

81-7.77

published by
New England Free Press
791 Tremont St.
Boston, Mass. 02118

JAIL BREAK

5¢

1968



Every day now a new insurrection breaks out in one of the prisons of the New York City School system. In February, at Lane High School in Brooklyn, clashes between white and black students led to the occupation of the school by New York police. To prevent further trouble, 700 students, mostly blacks, were suspended expelled or transferred. At Washington Irving, in Manhattan, a demonstration of 300 girls demanding more police protection in the schools was attacked by the cops. Two girls were beaten and arrested. Irving students are now demanding pigs out of the school.

In March, trouble hit Taft High School in the Bronx, Andrew Jackson in Queens, Eastern District in Brooklyn, Canarsie, J.H.S. 73 and a dozen other schools. At Taft a black student leader was expelled for distributing black student union newspapers. A demonstration demanding the student's reinstatement was again attacked by cops. Three students were beaten so severely they had to go to the hospital. Taft students now demand cops out of the school, no more suspensions and expulsions and reinstatement of student leaders. When three Jackson student affiliated with the Black Panther Party tried to break up fights between black and white students, they were suspended. And when black students at Eastern District High School demanded the firing of a racist dean and an end to oppressive conditions within the school, the administration responded by sending 50 more pigs into the school.

And the outbreaks aren't just happening all over New York City. In Plainfield, New Brunswick, Franklin and Teaneck black students from New Jersey are revolting against racist history courses, racist teachers and oppressive school conditions. High school students in Denver, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh and San Francisco are struggling against lousy schools and racist administrators. In each case the authorities try to blame the problems on "outside agitators" or "disruptive students". Lindsay calls for more cops, new "security officers" and more repression. High school students can't be fooled that easy. We know the real outside agitators are the Board of Education, the racist UFT teachers, and the cops. We know the real causes of the demonstrations are the miserable conditions within the schools. We don't have to be told what the problems of our schools are. Our everyday experience tells us that. But if we're going to make any real changes in the school, if we're going to build a strong movement, we have to understand not only *how* our schools are fucked up but why they're fucked up.

SCHOOLS SERVE THE RULING CLASS

Schools have always been used to meet the needs of those who control society. In early America, schools turned out preachers, teachers and politicians. At the turn of the century, schools were used to give immigrants the minimal skills needed to work in a factory. Today schools meet a variety of needs. The men who run the country need engineers, technicians and bureaucrats, teachers and case workers to administer and service the American empire. They also need secretaries, clerks, mechanics and factory workers to produce profits for them. Finally, they need soldiers to fight their wars, menial workers to do the shitwork and unemployed people to provide a readily available cheap supply of labor.

To understand our schools today, we have to understand how they're used to meet those needs of the rulers of America. Tracking is the main mechanism used to insure that the schools meet those needs. In New York City, tracking works in several ways. Some schools offer three courses of study: an academic program which prepares you for college, a commercial or vocational program which supposedly trains you for a job and a "general" program which prepares you for nothing except unemployment, the army or a miserable job in the garment district. Examples of this kind of school are Benjamin Franklin High School, Seward Park, Taft, Brandeis. In all these schools blacks, Puerto Ricans and, to a lesser extent, white working class youth are shoved into the general and vocational tracks while a few middle class white students follow academic courses.

Other schools are one track only. Almost everyone who graduates from Bronx High School of Science and Math or the High School of Music and Art goes on to college. Bronx Science is 94% white and Music and Art is 75% white. Food and Maritime, a vocational school, sends almost no one to college. Students are trained on a World War II Liberty ship for jobs that have been eliminated by automation. Furthermore, Food and Maritime is 75% black and Puerto Rican, and blacks and Puerto Ricans are generally excluded from the maritime unions.

The tracking system is clearly racist, that is, it systematically discriminates against blacks and Puerto Ricans. More than 60% of the total high school population of New York City is nonwhite, yet blacks and Puerto Ricans make up only 36% of the academic programs in the city. Of that 36% almost 20%, or more than half, do not graduate, are forced to drop out. Though the tracking system screws blacks and Latins worst, it comes down hard on white working class kids too. Chelsea

Vocational High School, which also trains kids for jobs that don't exist, is 53% white. Lafayette and John Jay High Schools, both schools with lots of poor white people, have drop-out rates more than twice as high and college acceptance rates less than one third as high as Brooklyn Technical High School and Stuyvesant High Schools, both schools which train white kids from more wealthy families.

Tracking starts way before high school. It starts when you walk into first grade. If you don't meet the standards set up by the administrators, then you're shovved into the lower tracks. That means if your face is black or brown, you go into the lower track. It means if you come from a "good" neighborhood you go into the higher section. And the longer you're in lower tracks, the worse your education gets. Because slum kids, black and white, spend their elementary years in terrible schools, they're told they don't know enough to get into the better schools—so they spend another six years in miserable schools.

Tracking is also used to keep up the myth that education is the road to equal opportunity. Teachers tell us if we work hard, we'll get into a better track, a better job or a better neighborhood. That's bullshit. How many kids do you know who have transferred from the general program into the academic? The fact is that the men who run this country need a whole mass of badly educated people. Otherwise where would they get soldiers for Vietnam, workers for the garment district or drivers for the transit system? This does not mean, of course that GI's, garment workers or bus drivers are stupid or even that in a decent society these people would *have* to be badly educated. Blacks and Puerto Ricans don't get lousy jobs because they have a bad education. They get a bad education because bosses need them for lousy jobs. The people who run the schools figure they'd be wasting their time and money if they gave a good education to people doomed to unemployment, the army or bad jobs. And so no attempt is made to give lower track kids even a minimal education.

We also have to understand how tracking is used to promote racism. It pits white students against blacks for the higher tracks and later the places in college and the better jobs. It teaches white students to think that because there is someone in a lower position than they are, *they* don't have to fight against the school. White students are also taught that they have a certain position to *defend* against black people. Racism and white supremacy are used by administrators to prevent whites from joining with blacks to fight their common enemy, the principals, the Board of Ed and Lindsay, who are, after all, responsible for maintaining the oppressive schools. A good example is Canarsie High School where white students fought *against* blacks instead of joining *with* them in their fight against the oppressive conditions in Canarsie.

Similarly, tracking is used to keep women in a sub-ordinate position in our society. Girls are pushed into bullshit "home economics" and secretarial courses. Black, Latin and white working class girls are sent into the general program or to the vocational schools where they are trained either for nonexistent jobs or the most menial jobs for which women are paid consistently lower wages than men. General programs prepare girls for nothing so they are forced to become baby-producers, collect welfare or work for inhuman wages.

WHY SCHOOLS FUCK OVER OUR MINDS

Tracking serves the ruling class by turning out the people needed to perform certain tasks and by keeping class divisions in the schools. Another function of the high school is to "socialize" us, to deform our minds so that we will not question the existing order. What's taught in the classroom, the way it's taught and disciplinary regulations all serve to turn out the kind of people needed to keep America the way it is.

In history classes we're not told how the colonists destroyed the Indian people in order to build America. We're not taught about the black slaves' heroic revolts or about the struggles of black people for freedom for the last 100 years. And we're not taught about the long battles of working people for decent wages and unions. What we are taught is anti-communism, that America is always right, that America is a democracy, "the land of the free and the home of the brave". And there's a reason why the schools lie to us and feed us all that bullshit. Because if every black student knew and understood the history of black struggles, there wouldn't be anyone who'd listen to Tricky Dick's crap about "black capitalism" or "war on poverty". And if working people understood, for example, how white racism was a trick of the bosses to keep black and white workers fighting each other, then they'd get hip and stop playing the Man's game. And if all of us didn't believe we had to smash those commies everywhere, how could the Pentagon fool people into killing or being killed by their Vietnamese brothers and sisters?

Schools also have to teach us not to ask too many questions. So the teacher stands in front of the classroom, gives for 45 minutes, then *maybe* answers a few questions, if you ask politely. But if you challenge the teacher, if you try to put forth a different opinion, then the teacher very quickly turns into a cop who tells you to stay in your place. And there's a reason for that, too, because if we learned to think we might start asking why we had to fight in Vietnam and why Rockefeller makes three million dollars a year more than a subway conductor and why American troops have fired on American people in Newark, Detroit, Washington and Chicago.

If we believe schools are places where we get educated, then some of the Board of Ed rules seem pretty crazy. Why can't we wear coats or hats in school if we want to? Why do we have to show our program card if we want to take a piss? Why do we have to wear certain clothes? Why can't we pass out leaflets? What do any of those rules have to do with getting an education? Absolutely nothing. But schools are *not* places to educate us, they're institutions to fit us into the proper slot and to teach us to accept authority which is against our interest. Then those rules make sense. Because we have to learn not to question our bosses, not to question the army lieutenant, and not to question the system. Then we'll be good soldiers, good factory workers, or good secretaries. And that's exactly what the ruling class needs.

When we understand that the schools are not educational institutions but political and economic institutions whose purpose is to force us to accept America the way it is, then we realize that the recent outbreaks in high schools are not only angry students fighting against lousy schools but also *political* rebellions against a whole system. And that's what makes Lindsay, Donovan and the pigs so uptight. *They* understand that is the high school movement isn't stopped soon, it's going to turn into a much bigger, stronger movement that attacks the whole system. This system is one in



which a very few people own most of the wealth and control all the corporations, schools, hospitals, army and even the government, while most people are poor, work for the rich people and have almost no power in any institution. They understand all that and that's why there are 100 cops in Taft High School, that's why 700 "troublemakers" were expelled or transferred from Lane High School and that's why Lindsay is sending security officers, narcos and piglets (police cadets) into every school in the city. We have to get hip to what's at stake too.

When we talk of restoring respect for law in this country we mean respect as well for the symbols of legitimate authority. One of these is the solitary policeman on the beat but another is the teacher in the classroom.

R.M. Nixon

WHAT'S COMING DOWN IN THE AMERICAN EMPIRE

What's happening in the high schools in New York City is part of a much bigger situation happening all over the world. Wherever people fight for freedom, the U.S. government has to put them down. The cops in the high school are part of the same system which requires more than half a million American troops in Vietnam. Despite the phony Paris peace talks, the American Air Force is dropping more bombs on South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia than ever before. And the National Liberation Front is still winning. U.S. soldiers are fighting guerrillas in Bolivia, Thailand, Guatemala and Peru. All together now, the New Action Army has bases and men in 64 countries. U.S. imperialism, the economic, political and military system by which America dominates most countries in the world, continues to expand, to search for new places to invest, new markets, and more profits, and continues to exploit and oppress people all over the world. But things aren't looking too good for the rulers of America—all over the world people are starting to fight back.

So in response to this crisis in U.S. imperialism the government has to tighten up here at home: more soldiers, bigger draft calls, more missiles (like Nixon's new ABM project), more people for war industries, more technicians and bureaucrats to administer the empire, less money for education, welfare, poverty projects and other pacification programs and more taxes for our parents. Rockefeller's 5% budget cut is part of that tightening up.

And in reaction to this tightening up, more folks are starting to fight back here at home. The new struggles are being led by the blacks—rebellions in Watts in 1965, then Newark, Detroit and Washington D.C. And there's trouble within the U.S. Army at Fort Dix, Fort Hood, the Presidio in San Francisco and a hundred other bases. Every military stockade in the country is over-crowded and most of the prisoners are blacks. Also, we've seen struggles for community control of education, the formation of the Black Panther Party and more wildcat strikes by working people than ever before. Finally, we've seen the student movement grow from a peace and civil rights group into an anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement that has led militant struggles at Columbia, Chicago, San Francisco State, Duke University, Wisconsin and in high schools in New York, L.S. and New Jersey.

Because of these escalating struggles here at home, the ruling class of America has to use more and more violence to maintain itself. Cops now occupy black communities full time. There's very heavy repression of black militants and white radicals and lots of talk about law 'n order (like Nixon's new preventive detention act, aimed at blacks and young people), more young people are getting busted than ever before, especially working class kids. New laws preventing working people from striking are being passed. And, of course, there are whole herds of pigs in our high schools.

BUILDING A MOVEMENT

When we understand that the problem in the high schools is part of a much bigger problem, when we understand that our schools are fucked up because America is fucked up, then our tasks become clearer. Until we destroy that system which depends upon oppression and exploitation, until we destroy capitalism, neither our schools nor our society can be free. So our goal must be to build a mass movement, a revolutionary movement which sees itself as part of the international movement to eliminate U.S. imperialism and U.S. capitalism. In America, that movement must include the most oppressed people—blacks, Latins, Chicanos—and the most powerful people, the workers, black, white and every other color, who, after all, produce the goods that keep this country running. Obviously, building that movement will be a long, hard struggle, but any student movement that's serious has to have as its strategy fighting in the interests of working people to help create and to become part of a working class revolutionary movement.

In the past there have been several obstacles to building a strong mass movement in the high schools:

1) First, until recently, the white middle class high school movement has fought for its own self-interest at the expense of other students. That kind of struggle has been waged with the demand for "student power". That demand understands that students are powerless, that's true. But the real question is not whether they should have power, obviously they should. The real question is what students power is used for. Sometimes student radicals have demanded the "right" to draw up dress codes or the right to sit on certain committees. That kind of demand is very dangerous. Principals like nothing better than for students to regulate and discipline other students. It's like the plantation owner using the house nigger to oppress other slaves. It makes the principal's job easier. That's why last December, those Mickey Mouse student government "leaders" were appointed to the Board of Ed Committee on Student Rights. In short, "student power" has often meant that a small group of middle class kids demand special privileges for themselves. That serves to divide middle class kids from working class kids, which is exactly what the administration wants. We must see student power as a tool with which to attack the common oppression of *all* students and to unite students against their enemy. When student power is used to demand pigs out of the school or the firing of a racist teacher, then it's a real good thing.

2) Second, we should decide which of our problems are most important. While there are a million things wrong with our schools, from terrible food in the cafeteria to captive lunch periods, from tracking, cops in the school, and racist teachers to suspensions, dress codes and boring classes, we should raise only the most important and serious issues. Some people say you start with little issues and build up. But experience has shown that doesn't work. Students will be willing to fight long and militant battles only over issues that really count—like tracking and expulsions and suspensions. Further, we must explain to all students that only by attacking the *causes* of problems can we make any real changes. We must explain that the *roots* of the petty problems lie in the much broader problem of the function of the school in society. So we must choose demands that will educate people about the true nature of the prisons run by the Board of Education.

3) A third obstacle to building a strong movement is the separation between the high school movement and the college movement. Nothing helps the Man more than a divided movement. In the past college students have thought that they should organize in colleges and high school students should organize in high schools. While Students for a Democratic Society has led militant struggles against racism and the war in Vietnam at Columbia, San Francisco State, Wisconsin and hundreds of other schools, SDS is only now beginning to see the need for an ongoing struggle in which college and high school students fight together against the whole oppressive educational system and the ruling class which it now serves. The fat bald men who run the schools are organized. Principals from all over the country meet together to plan repression of student protests; college professors do research on high schools; and principals conspire with pigs, the Mayor and others. If we're going to win we have to get just as organized. If the half a million students in New York City were together, they'd need an army to stop us. We have to learn from each other, trade experiences and help each other out. We can't be afraid of the outside agitator charge. Until every pig and principal is out of the schools, we'll need outside agitators.

4) Many high school students who understand the real aims of the educational system and of the society do not join the movement because they think the fight for change is too hard, too long or too much of a drag. Instead they turn to drugs or hippy culture. Dropping out is an understandable reaction to our racist decadent society. But getting high ain't going to change America. It's no accident that high schools are loaded with drugs now. Principals know that drugs keep people out of political activity. As long as we need scag to keep going, we're no threat to the Man.

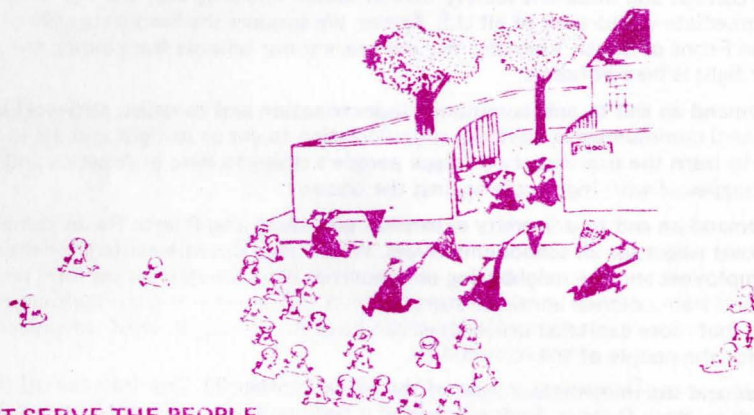
5) Finally, an most important, white racism has prevented us from building a strong movement. Almost every high school action in New York City in the past year has been led by blacks or Puerto Ricans—Brandeis, Food and Maritime, Haaren, the November-December strikes, Taft, Eastern District, etc. And that's no coincidence. Black students have led the struggles because they are most oppressed by the schools, because they understand most clearly the true nature of the schools and how to fight against that. Very often white students have failed to support black and Latin students' demands because they have thought that the blacks' struggle was separate from their own or that the demands of the black students were not in their interests or even went against their real interest. We must understand that all these positions are not only racist (don't attack the special oppression of blacks) but also go directly against building a strong high school movement.

Black and Puerto Rican students are fighting against the same oppressive conditions which hit white students—pigs, suspensions, political harassment, lousy teachers, etc. Some white students think that because they have a slightly better position in the school they don't have to fight. That's wrong. We must how these people their own oppression but we must also attack this white supremacy in every case. We must explain to white students how the administration use white supremacy to force white students to ally with their real enemy: the principals, the UFT and Lindsay and his cops. We must also understand that this fight against white racism is a key to our movement and

7 that until it is defeated we cannot possibly win. We must always support the black and brown students' struggles.

The black struggle in America takes on certain unique forms. While all people in America who are not in the ruling class are oppressed, blacks, Puerto Ricans and other Third World minorities are doubly oppressed. They are oppressed and exploited as workers, like whites (except worse), getting low wages, miserable working conditions and long hours. But blacks and Latinos are also oppressed as a people, as a colony within white America. What that means is that the relationship between the U.S. ruling class and black and Puerto Rican people is in many ways similar to the relationship between U.S. imperialism and the people of the Third World—Asia, Africa and Latin America. Black and Puerto Rican people are forced to live in particular places in our country, their housing is owned by the white ruling class, their stores are owned by the white ruling class, their communities are occupied by the ruling class' pigs, they are forced to work for the white ruling class for particularly low wages. Also there is a systematic attempt by the white educational system and the white media to destroy black and Latin culture and to distort the history of black people in America. Even worse than all this, black workers are oppressed not only by the white ruling class but by poor white racists too. Since the black colony is oppressed by the white mother country, the struggle of black and Puerto Rican people must be a struggle of national liberation and for self-determination. Any strategy for a democratic society in America must include national liberation of blacks. White revolutionaries must support the demands of the Black Panther Party for decent housing, full employment, control of the schools and justice and self-determination for black people.

In high schools and colleges, this means all students must support the demand for black and Puerto Rican history courses and black and Puerto Rican studies departments. The content of the courses, faculty and admissions policy of these Third World studies programs must be determined by the black and Latin students and their communities. Schools and universities must begin to give black and brown people the education and skills they need to free their people.



THE SCHOOLS MUST SERVE THE PEOPLE

Despite these obstacles, however, the high school movement grows stronger every day. Now the question is not *whether* every high school student in New York City should rebel or *whether* there should be a citywide high school strike. Those things are going to happen no matter what anyone wants, no matter how many cops Lindsay occupies our schools with.

The questions that face us now are whether we're going to get organized this spring, whether we can use the outbreaks to build a strong movement, and whether we're going to win real demands:

1) **We demand an end to the tracking system within the schools.** The tracking system systematically shoves blacks and Puerto Ricans into unemployment, lousy jobs or the army. It also forces white working class youth into low paying jobs. Tracking is designed to help the rulers of America maintain their empire. Tracking exists not only in high schools but also in the university system: community colleges, trade schools, state colleges and elite universities. We attack this higher level of tracking too.

2) **We demand open admissions into colleges for black and Latin people and working class whites with full scholarships and stipends.** No one should be forced into an oppressive job or the army. Now the universities train white middle class students and some white working class youth to become engineers, technicians, scientists and bureaucrats for the ruling class of America. The university can no longer be a shelter for privileged whites; we must make the schools battlegrounds for control of educational resources. We must understand that the systematic exclusion of blacks and Latinos from universities is meant to keep these people in their colonial status within white America. America. The exclusion of poor whites keeps them in low-paying jobs. Now many young people

don't go to college because they must work to add to the family income. In these cases the university must pay a stipend to the family. Less than 3% of the population controls and owns 90% of the wealth of America. Since blacks and poor whites build the universities and the country, it should be the wealthy class who pays for the new buildings and faculty needed because of unlimited admissions. We also attack all budget cuts and tuition hikes and understand their relation to increased war spending.

3) **We demand autonomous black and Latin studies programs in all schools and colleges in the city.** Schools must begin to serve the black and Third World people of New York City. Since Albert Shanker and his racist pals are obviously unfit to educate black people, we support the demand for community control of education. We understand the colonial oppression of black and Puerto Rican people and support their right to self-determination. We support the program of the Black Panther Party and the Ten Point Program of Black Student Unions.

4) **We demand an end to flunkouts in all colleges and to all suspensions, involuntary transfers and expulsions in high schools.** Flunkouts and expulsions and suspensions are used to exclude black and Latin people from the schools of New York City. Of the 12,000 students suspended from the New York City public schools last year, over 90% were black or Puerto Rican. Flunkouts and suspensions are used to keep white students in line, to force them to meet the standards of administrators and to get rid of troublemakers and political activists. All suspensions and flunkouts are a ticket into the army.

5) **We demand all pigs out of the school.** Cops are in schools to intimidate us, to protect racist administrators and to stifle political activity. All cops must go now.

6) **We demand ROTC off all college campuses, no more military recruiting in any schools, no more war research, no more military assemblies, and no sending of names to draft boards.** The U.S. military serves only to put down people all over the world who are fighting for freedom and to protect a corrupt and decadent society here at home. The only way the war in Vietnam can end is by the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces. We support the heroic struggle of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. We will prevent our schools from aiding the military in any way. Our fight is here at home.

7) **We demand an end to anti-communist indoctrination and to racist, anti-working class history courses.** Anti-communism is used as a rationalization to get us to fight and die in rich men's wars. We want to learn the true history of black people's struggles here in America and the real history of the struggles of working people against the bosses.

8) **We demand an end to university expansion into black and Puerto Rican communities. We demand decent wages for all school employees. We demand daycare centers for the children of university employees and the neighboring communities.** Now universities perform counterinsurgency research and train colonial administrators while at the same time evicting thousands of poor people so that more capitalist universities can be built. The facilities of the university must begin to work for the people of the community.

9) **We demand the immediate release of the Black Panther 21.** The frame-up of the Black Panther Party by New York District Attorney Hogan is nothing but an attempt to cover up the total breakdown of New York City high schools, public schools, colleges, hospitals, housing and welfare system. The Black Panther Party is leading struggles against each of these racist institutions and leads the struggle for self-determination for the black colony. An injury to the Black Panthers is an injury to all of us.

These are the main demands black and white radicals around New York and all over the country will be moving on this spring. Clearly these demands are non negotiable. We don't negotiate whether our schools should be a little bit racist, whether there should be a little bit of repression or a little bit of injustice or whether we should support a war of genocide a little bit. Right now we have to discuss our demands, explain them to other students, organize and plan. The High School Coalition and the High School Student Union plan actions in New York high schools if their sets of demands are not met by April 21st. We've got to be ready to move by that date. In late April and early May there'll be citywide demonstrations around the eight demands and a few others. Let's be ready to come out for those demonstrations. Within the next six weeks, schools all over New York City will be going up and coming down. Let's get together for a jailbreak.

**TIME IS RIPE FOR FIGHTIN' IN THE STREETS
SCHOOLS MUST SERVE THE PEOPLE
DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE**

