

most inflammatory issues in the development of the civil rights movement in the United States. What makes it ironical is the fact that compulsory school attendance itself is still universally accepted as just social practice, though it is without parallel in our society as a form of involuntary and unpaid servitude. The Supreme Court has just agreed to hear a case in which an involuntarily committed patient in a state mental hospital, who has been receiving custodial care of a sort but no treatment, has sued to have his confinement declared unconstitutional. If he wins, the precedent thus established might well be used to effect the release from school of hundreds of thousands of pupils, most of them of lower status and many of these black, whom the schools are not demonstrably benefiting; whom indeed they appear quite clearly to be harming by branding them as incompetent and reducing self-esteem that years of scorn have already rendered precarious.

Furthermore, the recent work of so-called "revisionist" historians of education like Michael Katz, Colin Greer, Bowles and Gintis, Clarence Karier, Joel Spring, and Paul Violas, among others, seems clearly to establish that the public school system has always served, on balance, the interests of social stratification and that it has reduced, rather than augmented, gross access of lower-status and working-class youth to channels of social and occupational mobility. The statements of its early supporters like Daniel Webster and Horace Mann indicate clearly enough that this was their intent in supporting it, though they saw the matter differently. They were concerned with designing an instrument which would permit a docile, self-policing labor force to be recruited from an expanding population of immigrants of varied ethnicity but quite uniformly low socio-economic status. Horace Mann probably thought that a Sicilian immigrant would, or at any rate should, think that a school system that trained his son to work a 70-hour week in a mill for \$30 was providing him with economic opportunity. Many, of course, disagreed, and turned their efforts instead to organized public service through the Mafia and other social agencies. But there are no historical grounds that would justify any-

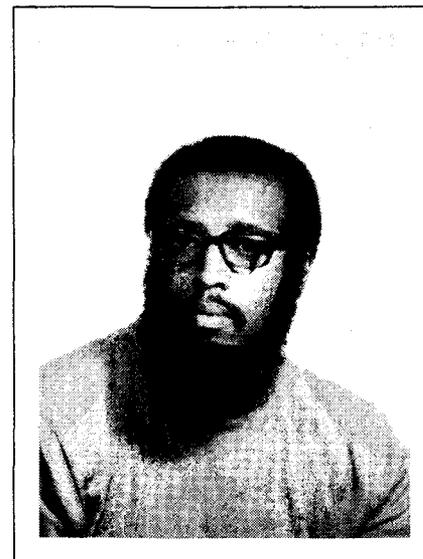
one, black or white, to infer that the public schools are a suitable instrumentality to which to turn for social justice, though schoolmen and liberals have generally pictured them so in their rhetoric.

With these considerations in mind, I simply cannot respond to the current controversy over busing in the terms in which it is now presented. I am, of course, opposed to busing because I oppose compulsory school attendance. How can I support compulsory transportation of children for the purpose of making them attend a school I would be unwilling to force them to attend if it were next door? Nor am I greatly moved by the statements of officials like Mayor White that the law must be upheld even by officials who find it repugnant. I've been through that already nearly 15 years ago with then-Governor Pat Brown of California yattering for years about his abhorrence of capital punishment as the state moved inexorably toward the execution of Caryl Chessman. Nor do I highly esteem the many Americans from FBI man to draft board member who have assisted in the enforcement of the Selective Service Act.

But neither am I sympathetic with the hasty efforts now being made to avoid polarization of the United States by greeting the bigotry of the people of Southie or Queens, or the book-burning miners of West Virginia, as an understandable expression of the resentments associated with their own struggles, insecurities, and marginality. Of course it is understandable; there is no mystery here. But being understandable doesn't make it any more tolerable. And the extreme depth and prevalence of such pockets of ill-feeling seems to me the strongest argument against local control of the schools, though not necessarily a decisive one. I see no reason, in any case, why children of either race or any social class should be conscripted into a 20th century crusade for social justice; while the selection of the schools as the arena for such an encounter seems quite absurd on historical grounds. Before getting into a bloody conflict over this issue, let people—not people's parents but the people themselves as individuals; children are people—choose what school, if any, they wish to attend and see where that leaves us. Any

struggle which then erupts will at least have the grace of being fought by volunteers, rather than being imposed on the most helpless members of social groups whose antagonisms are largely fueled by social processes they hardly even seek to understand.

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## Malecai Andrews

**“What if I don't want to be a melted down, diluted version of whitey? Blacks already know white culture. It's their own they need some tutoring in.”**

Every September, as the opening of school nears, white liberals steel themselves for moral paralysis over whether busing is a good idea or not; conservatives busily prepare speeches on “quality education”; honest racists start getting nigger fever; and the Left prepares to be confused. Last fall was no exception. The action centered around the Irish of South Boston who have laid the issue on the line. They spell it out in the signs that dot windows and appear on the sides of buildings:

**“IT'S NOT THE BUSES, IT'S THE NIGGERS”; “NIGGERS SUCK”; “FRENCH-FRIED NIGGERS FOR SALE.”**

And so we are treated once again to the question of whether or not it's a

good idea to bus black kids into white neighborhoods for educational purposes. But as everyone knows the issue isn't busing, the issue is blacks, it is power, it is culture, it is alienation, it is fear, it is America. This takes us all back to base one, to Little Rock, Pontiac, Brooklyn, James Meredith and George Wallace. The issue is whether America, right now, is ready for what must be done to deal with integration. I think not, and there are many reasons why this is the case.

First, in 1974 there is still no clear understanding of the issues. The basic assumptions of the busing controversy reveal racist attitudes on the part of nearly all of the contending parties. Liberals such as Ted Kennedy begin with the assumption that assimilation-integration is a good idea because blacks are inferior. Beginning from that premise the only humane thing to do is to integrate 'em. That way the down-trodden black can get equal to his "advantaged" white superiors. Yes, we are inferior, Kennedy tells us, but dig it, it's okay because it is not our fault. It's bad schools, weak family structures, bad nutrition.

Out-and-out racists like Jensen and Shockley agree basically with this Kennedy, liberal assumption. Shockley is blunt—blacks are inferior; IQ tests confirm it, he says. Blacks are dumb and this is directly related to racial factors. But more importantly, those blacks with some white blood can be saved. Because they have some white genes, they can be educated. Those who are "pure" black . . . well they are hopeless. From this premise it makes sense to bus and integrate that part of the race that can be saved through "selective assimilation." Genetic improvement demands nothing less. Right?

On the Left one finds ideological confusion. On the one hand some white leftist groups are committed to Marxist notions of class unity, and busing-'em-down-to-Boston pits working class Irish against their black working class comrades. Boston, they point out, is an example of the niggers and the poor whites fighting it out in the streets while uptown liberals smile knowingly and continue to run things. Given this view a fight about busing simply illustrates the problem of oppressive rule by the few over the many.

On the other hand the Left is also committed to supporting the integration and equal opportunity fight of their black brothers. This demands their support of integration efforts. What to do? One position tends toward the endorsement of community power arguments and the other toward "integration."

The underlying assumptions of the above views are clear. Everybody believes blacks are inferior. The only real disagreement is over why—environment say the liberals; genetics say the Shockleys; evil, lazy, shiftless natures say the conservatives; and the Left is caught on the horns of an ideological dilemma.

The implications of these views are similarly racist. Most seem to agree that the result of blacks remaining with other blacks in their own schools equals mixing ignorance with ignorance. There you have it—the so-called busing controversy. Integrate 'em cause they are inferior; segregate 'em because they are inferior. This is a controversy? The issue, simply put, becomes whether there ought to be an attempt to integrate an "under-race" everybody acknowledges to be inferior. Some say yes, some say no; blacks waver and a few who have found their wits say: There is something rotten about the argument.

**B**ut there is more to it than even this. Not only are the premises of the busing assimilation "controversy" racist, they are also incorrect. This country prides itself on the melting pot idea. For many it is an unquestioned good that everybody ought to be melted down to look, think, and act like everybody else. Integration is a code word for assimilating and assimilating is what the melting pot is all about. But many blacks now say: "What if I don't want to be a melted down, diluted version of whiteness? What if I like being black?" There is no answer to that—few believe that anyone could *want* to be black.

But more importantly the argument that integration results in higher black IQs and greater and equal opportunity is highly dubious. Studies have shown that integration has no effect on either black or white IQs, on black or white performance in the school, on black or white job skills and incomes. In fact,

schools for blacks or whites, in a glutted post-World War II job market, do not necessarily provide "better opportunities." Now everyone has "schooling." Moreover, studies have shown that success in schools is related more to home environment and peer group norms than anything else. So the question is why bus black kids to be spat upon, degraded, physically assaulted, and psychologically damaged.

The argument that integration "broadens horizons" through the association that blacks and whites come to share, won't do. Blacks already know too much of white culture. It's their own they need some tutoring in. It is senseless to talk of "broadening horizons" in the hostile environment which the Boston schools represent.

The premise of busing and integration is wrong because it just won't work. It won't work because it does nothing about the problem of institutional racism. Here comes Leroy Jones, a nine-year-old black kid fresh from the busing war. He enters the white world across town, a world which ignores or is positively hostile to him, to black culture, to his black personality, to his entire black experience. The institution itself, the teachers, the administrators, and the community daily assault him. He is now "integrated."

But that is not even likely because Leroy is liable to end up in a tracking system which guides him to a vocational occupation (so much for equal opportunity) and overall he exists in a school which is integrated on the outside but segregated on the inside. This is progress? Not by a long shot. It is cultural imperialism and annihilation; it is psychological assault. In fact, such a hostile environment increases the causes of racism for both Leroy and his well and ill-intentioned tormentors because there is a net increase in the fear, hostility (we can expect Leroy to retaliate) and alienation which is the basis of racism in the first place.

Busing with its goal of integration is bad for the whites involved also. The Irish in Boston have an interest in maintaining the traditions and cultural identity which their community entails. They, too, want to control what happens in their community and they also want control over what happens in their neighborhoods. Blacks threat-

en these things profoundly. Black cultural traits and mannerisms have a way of "taking over" in any milieu because black culture is more alive than the dead white world which surrounds it. The Irish in Boston know this and seek to save themselves.

That is the case against busing and integration. But more important in relating to the Boston example we must think of it as a tragedy. What you have in Boston is the spectacle of working class people fighting among themselves (blacks and whites) to get into, or to retain schools that everybody knows victimize all students, black and white, schools which do little in terms of educating, which are often harmful to any pupil whatever his race.

The solution for blacks is community control. Assimilation is a liberal moral issue. The integration which blacks originally sought has been perverted as most worthwhile goals in this country tend to be. It is not now the integration blacks originally sought, fought for, got killed for. The issue is now in the hands of every cynic, racist, fool, power-monger, and liberal super-person that has been able to get his or her hands into the pie.

Busing and integration on these terms may benefit a few black children, and that is good. But for the majority, equal opportunity lies in having some control and some power in one's own community such that one can create equal opportunity and not have to go begging for it.

A last word. The problem of busing and integration must be viewed in an international context. As we move into 1975 one fact is crystal clear. The world is a world of color. The white gene pool, historically in a minority in the world, is shrinking. If one thinks of how many delegates to the United Nations represent *colored* people the message is clear. Therefore, internationally whites are on the defensive. Integration-assimilation for many of them represents, as the old racist catch/phrase goes, the threat of the "mongrelization of the race." So it does; and it is inevitable.

The issue for many whites is how to control this process and diffuse it and thereby save the race. Busing and assimilation can be seen as "selective assimilation" whereby the "best" of the "under-race" are separated from their

brothers and sisters in the ghetto, from their community, their roots. This isolates the masses of the blacks who, leaderless, can be safely labeled inferior, dumb, and expendable. In 10 years bleeding hearts of all stripes will yawn and proclaim, "Well, we tried integration but only a few made it; most are irredeemable, unassimilable, unneeded, and dangerous . . ." Shockley will smile.

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## Miriam Wasserman

**"There is no 'solution' apart from solutions to the social crisis of the nation. We have to begin to wrest our humanity back from those who prey on us all."**

**T**here are a lot of misconceptions about who is responsible for the troubles in the schools. It isn't the rowdy students, or the uncaring teachers, or the "culturally deprived" minorities, or the "racist" poor and working-class whites. All these groups are being miserably served by the schools, and each is being led to believe, and does believe, that one or more of the other groups are to blame. This is a self-defeating and paralyzing belief which only ensures that the schools will continue to be miserable.

The blacks and the whites in South

Boston, for example, don't have different or conflicting needs in respect to their children's schooling. They don't even have needs that in any decent society, and especially in one as technologically advanced as ours, couldn't all be met, with plenty left over for the whites in West Virginia, the Chicanos in San Francisco's Mission, the blacks in Harlem, and the Navajos in Arizona. Also, in any particular community or school, the children and the teachers, or the children and the grownups, or the teachers and the parents don't really have conflicting needs. Essentially, what we all need and want—and what we aren't getting from school or from society—is a dignified, orderly, decent political and work life which offers respect and fulfillment.

For in this society respect and dignity are scarce commodities; what little there is around is claimed by the people at the top; and what's left is rationed out in accordance with a hierarchical system in which race, color, national origin, sex, and parents' life style are the major determinants of place.

So it is in schools if teachers buy order at the expense of children's self-respect; if children try to surpass their powerlessness by creating terrible disorder (violence) or by dropping out (drugs); if some working-class parents believe that they can bequeath dignity to their children only by excluding or assaulting the children of others; and if parents and teachers protect their own self-respect by scorning and blaming each other. This is because a very few people in school and in society have a corner on the market of respect and dignity.

Then the victims of this scarcity of dignity prey upon one another. While you could say the respected people, the Important People at the top, are directly or indirectly responsible for the mutual hostilities of the unimportant people, it hardly ever happens that in the mounting violence which has come in recent years to terrorize children and teachers and to spill over from time to time into the streets of South Boston; Ocean Hill—Brownsville, New York; Charlotte, West Virginia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Albany, Georgia; it hardly ever happens anywhere that an Important Person is the victim. (Once a group of normally doc-