School Crisis Faces Nation: McCoy

(Continued from page 2)

the Harlem reservation, the Bedford-Stuyvesant reservation. The natives were determined to leave the reservation.

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The first confrontation was with the institution of public education.

The New York City Board of Education had established a policy for the discovery of relevant educational programs. The mayor in his quest for more state aid to New York City had commissioned Mr. McGeorge Bundy of the

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An expected collision of time, circumstance, and fate created three demonstration districts.

Their selection is interesting. Harlem or IS 201 was chosen because of its militant and persistent reaction to the Board of Education's perpetration of a fraudulent integration school concept.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville, a politically gerrymandered poverty area was selected with the support of a contingency of the United Federation of Teachrs because of its sustained actions against an ineffectual series of schools and educational processes.

Two Bridges "thrown in" so as to prevent giving the illusion of submitting to the demands of the black community. Two Bridges is a multi-ethnic community in the lower East side of Manhattan; it was in the control of the teachers and supervisors.

The Ford Foundation provided seed money for the three districts as pilots for the direction of the Bundy Plan of school reorganization.

AN AUTHORITY ON school problems, Dr. Rhody A. McCoy, assistant superintendent of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Public School District, realizes the many problems that face inner city schools. He is also aware of the many myths that have created some of these problems. A former classroom teacher, in his present capacity, Dr. McCoy knows that individual attention to students is still important.

The three had the tacit approval of the Board of Education, the Ford Foundation, and the United Federation of Teachers.

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In Ocean Hill-Brownsville a steering committee selected a black man to implement the so-called Demonstration School District.

What was unexpected was action, expeditious and succinct. In less than 28 days, despite impediments, there was a community-wide election of seven parents, five community people, a college representative and a unit administrator.

This momentum electrified the community as well as the nation.

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The helmsman moved to unite the community and the city and to secure the commitment so necessary to sustain the movement.

The elected body, designated as the Governing Board, appointed the first Puerto Rican principal in the history of New York City, two black males (one Jewish) and a white Jewish male from the New York City system's civil service list.

Later the same year this Board appointed the first Chinese-American principal in the United States.

It is ironic that this local move has opened opportunities to minorities at the supervisory level in school systems all over the United States.

Another issue was developing.

The contractual negotiations between the Board of Education and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) was to divide the entire city into two camps, black v. white, over an ill-advised union position on the "disruptive child", that is, the ability of or opportunity for teachers to put the black child out of school.

This was a normal process since the school system in New York City has 75-85 percent white teachers and 95-98 percent white supervisors.

This legitimized racist actions.

The pupil population of New York City is about 60 percent black and Puerto Rican.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville Governing Board, in refusing to support the UFT when asked directly and in standing by its commitment to educate their children, would not close the schools.

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The mass media had indicated to the nation that the black community now had community control. Another fraud because it never was, never was intended and despite the confrontations has never been.

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In the white community, the UFT and the CSA (Council of Supervisory Associations) in particular, unrest was at a minimum until the contractual negotiations were over.

Once over, the UFT and CSA, for years arch-rivals married and initiated the most dastardly strategic attacks on the black and Puerto Rican community.

When they discovered that the leadership was capable, deeply committed and well supported they resorted to one of the most effective emotional gimmicks ever perpetrated in

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Plight Of The Black Teacher In New Orleans

Dual education system reveals social ills

By LAMAR SMITH

Editor Note: This article was prepared by Mr. Lamar Smith, chemistry and physics teacher at the G.W. Carver Senior High School.

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans is called the most fascinating city in the deep South, for it still maintains an adventurous atmosphere of romantic sites and interesting customs of bygone years.

However, a close-up view of this densely populated metropolis instantly reveals a multitude of social ills, one of which is its dual and immoral educational system.

The double-standard educational system in this city has been far more productive than its white designers had originally planned, for it has been more than successful in keeping the races separated and relegated to a position of near serfdom — the black protagonist of the classroom.

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The plight of the black teacher in New Orleans is conveyed best by analyzing the total interdependency of his activities with those of other agencies—the school board, the superintendent of schools, the "colored" administrator and the black student—that create his problems.

To begin with, the Orleans Parish School Board is an all-powerful elected agency comprised of five members—four men and one woman.

One of the four men is a "colored" man; he is the first black to receive such distinction.

There are, however, high hopes among the black masses that a fieldhand—a black man—might soon be elevated to the board.

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Traditionally, the school board sanctions any and all recommendations that are proposed by the school superintendent.

Some of these recommendations are efficacious and sound; however, a disturbing number of these proposals are unbridled in scope and in destruction.

Subsequently, irreparable damage is heaped upon the entire community.

The members of the school board do not have ample time to adequately peruse the superintendent's recommendations. These men are not paid a salary; each must find time to pursue his individual occupation for livelihood.

The American Federation of Teachers of Oreleans Parish, Local 527, a predominantly black organization, has for many years played a watch-dog role over the operations of the Orleans Parish School Board.

However, the school board has always pictured this organization as being a loosely united group of blacks that is both deadless and amorphous, and any concession it makes to the AFT is considered an act of condescension.

On two occasions, Local 527 conducted abortive strikes against the Orleans Parish School Board in an effort to obtain collective bargaining.

During the last strike, which the AFT organized and directed in April of 1969, the school board was forced to give some token recognition to the Teacher Union.

This strike witnessed a group of predominantly black teachers starting at 1,200 and dwindling to 269—who for 10 hectic days with sore feet, wet eyes, and fallen hopes courageously endured threats and fear tactics of every conceivable denomination.

The question is: Why did they persevere?

Was this the beginning of something new—the prime step in demonstrating to the white power structure that black teachers are determined to solve their own problems and, moreover, plan, shape, and direct their own destiny?

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The chief administrator and front-line trouble-shooter for the Orleans Parish School Board is the superintendent of schools.

The scope of this man's power is virtually unlimited, when you understand that his senses are vastly extended by the omnipresent eyes and ears of "colored" principals.

The superintendent receives his data, which he edits and makes ready for school board approval, from district superintendents, principals, and other school officials.

The superintendent's greatest weakness is that he allows principals to report to him on only those things that he wants to hear and not on the truth which he should hear.

Principals seldom confer with teachers, students, or parents prior to making their recommendations to the Superintendent.

This dictatorial mode of action ignores the talents of the teacher and places a wedge between the school and the community.

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Teachers are taught that education facilitates the leading of men; however black teachers are still being driven by "colored" principals.

The major duty of the "colored" principal is to keep black teachers in line, and he performs this task by exercising every conceivable form of coercion at his command.

The Orleans Parish School Board sanctions the concept that the building principal is supreme.

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"Colored" administrators seldom pass up an opportunity to let their black teachers know that they are their lords and masters.

Educationally, a substantial number of black principals possess considerable administrative adeptness: however, far too many are handicapped by marginal administrative ability, poor emotional control and unskilled leadership ability.

Seldom do these leaders step forward and recommend needed improvements for black teachers and black students.

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The black schools in the ghetto need more qualified teachers, more competent administrators, more guidance counselors, more ideal teacher-pupil ratio, more school nurses, etc.

To be more precise, principals in the ghetto areas should recommend that the school board adopt the More Effective School Program (MES), which is the AFT's answer to the ghetto school problem.

The same formula that is used by the superintendent to improve exclusively white schools should be employed to upgrade the ghetto schools.

What is wrong with this? Who is fooling whom?

How can a curriculum that is geared to educating the middle class whites succeed in upgrading the educative process of the lower class blacks?

Will the black principal speak up?

Local 527 does not believe that the ghetto child is receiving what he needs.

Moreover, the AFT does not believe that colored administrators will recommend to the superintendent any reforms that are aimed at improving conditions for black teachers, black students and the black community.

Local 527 has formulated plans which will bypass the "colored" principal in an effort to give teachers, students and parents of the black community a chance to participate in directing their own educational needs.

It is not the purpose of this article to castigate or place the blame on any particular group or individual for the present plight of the black teacher in New Orleans.

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What is wrong with teaching a black child that a black heroine prevented the assassination of George Washington, the Father of our country?

Is it not true that a people must study its own history to make certain that its future mistakes are not the same as those committed in the past?

Now, the major question is: can the gears of the system be reversed? And, if so, by whom?

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