our people's rich heritage of struggle and achievement.

But Black Studies is also serving the psychologically protective function of enabling black students who have been brutalized in the past by segregated education to withdraw from the demanding competition of the university. In this I see little virtue. Providing these students with separate courses of study in soul music and soul poetry--things they can just play with and pass--will enhance neither their competence nor their confidence. Nor will it deal with the fundamental problem of improving the quality of their education in order that they can obtain skills that will be useful in the world they must eventually enter as adult (1969:101-102).

Another noted critic of Black studies is Martin Kilson, professor of government at Harvard and a member of Harvard faculty committee on African and Afro-American Studies. Kilson does not oppose Black studies per se. In a speech at

the NAACP 60th anniversary convention in Jackson, Mississippi, July, 1969, Kilson declared "To this extent (to rid of the scholarly treatment of the Negro of white racist evaluations), I welcome the activity of Negro students on campuses across the country in behalf of Afro-American studies--though I disagree with some of their tactics and methods" (1969:329).

Kilson opposes proposals to make Black studies into a platform for a particular ideological group, and to restrict these studies to Black students and teachers. It would be a disservice to American higher education if the Black studies movement becomes responsible for forcing colleges and universities into fixed ideological positions in teaching the humanities and the social sciences (pp. 329-330). He strongly feels that **"It is ... imperative to ward against dilettantism in the academic organization of Afro-American studies. This can be achieved most effectively by requiring students who major in Afro-American studies to fulfill a good part of the academic requirements in an established discipline like economics, while simultaneously pursuing specialized courses in Afro-American studies"** (pp. 330-331). Later in an article in the *Journal of Black Studies*, Kilson calls this principle "tracking"--a student majoring in Black studies should be "tracked" through an established discipline (1973:304). It would be a tragic to allow Black students to become victims of academically and technically diffuse Black studies curricula

or programs. It is a colossal waste of time and resources. "And it will be as well of little value to the difficult problem of advancing the position of Negroes in American life" (1969:331). He warns that "the opportunity now available to blacks to major in the sciences and technical fields like engineering should not be lost because of the ideological and psychological attraction of Afro-American studies" because "the road to the top and middle occupations in American society is through the sciences and the technical fields--not through Afro-American studies" (1969:331).

Earlier Kilson had questioned Black studies on philosophical grounds. When speaking on the subject of "The intellectual validity of studying the black experience" at a symposium sponsored by the Black Student Alliance at Yale University in 1968, Kilson says that "I would suggest most firmly that the black experience is truly nothing more than a variant of the human experience" (1969a:15). He further says that "I cannot quite accept the viewpoint that the black man's experience with white oppression has endowed the black man with a special insight into oppression and thus a special capacity to rid human affairs of oppression" (1969a:15-16). In response to a question from the audience, Kilson explains that "My point is that whatever particular understanding oppressed groups have in and of itself it does not represent an intrinsically superior position--in the sense that most

ideologies of the oppressed would lead us to believe. That is to say, if the tables are turned, would the oppressed automatically find the system of values which would inform the new status with something that was not there before?" (1969a:20) Kilson's point is well taken but in the surge of Black nationalism, his is probably "a voice in the wilderness."

W. Arthur Lewis, noted economist of West Indian origin, argues that America is integrated economically but segregated socially and that blacks must go outside their neighborhoods to earn their living. He emphasizes that "The way to a better share of this integrated economy is through integrated colleges; but they can help us only if we take from the the same things that they give to our white competitors" (1971:148).

At this juncture, I would mention another kind of concern about the legitimacy of Black studies in the Northern white universities. In the March, 1969 issue of **Negro Digest**, Vincent Harding issued an open letter to the Black students in the North saying that the Black Studies Movement in the North was threatening the survival of the Southern Black colleges. In the letter he said:

The center of our concern is this: Do the black student (and faculty) brothers in northern schools realize that much of your motion over the past year has often appeared to encourage the destruction of those colleges and universities where some 125,000 black students study in the South? Besides, do you realize that

such action towards destruction puts you in league with many white, northern, academic administrators who are ready to deny the future of black southern education, ready to manipulate the death of potentially powerful black institutions? (1969:5-6).

He raised the concern because he felt that the northern schools had robbed the southern black colleges of their best faculty and students. He suggested that the northern schools sent the Black students to the southern colleges as exchange students and established visiting scholars programs to enable Black faculty from the southern Black colleges to teach for a year in the northern universities. He also questioned the quality of some of the Black studies programs in the northern schools. He also felt that "it is only logical that black institutions in the black community, if properly funded, organized and led, could probably do the best job of creating new scholars in the field of Afro-American studies" (p. 13).

The "charges" and suggestions by Harding were convincingly refuted by William J. Wilson, sociologist presently at the University of Chicago, and author of **The Declining Significance of Race?** and **The Truly Disadvantaged**. Wilson pointed out that the northern schools did not heavily recruit the best Black students from the South. The majority of the Black students were recruited from the ghetto. The facilities of the southern Black colleges would not be sufficient to accommodate the Black students from the North.

Besides, "the traditionally-oriented Negro colleges which, as I emphasized above, have yet to acknowledge the legitimacy of black studies programs" (1970:11). The visiting professorship was only a stop-gap measure but could be implemented. The Black scholars produced by a few Black universities would not be sufficient to meet the demand for Black scholars. It was necessary for the white universities to join in this effort to train graduate students in Black studies.

Apart from the two opposing positions from the left and the right flank of the Black community, there is a third position on Black studies. Those who take the third position perceive Black studies program as an important tool to enhance racial understanding and it is equally important for blacks as well as whites if not even more important for the white. For instance, Kurt Schmoke, a Black student at Yale and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University during 1971-72, expressed his reasons for believing that Black studies are valuable and valid contributions to the curricula of institutions of higher learning:

First of all, it is a program which helps young blacks gain a sense of pride in their race. The importance of this should be evident to all who have any knowledge of the history of the struggles of black Americans. Secondly, the black American experience is an area of our cultural heritage which has been neglected by most colleges and universities but which demands attention, for the study of a country cannot be complete if the history and achievements of 15 percent of its population are ignored. Finally, the programs have as their end not merely learning facts but also gaining understanding. And if



the U.S. racial problems are to be solved, mutual understanding cannot be attained if schools teach only one side of the story. Although many wrinkles remain to be ironed out in these programs, I believe that the incorporation of Black Studies in the college curriculum is an important step on the road which leads to the solution of the American racial delima (Quoted in Ford, 1973:9).

Taking the cultural modification point of view, C. Eric Lincoln, author of *The Black Muslims in America* (1961) and *The Negro Pilgrimage in America* (1969), argues that it is mind boggling to "try to think of what America would be like if there had been no African presence here, and if the American experience had not been so extensively modified by the black experience" (1978:16). He suggests that it is clear then the resistance to Black studies is somewhat more than the denial of the present relevance of the Afro-American experience; it is also a precautionary strategy designed to forestall the modification of a society in the future by suppressing a body of knowledge about the past. He sees the value of Black studies in this way:

Black studies are a vital instrument in the determination of the quality of that future. As such, it is not a discipline to be limited to black children, for they alone will have had direct and continuing exposure to the critical learnings of the black experience. Yet the formal, pedagogic exposure for black children should be no less intense than for others, for in so critical an endeavor nothing should be taken for granted. But it is the white child whose social experience and whose value constructs have been deliberately contrived in most cases, inadvertently neglected in others, so as to exclude the reality of the black impress. Hence, the white child should at all costs have the benefit of black studies at some level in his academic career. Innocent of this experience, he faces the future with a distortion

of the past which will seriously compromise his fitness to perform acceptably in the world as it is--to say nothing of the world as it will be (p. 17).

An assimilationist view of Black studies is advanced by Nathan Wright, Jr. who holds that "Black students are not seeking to have the educational establishment destroyed. They are insisting that it be inclusive of and that it work in the interests of all who would aspire to the fulfillment of their potential." He emphatically says that "These students, it must be understood, want to be "in" not "out" with reference to American life" (1970:208). He also feels that Black or Afro-American studies fill a need, primarily in the white community, by offering new sources of enrichment concerning the nation's heritage" (p. 215). Nathan Wright is the author of **Black Power and Urban Unrest** (1967), **Ready to Riot** (1968), and **Let's Work Together** (1968).

### **BLACK UNIVERSITY MOVEMENT**

Parallel to the Black studies movement, there was a Black university movement launched by radical Black academicians. Indeed, it can be said that the Black studies movement and the Black university movement are two sides of the same coin. If the Black studies movement was born out of the quest for educational relevance to Black students at white colleges and universities, then the Black university movement was born out of the quest for educational relevance for Black students at

black colleges and educational commitment to the Black community.

The concept of Black university was raised during the student revolt at Black colleges. The "Black Power Committee" of Howard University, Washington, D.C. issued a call:

- (1) The overthrow of the "Negro" college with white innards.
- (2) To raise in its place a militant black university which will counteract the white-washing black students now receive in "Negro" and white institutions.

"... Our goals revolve around the complete revamping of the "Negro" college... Moreover, we must have a complete overhauling of the present curricula and the building of courses of study more pertinent to the present and future demands of the black struggle in America and the world... At the same time it is necessary to launch a vigorous campaign to change the names of black universities to commemorate the courage and deeds of black thinkers and theorists...(Quoted in Anderson, 1967:15).

Among those who responded to the call for Black university was Charles V. Hamilton, the co-author of **Black Power: the Politics of Liberation in America**. In an article entitled "The Place of Black College in the Human Rights Struggle" published in the September, 1967 issue of **Negro Digest**. He suggests that Black colleges occupy a special relationship to the human rights struggle because there is a prevailing **ethos** which pervades the Black college campus. He explains that:

This ethos, this spirit, if you please, comes precisely out of the context of black experience, black tradition, black heritage. This ethos is a function of the fact that most of the black students in that college come from a particular socio-cultural environment

characterized by its deliberate exclusion from benefits and services of the larger society. This environment, this exclusion, this resultant ethos cannot be treated as if they did not exist or as if they were not relevant to the kinds of courses we offer, to the kinds of faculty we hire, to the kinds of administrators we hire, to the kinds of goals we seek (1967:4-5).

Hamilton suggests Black colleges have overlooked this ethos and the insights of the Black people in constructing the academic curriculum. He proposes that Black colleges reexamine some of the established beliefs and values and restructure their academic curriculum. He goes on to propose:

a black college revolutionary in its purpose, revolutionary in its procedures, revolutionary in its goals. ... a black college which would be for the first time legitimate--vis-a-vis that distinctive ethos--not in relation to a large white, anachronistic middle-class. ... a black college that would quickly understand that Western technology is not the criterion of greatness. ... a black college that would do many broad things: Educationally ... it would not be bound in all discipline. ... a black college that would not only study the ghetto but get its students from there; that would prepare its students to go back there to assume roles of leadership. ... a black college with specific courses in Economics, E.G.: Economic coops in the Ghetto; Political Science, E.G.: Viable Political Movements in the Ghetto; Business Administration, E.G.: the Business Potential of the Ghetto, etc. ... a black college that would offer summer and other-season in-service training for students who prepare themselves for leadership in the ghetto community by living in and organizing in those communities. ... a black college that would make the History of African Civilization at least a three year course and required for graduation. ... a black college whose curriculum goal would be relevancy to the lives of the students and their experiences. ... a black college that would graduate students to go to that city and hundreds like that one and organize to challenge and change that despicable situation. ... a black college that would deliberately strive to inculcate a sense of racial pride and anger and concern

in its students. ... a black college where one of the criteria for graduating **summa cum laude** would be the demonstrated militancy of the candidate. ... a black college that would be a felt dominant force in the community in which it exists. A college which would use its accumulated intellectual knowledge and economic resources to bring about desired changes in race relations in the community. A college that would offer **free** remedial training and education for black adults and school drop-outs. A college that would be intimate friends, not foe, to the black citizens surrounding it. A college that would do business only with those who hired its students and contributed a certain predetermined amount to the college's scholarship funds. ... a black college that would embark on these programs not fearful of reprisals, because the college I propose would seek its **raison d'être** not in the sanction and approval of others--but in the sanction and approval of its black students and their black parents. ... a college that would insist first on being its own man--before it attempted to go into the business of educating men and women. ... a black college whose faculty and administrators would be on fire with the desire to eradicate human injustice. A college whose faculty and administrators would reject the shibboleths of "objectivity" and "aloofness", because they would know that these are merely synonyms for "passivity" and "irrelevancy." ... a black college, then, that would adopt as its preamble the avowed purpose to pose the hard questions, to challenge established myths. A college that would feel ashamed of itself if its graduates did not become active fighters for human dignity and social justice. A college that would recruit as students those freedom fighters--in the same way that some colleges today recruit football players. ... a black college that would grant honorary degrees to the Paul Robesons, and John Hulletts of Lowndes County; to the Amzi Moores of Cleveland, Mississippi; to the Mr. McClains of Nothingham, Penna. ... a black college that would hire a Fannie Lou Hamer and welfare mothers as professors of Social Action. A college where ferment was a reality, not superficial rhetoric; a college that would see an Alex Melton of West Chester and Charles Butler of Coatesville as 10 times more legitimate in community organization than 10 full professors of political science and sociology from Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. ... a black college that would recognize and utilize the talents of these people as surely as some colleges now

bargain for irrelevant Ph.D's (pp.6-8).

"This may all sound silly. It may sound 'out of order'," says Hamilton, "But, you see, I operate from the point of view that too many of us have been "in order" for too long."

The editors of **Negro Digest** took up the idea of Black university quite seriously and the magazine became an important forum for discussing the concept of Black university. It published two special issues on the subject. The first one appeared in March, 1968 and the second a year later. As in the case of Black studies movement, Black university means different thing to different people. The definition of Black university offered by the Managing Editor of **Negro Digest**, Hoyt W. Fuller, represents the position of the radical wing of Black scholars. Fuller defined the concept of Black university as follows:

...the concept is not to be defined within the limits of the university as it traditionally has existed in this country and as it is imagined by the academics. The concept is revolutionary; that it, it is concerned with breaking out of--indeed, leveling--the existing university structure and instituting in its stead new approaches to education. Where existing universities are scholar-oriented, the Black University will be community-oriented; where the traditional university has emphasized the intellectual and cultural development of the student toward the ends of academic excellence and elitism, the Black University will seek to involve the total community and its institutions in a system of interrelated and interlocking "schools" and programs of study which are designed to serve the black community in its reach toward unity, self-determination, the acquisition and use of political and economic power, and the protection of freedom of the human spirit; where the American university has sought to prepare the student to assume a meaningful role in the mainstream of American life, the

Black University's goal will be to destroy in the minds of black people the validity of the values of the "mainstream," those values which, for nearly 400 years, have been used to debase and to dehumanize black people dignity, and to resurrect and to glorify within the black community the spirit of Muntu (1969:p.4).

One of those who postulate the radical concept of a Black university is Gerald McWorter, an assistant professor of sociology at Spelman College in Atlanta. He articulates the view that education ought to be "an instrument of national emancipation and integrity." Thus, the social role of the Black University should be "the fountainhead of revolutionary liberation."

According to McWorter, there are two developing trends that prompt the call for a Black university. The trends are 1) "the revolution of rising expectations" among the oppressed people "who know that the world offers more than they have, and 2) "the increasing saliency of a nationalistic alternative to the system."

Thus, a Black university shall be a center of learning focusing on the particular needs of the blacks. McWorter stresses that "it must be based on an educational ideology grounded in an uncompromising goal of psychological independence from the oppressor (and his oppressive system), and as much structural independence as is necessary not only to survive in the world, but to prosper" (1968:9). Also the thrust of the Black university must be to overcome the ethic of individualism with the ethic of communalism meaning

"self-help cooperative efforts, the ethic supporting new alternatives."

The service of the Black university suggested by McWorter must be one transmitted through "a concrete programmatic movement toward liberation." He adds "The time when the Afro-American community must be arms-length from its institutions of higher education is over. The pimps, prostitutes, preachers, and Ph.D.'s must find a common bond to change themselves and weave an organic unity as the basis for liberation and a better life for all" (pp. 9-10). The Black university must get rid of two pervasive patterns: 1) education as a process of acclimation and adjustment to the white world, and 2) the play-culture of friendship cliques and fraternity life. Instead the students and faculty "must be evangelical in their social roles and give new meaning to being a missionary for freedom." And finally the Black university must impart to all who are associated with "the inner strength, positive historical identity, and a vision of the good, for only in having these traits will he be able to stand up in a world dominated by evil and be secure even in being alone" (p. 10).

Another mission of the Black university is to revise the educational materials in order to secure for colored peoples of the world their proper place in human history. The process of revision is as much political as it is scholarly.



McWorter further emphasizes :

But more important (and more difficult), there is a need to find new styles of scholarship, new forms of knowledge, new ways of knowing. These new developments must be consistent with what is to be known, and have utility for the liberation movement. There must be research on all aspects of the Black Experience, research necessarily not limited to traditional scholarly disciplines, but open to the demands of the subject. For example, the "Blues" component of Afro-American culture demands a historian, musicologist, literary historian, sociologist, etc. The soul of a people must be reflected in the results of the research as well as the life style of the Black University. We must be in search of the "funky" sociologist, the "soulful" political scientist, and the University president who can "get down" (p. 11).

On the other extreme of the postulation of a Black university is Darwin Turner, the dean of the graduate school of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University at Greensboro. Turner's version of Black university does not call for restructuring the existing Negro colleges but "blackening" the curriculum a little bit by adding courses oriented toward blackness. He, however, urges that "The Black University must discard the characteristic conservatism of most Negro institutions. Fearing criticism for failure, Negro institutions rarely have gambled on educational experiments" (1968: 67). He also suggests that Black university must support the budding Black artists, actors, writers, dancers, and musicians, etc.

Taking a step further than Turner is Stephen E. Henderson, chair of the English Department of Morehouse College, Atlanta. He suggests that the Black university can be

realized in the form of several regional centers of Black consciousness by consciously reorganizing existing institutions if Black college presidents have the will to be Black. He sees several possible centers in the Baltimore-D.C. area, in the Norfolk area, in the Durham-Greensboro area, in the Nashville area, in the Atlanta area, in the Tallahassee area, in the New Orleans area and in the Houston area. These centers are to form units of a single **de facto** supra-institutional Black university which is to affirm blackness (1968:24) Henderson holds that "The single revolutionary concept that has emerged in recent years is that the black experience is not only relevant in such a search [for black identity], it is fundamental and crucial." And the question of blackness is not just a matter of pigmentation but it is "ultimately a moral and philosophical position" (p. 23).

The Black university movement gained momentum in 1969. In March, 1969 **Negro Digest** again published a special issue related to the Black university and in November of the same year, over four hundred Black academicians, political activists and students attended a conference on the Black university at Howard University, Washington, D.C. Hoyt W. Fuller, the Managing Editor of **Negro Digest** notes that "the growing number of advocates and supporters of the Black University, in and outside of white universities, recognize that they have formidable adversaries in their struggle toward

achieving their goal." Nevertheless, he is optimistic that "already a very large percentage of the brightest of the young black students and professors have thrown their sympathies and, in many cases, their energies behind the Black University movement" (1969:95). Fuller also assures his readers that "Nor will the proliferating Black Studies Programs now being hurriedly established at major white colleges and universities across the country succeed in co-opting the Black University concept and in de-fusing the drive toward its realization." Ironically, the proliferation of Black studies programs do cause some conflicts with the Black university movement. For instance, Vincent Harding, chairman of the Department of History and Sociology at Spelman College, Atlanta and the Director of Institute of the Black World, poses this question to the advocates of Black studies:

If we really intend to make the search for the Black University more than good rapping materials for a hundred conferences, then where can we take the best concrete first steps--on a white campus or a traditionally "Negro" one? Especially when we consider the service the black university must render to its immediate community, is it contradictory in the extreme to consider such nation-building service coming from "black universities" in overwhelmingly white institutions? (1969a:10)

The solution to this delima is provided by Edgar F. Beckham, director of the Language Laboratory and lecturer in German at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut and chairman of the steering committee of the Connecticut Association Afro-American Educators. Beckham considers that

the Black university is concerned more with "process" than with "place," and, therefore, "the Black University exists implicitly wherever and whenever Black people join together for a Black educational purpose" (1969:25). Beckham arrives at this position because he perceives that:

The Black University is indeed the product of visionaries, who affirm the validity of Black experience and recognize that the celebration of what is vital and true in the lives of Black people requires institutions free from the corroding effects of extraneous influence. But Black University is also the product of practical men who recognize that the pressure generated by Black people in response to Black dreams is a primary factor in the evolution of local mechanisms for the alleviation of oppressive conditions (p. 25).

Indeed, to eradicate the oppressive conditions in the Black community is one of the declared goals of the Black university movement. For Gerald A. McWorter, Black people who are seriously concerned about the nature of the Black struggle in education must have a critical understanding of how educational activities can lead to---and to be a part of---the struggle for the liberation of all Black people. In order to make the Black university "an institutional concept of life and liberation", McWorter suggests that blacks must be concerned with four basic questions. They are (1) What are the ideological bases of conflict concerning the liberation struggle for Black people? (2) What-How-Why are certain institutions playing significant roles in the development of the concept of the Black university? (3) What are some of the

dangers of Neo-colonial racist pacification? and (4) What is the correct ideological basis of our Black struggle toward liberation? (1969:16)

McWorter contends that blacks are a colonized people and that they must embrace the revolutionary Pan-African Nationalism to fight a colonial system with its neo-colonial racism functioning to pacify Black people and to influence Black affairs "with revisionary subversion" (p. 17). The system is racist because "white is still right." McWorter adds that "Our goal is to destroy it [the colonial system] and to replace it with a system that speaks to our needs" (p. 17). What does it mean that the Black university be predicated on Pan-Africanism? Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller), one of the founders and a director of Malcolm X Liberation University, a university built on the concept of Black university, explains Pan-Africanism as follows:

...Pan-Africanism ... to us does not connote an escapist "back to Africa" philosophy. It does not connote a narrow cultural identification of just dress and language. It connotes a revolution in the sense that we are talking about the liberation of African people where we are. We recognize Africa as being central to that liberation but not the only factor in that liberation. Our struggle is against racism and imperialism as a world-wide phenomenon which means that we have to fight it where ever we are in the world (**Black Collegian**, 3(2), 16).

Turning Black university toward internationalism is the central tenet in Vincent Harding's vision of Black university. Harding contends that "One of the central characteristics of the Black University movement is its willingness to define

education as being unashamedly political, and to tie black education to the struggles of African peoples everywhere" (1970:157). He further writes:

Although the Black University will obviously plumb the deepest levels of the black experience, past and present, it will at the same time look constantly outward, its vision informed by a new understanding of and commitment to our community. As a result, one central aspect of the study of the Black University will be focused in dogged, precise research and analysis of the development and maintenance of the economic, political and cultural imperialism of the Western world, especially as it affects African and other non-white peoples. No longer will we study the white world to emulate it, or to negotiate passage on its terms. Now the study of the West would be motivated by a commitment to change it radically, to draw out the poison which has brought death to so many of our fathers (p.158).

Stephen Henderson then advances the idea of "saturating" the Black students in the Black humanities and to replace the traditional "western man" with the "universal black man" (1970:114).

And yet another approach to Black university was articulated by Henry Allen Bullock, the author of **A History of Negro Education in the South**. Bullock argues that Black educators must recognise the fact that racism is a barrier to assimilation and the Black college must function in a dual role. He explains:

First, it must prepare its students for full and efficient participation in a WASP dominated society from whose overpowering influence they cannot escape, second, it must train them for a world of blackness in which they must live. (1971:594).

The Black university is not just rhetoric. Efforts have

been made by Black organizations to construct an alternative system of education. The Black Communiversy emerged in 1969 in Chicago. This was the result of the effort of Black Liberation North and many groups and individuals worked in unison to bring culturally-expressive programs to all segments of the Black community. The Communiversy was a Saturday college. The activities and the programs of the Communiversy was described by the **Negro Digest** as follows:

Teachers, parents and college students, after having finished their morning task of instruction to the pre-school, the primary and secondary schools, will attend (or teach) afternoon classes at the communiversy--where the following subjects will be taught:

1. African History
2. African-American History
3. Political Science
4. Colonial Anthropology and Sociology
5. Survival (Medical)
6. Swahili
7. French and Other Languages
8. Black Arts
9. Black Literature
10. Teaching Techniques

#### Future Programs

1. Food program for the black community
  - a. Feast for the purpose of redistributing food in the black community.
  - b. Food Cooperatives.
2. Housing program
3. Family and social program (extended family concepts, etc.)
4. Employment program (coping with cybernetics, automation)
5. Health program
6. Technology program (**Negro Digest** March, 1973: 74).

Movement toward the Black university took place outside the established educational system as well as inside the

system. The Malcolm X Community College, a tax-supported institution, was operated on the Black university concept. The man who pioneered this venture is Dr. Charles G. Hurst, Jr., a former professor at Howard University. Hurst, who took the helm at the Malcolm X Community College, states that the goals of the college are to educate students for freedom, individuality and service. He delineates the goals as follows:

(1) FREEDOM in a very general sense refers to a freedom from external constraint. Malcolm X College is characterized by free access to resources of the institution, the city, the world. The role of staff and student body is to remove the obstacles which block the path of those seeking the more specific freedom defined as "the capability to deal creatively and effectively with one's situation." We take the position that in order to achieve positive freedom, students must be encouraged to actively and consciously attempt to utilize their personal resources, their life style, and their experiential background in the classroom. The student must become skilled at identifying needs, problems and issues which affect the nature and quality of life in his environment and then use them in his research. Hopefully, he will learn to relate his learning to the problems of his community, with a view toward ultimately finding solutions to the community's problems, as well as his own.

(2) INDIVIDUALITY cannot genuinely exist without the freedom described above. The thrust of this perspective is to resist any simple accounts of what a person "really" is or intends to become, and allows for distinction between one's **real** self and one's **apparent** self. The real self is, in our judgment, dynamic and expanding and defies **prima facie**, or merely quantitative, assessment. Individuality presupposes a social context and, yet, underscores the uniqueness of each person in that context. Our notion of individuality is characterized by built-in capacities (not necessarily apparent) for good which are inseparable from the good of the community and ultimately of all mankind.

(3) SERVICE involves being a contributing member of society by bringing one's unique resources to bear upon



human problems, particularly the problems confronting the Black community. As with the others, this concept recognizes that the truly educated man is also a learned man; but more than that, he is one in whom learning is combined with an understanding of social injustice and a commitment to correcting it (1970:34-35).

The mechanisms have been instituted at Malcolm X College to realize the above-mentioned goals. The processes are:

- Step 1--Discipline follows from a precise understanding of what must be done and why: it generates from within the individual and the group and is enforced by each individual in the group;
- Step 2--A deliberate effort is made to develop a capacity to master whatever one aspires to learn, to succeed in whatever one aspires to do;
- Step 3--Those in positions of authority endeavor to empower their colleagues and subordinates, teaching them how to use power for the good of all;
- Step 4--The enterprise is viewed as belonging to the people; specially, to those people in the community who voluntarily express an interest in it--and hence, the standards, norms and values permeate from the base to the apex in terms of the kind of institution desired by the students and the community;
- Step 5--People are helped to help themselves--to learn from failures rather than seek to avoid them; to be honored more for having tried than for having succeeded (pp. 33-34).

Hurst also declares that Malcolm X College is a Black institution--"one in which the educational services are designed to serve in a unique way the goals of Black people." He emphasizes that "as an integral part of the community itself, the institution can and must be creatively and flexibly responsive to the community's needs, as well as to those of the individual inhabitants. Where necessary, the College must serve as a catalytic agent to synthesize the varied components

of the community into a viable force for liberation" (p. 36).

The year of 1969 also saw the Black university taking shape in Washington, D.C. and in Durham, North Carolina. Both the Center for Black Education and the Malcolm X Liberation University began operation in October, 1969 in Washington, D.C. and in Durham, North Carolina respectively. Charlie Cobb, one of the key organizers of the Center made it very clear that, in spirit, the Center for Black Education was the northernmost branch of Malcolm X Liberation University. The organizers of both institutions were in frequent contact, sharing information and ideas, as well as vision.

The Center's course of study was organized into four program areas: African World Reality; Communicative Skills; Culture and Consciousness; and Human Development. One important feature of the curriculum of the Center was the emphasis on field work in whatever subject one was pursuing. Also, science and technology were emphasized over the humanities which had been consolidated into a required broad political education course. Saturday seminars focused on nation-building.

The overriding purpose of Malcolm X Liberation University was described by Chuck Hopkins, Information Officer of the University as "to provide a framework within which education can become relevant to the needs of Black people." Training at the University, therefore was geared toward the analysis of

the American system, and of all other institutions of colonizing societies. Hopkins adds that "Malcolm X Liberation University, then, is essentially concerned with the building of Black self-reliance in order to help bring about Black independence." Thus, the University was concerned with these things:

1. The control by Black people of our goods and services;
2. The control by Black people of our consciousness;
3. The control by Black people of the mechanisms of force and violence.

The curriculum of the university was broken into two sections, running for approximately 10 to 12 months each. The first section, broadly defined as the ideological and cultural part, including five basic topics such as 1) Independent African Civilization, 2) Slavery, 3) Colonialism, 4) Neo-Colonialism, and 5) Independent African World. The second section consisted of the self-reliance skills courses in 1) Food scientists, 2) Architects, 3) Medics, 4) Engineers, 5) Black Expressionists, 6) Teachers, and 7) Communications technicians. There were also community seminars offered weekly by students and instructors at the University. Students and faculty also became involved in any activities affecting the community since the University was considered as an integral part of the community.

A year later the University was moved to Greensboro, North Carolina with the hope that "the technical aspects of

the curriculum would receive more help from the community of Greensboro since A&T State University was a technical institution." However, Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller), the Director of MXLU informally told the **Black Collegian** that the move was caused paradoxically by "the situation of having too much community involvement." He added "In Durham evrybody knew that the Red, Green and Black building on the corner was MXLU and as a result the community naturally relied on MXLU to do more than the school could do" (**Black Collegian**, 3(2), 1972:13).

After four years of struggle to provide an alternative education to Black youth, Malcolm X Liberation University was forced to close. During a June 27, 1973 press conference, the University Director, Owusu Sadaukai, assessed that there were three weaknesses hindered the growth of the institution. They are:

First, there was an over-emphasis on Africa as a major determinant in the future welfare of the masses of Black working people in this country. Second, the school become isolated from the local black community, and consequently from the Black masses. Finally, the University was beset with financial problems from the beginning (**Black Collegian**, 4(1), 1973:36).

The closing of Malcolm X Liberation University and the Nairobi College, a counterpart of MXLU in East Palo Alto, California marked the end of Black efforts to provide an alternative education to Black youths. However, the struggle for social justice, equality and dignity through education

continues.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters demonstrate that public education had not fulfilled its promise of promoting democracy and providing equal opportunity to all within society. Instead of being the "great equalizer", public education served as an apparatus of control. The actual function of the public schools was to certify lower class status youngsters as socially inferior at an early age and to initiate the process that would make many of them economically and socially inferior in adulthood. To the revisionist critics, it was a class system of education. Education, instead of bringing about equality and freedom, perpetuated inequality by reproducing the inequality of the society. Martin Carnoy went a step further by characterizing American education as cultural imperialism. He stated:

In our theory, schools are colonialistic in that they attempt to impose economic and political relationships in the society especially on those children who gain least (or lose most) from those relationships. Schools demand the most passive response from those groups in society who are the most oppressed by the economic and political system, and allow the most active participation and learning from those who are least likely to want change. While this is logical in preserving the status quo, it is also a means of colonizing children to accept unsatisfactory roles. In its colonialistic characterization, schooling helps develop colonizer-colonized relationships between groups in the society.

It formalizes these relationships, giving them a logic that makes reasonable the unreasonable (1974:19).

Schools serve as more than a mere educational institution. They serve as an agent of social control by legitimizing the dominant culture and ideology. Schools produced and distributed the knowledge and traditions of the dominant class and excluded other groups' culture and traditions as inappropriate. The treatment of Black culture and traditions would substantiate this assertion.

Carnoy's view on American education as cultural imperialism approximated that of many Black critics, especially the militant critics. They saw blacks along with other colored minority groups as the colonized people in America. American education de-Africanized and dehumanized them because the history of Black people in America and in Africa was either excluded from or distorted in the school texts and the blacks' contribution to civilization was never recognized. It was the American education which "confirms our colonist **status quo**."

Ethnological studies of the lived culture of working class students in schools, particularly the study of Paul Willis (*Learning to Labour*) and Robert Everhart (*The In-Between Years*), show that working class students resist the dominant ideology and knowledge. This prompts Michael Apple, Henry Giroux and other radical educational theorists to go beyond the reproduction theory--the school reproduces the

inequality of the larger society--and to advance the theory that there is an autonomous cultural dynamic at work in schools (Apple, 1982:95).

Schooling is undoubtedly a politically contested terrain. It is more so in the case of Black Americans. The dominant society provided blacks with inferior education or and relegated them to social and economic marginality. On the other hand, blacks viewed education as a means to achieve upward social mobility and economic power. In slavery, blacks were legally prohibited from learning to read and write. Blacks realized that knowledge was power. Slave narratives show that blacks had defied the law in ingenious ways and means to learn how to read and write. The act of learning to read and write became a political act of resistance. Educationally speaking, the free blacks in the North fared no better. Either the Black children were not provided with any education or they were educated in the poorly equipped segregated schools. However, blacks had never swerved in their faith in education as the key to the attainment of elevated social and economic status. The significance of education to the blacks was best summed up by the editor of **The Christian Recorder**, Benjamin Lee when he declared that "the combined forces of opposition cannot prevent us [from advancing] so long as we have the road to books and schools open to us. Even the snub that has been given to our political



condition is as nothing compared with what it would be to shut against us the doors of schools" (Meier, 1971:69). The story of how education had changed the life of David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington and many others attests to the importance of education for the oppressed.

Education occupied a very important place in the agenda of every Black state and national convention held before and after the Civil War. The Black community was exhorted again and again "by all means early to instruct our children in the elements of education," and to do what they could to support the educational effort of the community.

Black educational thinking was intimately informed by their political experience. Their political struggle shaped their educational thinking. Since the earliest days in their resistance to slavery in the slave states and their struggle for social justice and political and economic power in the Northern states, blacks had conceptualized education to serve various ends such as to gain their freedom, to regain their lost manhood and womanhood and the respectability of individuals and the race as a whole, to promote social enlightenment and social advancement, and personal and group power. "If we ever expect to see the influence of prejudice decrease, and ourselves respected, it must be by the blessings of an enlightened education. It must be by being in possession of that classical knowledge..." This passage in a report to

the 1853 Black National Convention reflected the belief of many Black people.

Blacks' resistance to political oppression had helped to shape their egalitarian and humanitarian perspective in education. Freedom, social justice, and equality were the mainstay of Black political thought then. The same themes also featured prominently in their educational thinking. Since the earliest days of their educational struggle, blacks sought equal education for their children and opposed vehemently "separate schools" for Black children. Opposition to "separate schools" was recorded in every Black state convention from coast to coast. Blacks realized that separate schools created inequality and relegated their children to inferior status and "taught them submission." Education that taught the superiority of one race and the inferiority of another was unacceptable to the blacks. They vehemently opposed separate schools as unconstitutional.

Education for power was central in Black educational thinking. The 1855 California Black State Convention in its address expoused this philosophy of education by stating that "Knowledge gives to its possessors a power and a superiority over the uncultivated, real and substantial. The ignorant must give place and yield to the intelligent and educated..."(Foner & Walker, 1980:129). It is understandable that blacks attached a messianic quality to education which

was deemed as the key to deliver them from oppression and "the degraded condition" because blacks felt that the lack of a liberal education "makes us yield too readily to such influences as cause us to remain the vassals slaves of a powerful clan." They adhered to the principle of having an education "that would develop power; and that kind of power most essential to our elevation."

It is evident that early blacks emphasized both liberal and vocational education. They saw no contradiction in a liberal education and a vocational education, feeling that one complimented the other.

Historian Howard Holman Bell in his introduction to the proceedings of conventions held in the 1850's remarks that emphasis of Black togetherness had developed into a Black nationalism. The nationalistic sentiment, I submit, is evident in their educational thinking. Pondering on what type of education and institution were best for the Black youths, the Committee on Social Relations and Polity recommended to the 1853 National Convention that "The training, therefore, necessary to propel him, so that he can gain up with the whites, (as gain he must, or be utterly lost,) is to be obtained only in schools adapted to his wants." Recognizing the schools for the whites were the better schools, the Committee, however, felt that neither white schools nor educators were in sympathy with Black children and that they

taught them but not about their conditions. They would educate them away from their own people and would not teach them to help their own people. Clearly, the Black leaders were concerned that the white educational institutions would cause the Black youths to lose their racial identity and to forsake their own people. Furthermore, they wanted the blacks to control their own educational institutions.

The blacks also felt that "the colored man was the best teacher for colored children," because they believed that the Black teacher "had the welfare of the race more at heart, knowing that they rose or fell together, and because he would take more care to strengthen those faculties in which the white race thought the colored child deficient." Such sentiment is still prevalent today.

As alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, slavery was the earliest source of Black educational ideology. Their struggle for political freedom, social justice and the uplift of the race informed their educational thinking. After the failure of the Reconstruction, another major source of Black educational ideology was racism. Jim Crowism and the doctrine of "separate but equal" (in fact, unequal) had practically blocked all channels for blacks to gain access to the mainstream society. Booker T. Washington's conciliatory posture and his emphasis on economic power for blacks and W.E.B. Du Bois' advocacy of civil rights for blacks and direct

challenge to white political domination were two responses to the white supremacy in the South. And their different political positions were translated into different educational strategies. Washington emphasized on industrial education to enable blacks to gain a stronghold in the economic sphere whereas Du Bois advocated a liberal arts education to enable blacks to assume leadership roles in the political and social struggle.

Although the controversy between Du Bois and Washington formally ended a year after the death of Washington, the controversy continues to evoke debate among scholars. The radical and revisionist Black scholars levied harsh judgement on Washington and condemned industrial education as a system to perpetuate the caste system in the South.

The New Negro Movement in the 1920's had led students and faculty in Black colleges to revolt and to wrangle control of Black colleges from the white philanthropists. With the ascendancy of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its attack on segregation, the main current of Black educational thinking was centered on the struggle for equality in education for Black children. In 1930's and 1940's, the NAACP assaulted the barrier of segregation by a series of litigations. These legal assaults culminated in the **Brown** decision in which the Supreme Court had put the doctrine of "equal but separate" to rest. It

was a psychological and symbolic victory for the blacks. The **Brown** decision paved the way to the Civil Rights Movement which substantially dismantled the barriers of segregation in housing, employment, public facilities, education, etc., and secured political rights for the blacks.

The Civil Rights Movement had not only made blacks more aware of their rights but also the big gulf between their status and that supposed for all citizens of the land. Moreover, the Movement raised the consciousness of the Black people. But in the middle of the sixties, the Civil Rights Movement encountered obstacles in both the North and the Black Belt South and the black-white liberal coalition became strained. The young Black Civil Rights workers became radicalized and nationalistic. Finally, Stokely Carmichael made a call for "Black Power" in response to white violence in the South and the stalemate of the Civil Rights Movement generally. The call for Black power ushered in a new era in the Black political struggle--the era of Black Revolution.

The call for Black power for Black community was a clear rejection of integration and was a call for the preservation of the "racial and cultural personality of the Negro community" while simultaneously carrying on the fight for freedom (Rosenthal, 1975:124). Among other things, Black power was a cultural revolution. Black power expressed in the form of belligerent self-assertion, the depreciation of

tokenism and the severance of ties with the white liberals. Black power was not a separatist movement but an expression of desire for full participation in the American society on an equal basis. It signalled a switch from integration to pluralism. Charles Hamilton states: "In fact, what some (including myself) were attempting to do by raising the issue of Black Power was to put the Black American struggle in a context that recognized the fact and legitimacy of ethnicity and pluralism in this country" ("Introduction" to Daniel Elazer and Murray Friedman's **Moving-up: Ethnic Succession in America**, x). Ron Karenga put it in a very terse statement: "Our society may be America, but our values must be Afro-American." The basic theoretical assumptions of Black nationalism were carried over to the educational arena. Black nationalism challenged the legitimacy of the American educational system and condemned education for Black children as irrelevant to their experience and needs. Price Cobbs, a Black psychiatrist and co-author of **Black Rage**, had captured the essence of radical Black view on education then as he states:

Black Americans are now responding to their moment in history and can no more be stopped than can an overflowing stream. We have been bred with the words of freedom, but immersed in bigotry and oppression. . . . We must have a revolutionary change in the national character of this country if black people are to survive, and the educational establishment must participate in this. We must immediately change the way Americans perceive themselves and others. Black survival demands that, either willingly or unwillingly, institutions of

education reflect our heritage, our contribution, our pride. Black survival, and perhaps the survival of this country, demands that black be exalted in this country--that white people and white institutions reflect that Black is Beautiful. ... We must now ask that educators join the revolution and demand that the institution of education--the keeper of tradition--move on to the truly revolutionary task of a radical mutation of the American national character. We must ask that educators renounce curricula and teachers who follow too closely the racist traditions of this country ... (1972, pp. 262-3).

Expression of the Black consciousness strand of Black nationalism was very strong in the educational sphere. It was reflected in four main areas. They were educational colonialism, community control of schools, Black Studies movement and the Black University movement. The radical blacks called for a new type of education for Black people. They wanted an education for Black consciousness. Thus Black nationalism was the third major source of Black educational thinking.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK EDUCATION**

The following paragraphs characterize radical Black educational thought.

1. Education was to foster a collective Black cultural identity. The important task of Black education was to awaken the Black consciousness and to instill a positive self-image and a sense of self-worth into the Black psyche. Blacks must achieve a psychological independence from the white cultural hegemony. Blacks needed a Black education in order to



determine their own destiny. Black education was to denounce the white (the oppressor's) value system and to announce "Black is Beautiful." Vincent Harding put it more forcefully by stating "Above all it is about the struggle to 'release our minds from borrowed white hells.' In its most profoundly political sense, it is about release from essential identification with the goals and purposes of America" (1973:110). Education was to affirm blackness.

2. The education of blacks paralleled the colonial education in colonized Africa and other colonized countries. Education provided for Black children had not taught them to exercise power but trained them to be docile laborers. Education was a mind-controlling tool. The education of Black children did not provide them a knowledge of and respect of themselves. It resulted in Black people feeling inferior or hating themselves. The education was void of their cultural heritage. It was an education of subjugation. Community control of schools in the ghetto as the radical blacks envisioned it was to "nationalize schools" in the Black community and turn education into a "process of nation-building." Education was to move away from assimilation and toward cultural pluralism. Involving community self-determination is an example of American cultural pluralism.

3. Black education was to be an education for liberation or at the least, an instrument for social change. Militant

blacks perceived the existing education designed by white oppressors as essentially an education for oppression. Black education should prepare Black students to become the catalysts for a "Black cultural revolution." All courses--whether history, literature or mathematics--would be taught from a revolutionary ideology or perspective. Black education must teach Black students an oppositional worldview--a Black way to critically and analytically negotiate the world around them. Black education was to awaken and expand Black consciousness that would challenge domination. Black education was to help Black students to discover their identity through Black history and Black cultural heritage. It was an education of freedom through self-knowledge. It was not a physical freedom but a freedom from contempt. Claiming freedom from white determination of Black identity was a search for a new value system--a point of reference, a way of understanding the world. Militant blacks strongly felt that liberation of Black people could not be affected without a new value system. One of the tasks of Black studies programs was to change the way blacks see themselves (on a positive term) and the world.

4. The Black studies movement was born at the height of student rebellions and the Black consciousness movement. It was, in the words of Charles Hamilton, "a political demand for academic innovations." The Black studies movement was

envisioned as a tool of empowerment, for it provided a medium through which strategies might be developed for defining and meeting the liberation and decolonization needs of Black people. The militant blacks perceived that the greatest need of Black people was to acquire the vitalizing sense of their human dignity and their destiny in the reshaping of the history of the world. Black studies programs were envisaged as a means to this end. Black studies programs at white colleges and universities were deemed as an important tangible way in which Black students resisted "cooption" by the system. It was a strategy of fighting against the "cultural imperialism" of the dominant group. Black studies programs personified Black students' desire "not to integrate...into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become beings in themselves" (Paulo Freire's words). At the least, Black studies programs questioned and challenged the legitimacy of American institutions of higher education and called for a change in the status quo in those institutions.

5. One of the key components of Black studies program was the community involvement. It was a motivation device. It was rooted in the concept of service to fellow men and also in the concept that Black studies programs become a vehicle for social change. The community-based activities were designed to produce social changes. Community involvement was

also based on the premise that Black people understood Black problems better than anyone else. Blacks were determined to solve their own problems. Black students challenged the educational institutions to provide an educational environment where both intellectual achievement and social relevancy could be fostered and mutually reinforced.

6. Black studies demanded the legitimacy and institutionalization of Black experience and cultural heritage in the school curriculum and the recognition of Black cultural identity and differences and Black humanity in the American cultural context. Indeed, the Black experience and cultural heritage must be utilized to further the truly meaningful education of Black children. The Eurocentric curriculum was challenged.

7. The Black university movement was essentially aimed at "blackening" the "Negro" colleges. In the words of Nathan Hare, the "Negro" colleges were "an epitome of their political docility and academic nothingness," and the graduates of these colleges "became domesticated emulators of upper-class Southern white manners," modelling their lives to approximate white thinking and behavior. The Black university movement was to turn the "Negro" colleges into Black institutions where Black students would be "saturated" with blackness and absorb as much of the Black experience as they could so they could discover their Black identity.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Undoubtedly, the source of radical Black educational ideology was the Black political thought, notably that of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Charlves V. Hamilton, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Martin Delany and the West Indian social thinker, Franz Fanon. Black power as a cultural revolution sought to change the racist structure which dominated the lives of Black people. Black power sought to identify, recreate, unify and authenticate whatever traditions, values, and ways of life were indigenous or distinctive to the Black community. Black education became the vital part of the Black consciousness movement which sought to awaken in Black people a sense of their intrinsic worth as human beings. Black educators took very seriously the socio-political dimension of the reality faced by blacks in the United States in formulating their educational philosophy and strategy. They made no apology for it. Charles Hamilton frankly stated that Black Studies programs "were political demands for academic innovations." He added that "At all times, the demands were focal points of a political struggle. The struggle was political in the sense that the right of the college and university to rule unchallenged in the traditional ways was being questioned. **This was the central question: the question of legitimacy**"(1971:157). James Turner contended that "Black

educators and students should understand that in a situation of oppression education is fundamentally political." Similarly, Andrew Billingsley, a noted Black university administrator and sociologist, stated "Black people are more and more determined that our cultural heritage should no longer be separated from our political struggle for freedom" (1970:139).

I submit that community control of schools was not only a strategy for redistribution of power but also a means to overcome alienation from the distrust of American institutions among the underclass blacks. The militant blacks hoped the strategy would forge a bond in the Black community with a sense of cohesiveness and a collective racial identity. No doubt, community control of schools carried a strong political overtone. Blacks correctly viewed educational decisions as political decisions that affected the welfare and future of their children. The decisions were made by the dominant group and did not even give blacks a choice within the parameters of their decisions. Militant blacks charged that this was the most subtle form of "slavery." Community control of schools was for the blacks an exercise of the right of self-determination. It also signalled the end of struggle for integration as the key to better education for blacks and began a new struggle for Black power in education.

We have no evidence to conclude that community control of

schools would result in better education for Black children as the concept has never been given a chance to be tested. However, the charge that educational bureaucrats did not seriously intend to educate Black children was substantiated by the studies of Kohl, Kozol, Herdon and others. The claims that Black community could do no worse in educating their children than the educational bureaucrats was plausible. George Stern-lieb, an urban housing expert, after painstaking analysis of the histories of large numbers of specific properties held that an impressive way to improve ghetto housing was to replace absentee ownership with resident ownership. If this is any indication, I would venture to suggest that if the Black ghetto community were given an opportunity to assume greater responsibility in running the ghetto schools, they would be motivated to see that their children took up schooling seriously and in a manner commensurate with their cultural experiences because the pride of the community would be at stake. Besides, community control of local schools would increase the sense of equality among the blacks since they considered the existing situation then a blatant denial of equality. It would also uphold the democratic principle of majority rule. In the inner-city, blacks were the majority but never assumed the majority status because they never ruled.

The advocates of community control of schools urged that

the curricular and instructional agenda must be rooted in a Black historical and cultural sensibility. This would enable students to draw upon the local cultural resources and the lived experience as a basis for engaging in the development of new skills and knowledge.

The Black community was never given a chance to bring the concept of community control of schools to fruition. However, it was never totally eradicated from the Black community either. It was submerged. Recently, the concept emerged again. In 1987, a group of Black parents, educators, and legislators led by Howard Fuller, a long-time activist and the former director of Malcolm X Liberation University, shocked the citizenry of Milwaukee, Wisconsin by announcing their intention to seek legislation creating an independent and largely Black school system. They issued a manifesto quoting a number of prominent scholars including W.E.B. Du Bois and Sara Lawrence Lightfoot to support their case. The manifesto states that the Black community of Milwaukee was frustrated and angry because the Milwaukee Public Schools turned to a new strategy of blaming the victims (the students) for their poor academic performance and used the students as a pawn in a larger power game; "a game which offers no real hope for equal educational opportunity for the majority of students nor, for that matter, provides for the equitable racial desegregation of public education in Milwaukee" (Smith and Chunn, 1989:141-142).



The manifesto declares the Black community rejected the metropolitan desegregation plan as a remedy to poor academic achievement. "It is an idea rooted in the racist assumption that it is impossible to achieve academic excellence in a predominantly Black environment. It is an idea that accepts as an axiom the notion that the Black community is so pathological that only a dispersal methodology offers any possibility of hope for our children." The manifesto holds that it is time for the Black community to make consolidating efforts to exercise power over the education process for their children. It then quotes Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, a Black educator, to support its case:

...a critically important educational success for black and white children lies in the power relationship between communities and schools, rather than in the nature of the student population. Mixing black and white bodies together in the same school and preserving the same relationships and perceptions between schools and the families they serve is unlikely to change the structures, roles, and relationships within schools that define the quality of the educational process. The nature and distribution of power among schools, families and communities is a crucial piece of the complex puzzle leading toward educational success for all children (p. 143).

Community control of schools was an attempt by the ghetto Black community to change the power relationships between the community and the school in order to effect a change in the quality of education for the ghetto children. As long as the ghetto Black community was held powerless in education, the state of education in the ghetto would change little in spite

of the effort to implement compensatory education.

Derrick Bell, professor at Harvard University Law School and former attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, contends that "Black parents and leaders of their communities learned the hard way that there can be no effective schooling for black children--even in racially-balanced schools--without having both parental involvement in the educational process and meaningful participation in school policymaking" (1989:138) He asserts that attainment of racially integrated schools in a society still committed to white dominance would not ensure that Black parents and their children gained the equal educational opportunities. He speculates on whether the educational situation for blacks would be different if the Court in the **Brown** decision, instead of mandating desegregation of students, ordered the immediate equalization of school facilities and resources and the provision for Black representation on school boards and other policymaking bodies in each school system in percentage equal to the percentage of Black students in the particular system. After these steps had been accomplished, students could have been desegregated.

Bell is of the opinion that "a proposal to create a separate or semi-autonomous school district for the purpose of dramatically increasing academic achievement, parent and community involvement, and reducing drop-out rates should

be upheld as constitutional by the courts" (pp. 138-9). He cites a federal district judge in Detroit who approved, over the objection of the NAACP, a series of proposals intended to improve the quality of schooling in all Black schools without seeking racial balance of the student body. Replying on the Detroit decision, a federal judge in Dallas approved a community-supported, mainly Black sub-district in that school system--again over NAACP objections. The judge observed that "the remedies designed for the 1980s may have to be dramatically different from those developed in the past." Bell observes that "critics fail to recognize the new district's emphasis will be on control and not color." The concept of community control of schools emerges in the form of autonomous subdistricts within a school system. Will this be the trend in the Nineties?

Militant blacks rejected the melting-pot theory and the assimilation approach because they felt that the blacks were never allowed into the pot let alone to melt. And embedded in the logic of assimilation was the white-supremacist assumption that blackness must be eradicated so that a new self, a "white" self could come into being. Put differently, what the dominant society was saying to the blacks was that they were not worth as much as the white or other groups. A Black student had put the matter in perspective by saying "I want neither to be your enemy or your friend. I don't want your

love or your pity, your guilt or your fear. I demand only that you respect me." I might add that he demanded to be respected as who he was. Respect of Black humanity was what the militant blacks asked for. They felt that the complete acceptance of blacks was to be achieved through a strong ethnic identity which was to be fostered through the revitalization of Black cultural heritage. Black studies programs were apparently a part of this effort to rebuild Black identity and to authenticate a perspective that simultaneously stressed the oppression of blacks and pride in the group's strength and ability to endure. Discarding the victim perspective of history and embracing pride in the group's heritage of strength and durability and group solidarity led Black studies to emphasize service to the Black community. This was an important paradigm shift by blacks. They were shifting away from individualism to recognition of collective identity. Black education was to emphasize selflessness--collective advancement rather than personal gain, cooperation rather than competition, for collective rather than individual commitment.

The demand for Black studies programs and for more Black faculty, administrators, and Black students in white campuses, separate dormitories, etc. was tantamount to a demand for racial representation in the white domain of higher education. Racial and sexual representation was a new concept of equality which emerged during the Civil Rights

movement as blacks, women and other minority groups had increasingly demanded apportionment and quotas as a means of remedying past and present forms of discrimination.

A good number of Black studies programs were cut when many colleges and universities faced budgetary retrenchment in the Seventies. Nonetheless, some do survive. Most of these Black studies programs are fashioned on the Yale University model which, basically is an undergraduate interdisciplinary program based on the area studies concept, and confirmed to the academic standard of Yale University. There is no "Black hegemony." Ena L. Farley, Chairperson of the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at the State University of New York at Brockport, points out that the National Council for Black studies reported 350 African American studies departments presently as compared to 78 in 1979. Farley states that the African American studies program had reached its last phase of development--"strong departments and dedicated scholars are set in place" and she adds "so I don't think the black studies concept is at risk any more" (Blount, 1990:23). She also opines that "The inclusion of black studies is now on the rise, as a required part of the core curriculum" (p. 23). Similarly, Robert L. Harris, Jr., Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, asserts:

Africana studies [or variously called Afro-American

studies or Black studies] has achieved legitimacy and has become institutionalized within higher education. It now has moved into a fourth stage of theoretical refinement and more sophisticated analysis and interpretation. The fundamental research tools have been developed, although there will certainly be a need to update and to supplement them as new materials become available. In general, the field is in fairly good condition, but there are some problems, or perhaps opportunities to improve it (1990:12).

One of the problems facing Black studies is the decline of enrollment of Black students in the studies. Other problems, according to Darlene Clark Hine, John Hannah Professor of History at Michigan State University, include faculty recruitment and retention, the development of a coherent curriculum and graduate program and "make-do" with less resources allotted to Black studies. She comments "All of these factors--lack of a critical mass of well-trained faculty, excessive reliance on temporary hirees, absence of a coherent curriculum and of content consensus for even introductory courses, and the increasing use of cross-listing of courses--bespeak the difficulties confronting and perhaps threatening the autonomy of many Black Studies departments" (Harris, 1990:19-20). But she is optimistic about the future of the Black studies "because of the energy, creativity, industry, and achievements of Black scholars" (p.25).

The radical concept of Black studies for liberation--the interlocking of the Black studies and the Black urban communities to solve the pressing problems in the community--had faded with the decline of Black nationalism.

Nevertheless, Black studies program has earned the institutional legitimacy and, to some extent, the Black cultural heritage forms part of the multi-cultural education in elementary and secondary schools. Black studies grew into maturity in spite of the fact that they had lost the revolutionary rhetoric.

Unlike its twin brother, the radical model of Black studies, the radical model of the Black university disappeared from the educational scene after the closure of Malcolm X Liberation University and the Nairobi College on the West Coast. The factors which contributed to the failure of Malcolm X Liberation University were lack of financial support from the Black community, the decline of Black nationalism, and, in the words of Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller) ironically, too much community involvement by the University. On the other hand, the reformist model of blackening the curriculum in the traditional Black colleges as suggested by Darwin Turner had been successfully implemented in practically all the Black colleges and universities. Courses in Black history, Black literature, Black music, Black art, etc. are today routinely taught in these colleges and universities. Some even offer specialized courses such as "Black Man in Urban America."

The concept of a dual approach to educating Black youths as suggested by Henry Allen Bullock received little echo from

Black scholars. However, as we have noted above that all Black colleges had blackened their curriculum and shifted toward blackness during the height of the Black Power movement, we might suggest that Bullock's concept had probably been quietly put into practice. Bullock suggested that Black colleges performed two tasks in one--preparing its students for full and efficient participation in the WASP dominated society "from whose overpowering influence they could not escape; and training them for a world of blackness in which they must live." I would suggest this is cultural pluralism. This is a realistic approach, which in a way, is in tune with Arthur Lewis' assessment of American society as integrated economically but segregated socially. The approach would probably ease the tension of twoness that had torn the Black man apart psychologically as argued by W.E.B. Du Bois in his Souls of Black Folk: "One ever feels his twoness,--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

The main contention of this dissertation is that the Black Power movement, in spite of the militant and radical rhetoric, is not a separatist movement. The main tenets of the ideology of Black power are the desire of Black people to control their own affairs, maintain group cohesion, define their own identities, and to appreciate and develop their



cultural forms. Rather than absorption, Black power has stressed co-existence with the majority and other minorities. Simply put, blacks want to participate fully in the American society but the participation must be on the recognition of racial and cultural differences of Black people. Integration and assimilation mean the eradication of Black identity. Black power or Black nationalism put the Black American struggle for freedom and equality into the context that recognized the fact and the legitimacy of ethnicity and pluralism prevailing in the society. The American society is not a melting pot as generally believed to be, but a society of diverse ethnic groups. Black nationalism called for Black self-determination through Black unity, Black pride, and Black power and the recognition of Black cultural heritage. It demanded equal opportunity for all people, respect for human dignity, and "the power to control the significant environment and psychological forces" impinging on Black people. Concomitantly, Black students and Black educators rejected the civil rights movement strategy of education for equality through integration or assimilation. They agitated for a Black education of liberation through the development of a Black cultural identity--a culturally pluralistic education. They agitated for institutionally legitimizing Black experiences in the school curriculum. They called for the affirmation of cultural pluralism, which William R. Hazard and

Madelon D. Stent defined as "not an assimilative posture; it is a negation of assimilation. It is a posture which maintains that there is more than one legitimate way of being human without paying the penalties of second-class citizenship ... it demands the same fair share **plus the right not to assimilate**" (1973:16-17). Black power agitated for an education to assert the validity of the blackness of Black Americans and the right to be different--"Plural and Equal" as Harold Cruse so entitled his recent book. Put differently, the radical blacks were saying that there were many legitimate ways of perceiving, believing and behaving and there were different ways to socialize their children.

Does cultural heritage matter? Not only the militant blacks but quite a few sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and educators would give an emphatic "Yes." Studies have suggested a knowledge of one's own history, high self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and academic achievement appear intimately interconnected. Black power's call for revitalization of Black cultural heritage, rebuilding Black identity and the affirmation of blackness and Black pride to boost Black self esteem is not merely a political slogan. It has psychological and ontological significance. It has been shown that when a boy or girl has answered the ontological questions--where I came from, who I am, where I am going--the movement forward to share with others and to learn

of and help meet their needs will be accomplished earnestly and eagerly. Research has also suggested that race, gender, and class together with culture, language and environment have a direct bearing on an individual's life experiences, in turn, those life experiences shape and influence the individual's mental model(s) of the world. Militant blacks had asserted that Black Americans are qualitatively different because of their unique historical experience and insisted upon the recognition of Black culture and achievements and concomitantly urged for an education that would be consonant to the interests, needs, and abilities of every child.

More and more researchers in education recognize race, gender and class as important variables in assessing effectiveness of schooling. William Trent of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, argues "for the necessity of including scholarship on race and ethnicity as a core part of the preparation of teachers" (1990:361). Two of the five compelling reasons he gives are that American schools are going to have an increasingly diverse nonwhite student population and on the opposite trend, there are fewer and fewer minority students who will be teachers; the teaching profession will increasingly be female and white.

Nevertheless, the call for ethnocentric curriculum raises some serious questions: To what extent do individuals

and groups in a multiethnic society have a right to define and maintain distinctive identities? And to what extent do these rights complement or conflict with other? Indeed, the dominant society opposes the ethnocentric curriculum. David Nicholson, a writer and editor of **Book World of The Washington Post**, asserts that ethnocentric curriculum would tribalize America and threaten to split society. He hopes that the vision of "more reasonable people who still believe in a common American culture and shared national values" will prevail (**Greensboro News & Record**, 10/7/90: B7). Russell Baker, a **New York Times** columnist, also joins in the debate of ethnocentric education by saying "What is depressing about these conflicts over -centrism is the disputants' indifference to the idea that education involves training people to think clearly. Instead, they treat education as a propaganda system to be manipulated for transient social or political purposes. Which is to say, with contempt" (**Winston-Salem Journal**, 10/31/90:13).

Racism has resurged in many quarters and racial violences had occurred across the country. Racial slurs and racial harrassments appeared in many college campuses including some prestigious universities. Responding to the resurgence of racism, minority students and student activists call for diversity in curriculum and ethnic studies as a vehicle for prejudice reduction. **The Guardian**, an independent

radical newsweekly, comments in its October 17, 1990 issue that "Diversity is the key concept that brings together a series of struggles taking place on college campuses across the nation. Student activists are calling for diversity in faculties, student bodies and course curriculums in order to chip away at white, male, heterosexual culture dominant in universities" (p. 13). The newspaper reports that students at University of California, Santa Barbara staged a 12-day fast in a fight to require all students to pass two quarters of ethnic studies courses. At University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, the Black Student League, the Lesbian/Gay Alliance, the Asian American Student Alliance and the Woman's Alliance engage in a "frustrating" struggle with the University's administration to institute a "perspective requirement," which would require all students in the undergraduate colleges to take one semester of any course taught from a non-white, non-male or non-Western perspective. Similarly, an English professor at University of Texas proposed in March, 1990 that a lower division writing course be revised to include readings about racism and sexism. Heated opposition ensued, led by National Association of Scholars member and English Professor Alan Gribben. Heritage Foundation syndicated columnist William Marchison published several columns in the **Dallas Morning News** attacking the proposed changes in English 306. Responding to two racial incidents at

University of Texas, the Black Student Alliance at the University started PRIDE which stands for Proposed Reforms to Institute Diversity in Education. PRIDE calls for a three-semester-hour African American studies requirement and the hiring of more tenured Black faculty. Ethnic studies are demanded by students at University of Colorado, Michigan State University, and University of California at Berkeley where the students staged a two-day strike in April, 1990. The underlying assumption is that diversity in curriculum would result in a more racially aware campus and fewer incidents caused by cultural ignorance.

The resurgence of racism illustrates that political reform movement such as the Civil Rights Movement and legislative action are necessary conditions for effective social change but they are insufficient in themselves. In a cultural pluralistic society, education has an important role in changing unhealthy personal and social attitude and behavior. James Lynch (1987) argues "Schools do not have to continue to reflect inflexibly the power relations and prejudices of a wider society while waiting for some kind of millennial conversion. They can both combat and, in many cases, counteract those values and actively educate for alternatives, which are more compatible with life in a culturally diverse democracy" (xi).

America has responded to cultural diversity, as in the

case of blacks, by aiming at separation and assimilation (in fact domination). And neither strategies had worked. Cultural pluralism would allow a person of a minority group to choose to integrate economically and politically and to retain cultural, ethnic and language separation. One of the professed principles of democracy is respect for persons, their languages, culture and ethnic backgrounds. Bernardo M. Ferdman of State University of New York, Albany, argues that cultural diversity has significant implications for the processes of becoming and being literate. He concludes:

I have argued that cultural diversity plays an important role in influencing the relationship of literacy and the individual. People's perceptions of themselves in relationship to their ethnic group and the larger society, as reflected in what I have called cultural identity, can change, and in turn be changed, by the process of becoming and being literate. As the United States debates alternative visions of positive ethnic relations, those advocating the goal of extending literacy to all members of the society might well incorporate a view of all individuals as cultural beings. If this is done, perhaps more sensitive and articulated models of literacy acquisitions can be developed that better take into account the social context in which literacy is defined and expressed. When everyone--minority and majority alike--is encouraged and supported in the development of a clear and strong cultural identity, we may well see a society, not of excessive uniformity and constraint at the individual level or undue divisiveness at the group level, as some might suggest, but rather, a society which would permit the full range of individual variation, choice, and flexibility, while at the same time recognizing the importance of group identifications hold for individuals. In such an environment, perhaps literacy can indeed become a universal characteristic (1990:201).

Cultural identity is important not only for the minority but

the majority as well. Sociologist Stephen S. Baratz in his reflection upon the social sciences' conception of the blacks writes:

I wish us, as a profession and a society, not to seek integration nor separation, but acculturation which does not seek to destroy the ties that bind black Americans together. I wish us to recognize that acculturation is a two-way street, that we, the white society, have something to learn from the black community and that we too can change as a result of those learnings (1970:65).

Cultural and racial difference exist and they should be openly studied, discussed and understood by all if ethnic relations are to be improved. Militant blacks' advocacy for a culturally plural education for Black children not only represents a paradigm shift in Black educational thought but is also compatible with the democratic principles of the American society. Advocates of multicultural education assert that racial and cultural differences should be approached and presented positively in and out of the classroom and that expression of racial and cultural identity are necessary and healthy for cultural minority and also for the rest of society. I hope this study, in a small way, will help in bringing a positive approach to Black education.



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