

COMMUNIST DANGER CITED

A friend telephoned Friday night to comment favorably on that evening's editorial, and expressed the hope that America will somehow become mindful of the menace of Communism. The caller has a record of distinguished service in education and has, perhaps as much as any other North Carolinian, an awareness of problems in our educational system.

He expressed the hope that we would comment on the failure of our public school system to provide training for our boys and girls as to the inherent dangers of Communism. He mentioned that there exists today a virtual impasse between schools and parents on the question of whether a study of Communism should be made in our schools.

This is not so strange as might appear at first glance, but it is nonetheless regrettable. Certainly it underscores a failure on the part of both the schools and the parents. And it is difficult to say, constructively, who should make the first move in correcting the situation.

It hardly seems debatable that the young people of America should know and understand Communism, and the terror and the tyranny which it is breeding around the world. But we imagine that many parents would prefer that nothing be taught in our schools about Communism if there is a risk that the teachers themselves do not fully understand and appreciate the difference between the principles of American and the fundamentals of Communism.

It is easy to understand the uneasiness on the part of parents when a proposal is advanced that a course in Communism be added to a school's curriculum. So much has been heard from certain educators, implying that they speak for all teachers, advocating--and even originating--

governmental trends which they call "social reform." Often these trends are too far a departure from fundamental Americanism for many parents to swallow. Thus flags of suspicion are unjustifiably raised over all school teachers.

Fortunately, school teachers are in a position to establish a climate of acceptance for teaching the menace of Communism. This can be achieved by emphasizing the things which made this country great--and different from all other nations in history.

This means, of course, that indirect ridicule of the free enterprise system must be discontinued, and that support for further socialistic inroads must be abandoned. School teachers must exercise care that children are taught that a government that promises to give them everything they want is also a government that will one day take everything they have. The children must be persuaded that personal responsibility, while not always the easy way, is the only way that real freedom can be preserved.

This is not to suggest that many teachers are not already espousing this philosophy, but it is also true that many do not. And those who do not are unwittingly creating the climate of distrust which, as our friend acknowledged on Friday night, does exist.

There is a need for increased confidence between parent and teacher, for when this is achieved, support for schools and their programs will come with a rush far beyond the imagination of any visionary on the political scene. And this should be the origin of such support, for then there will truly be a new day for public education.

This should not involve undue problems. The thinking of some--both parents and teachers--may need some adjustment; some textbooks may need discarding. But once parents are convinced that all teachers know what real Americanism is, then there