

# ent, just like black people'

Vietnamese war. It gets some opposition from a few teachers. Some support it. But a vast number of professors who know perfectly well what's happening are copping out again. And in the high schools, you can forget it. Stillness reigns.

I'm not sure why teachers are so chickenshit. It could be that academic training itself forces a split between thought and action. It might also be that the tenured security of a teaching job attracts timid persons and, furthermore, that teaching, like police work, pulls in persons who are unsure of themselves and need weapons and other external trappings of authority.

At any rate, teachers ARE short on balls. And, as Judy Eisenstein has eloquently pointed out, the classroom offers an artificial and protected environment in which they can exercise their will to power. Your neighbors may drive a better car; gas station attendants may intimidate you; your wife may dominate you; the State Legislature may shit on you; but in the classroom, by God, students do what you say — or else. The grade is a hell of a weapon. It may not rest on your hip, potent and rigid like a cop's gun, but in the long run it's more powerful. At your personal whim — any time you choose — you can keep 35 students up for nights and have the pleasure of seeing them walk into the classroom

pasty-faced and red-eyed carrying a sheaf of typewritten pages, with title page, MLA footnotes, and margins set at 15 and 91.

The general timidity which causes teachers to make niggers of their students usually includes a more specific fear — fear of the students themselves. After all, students are different just like black people. You stand exposed in front of them, knowing that their interests, their values, and their language are different from yours. To make matters worse, you may suspect that you yourself are not the most engaging of persons. What can protect you from their ridicule and scorn? Respect for Authority. That's what. It's the policeman's gun again. The white bwana's pith helmet. So you flaunt your authority. You wither whispers with a murderous glance. You crush objectors with erudition and heavy irony. And worst of all, you make your own attainments seem not accessible but awesomely remote. You conceal your massive ignorance — and parade a slender learning.

You might also want to keep in mind that he was a nigger once himself and has never really gotten over it. And there are more causes, some of which are better described in sociological than psychological terms. Work them out, it's not hard. But in the meantime, what we've got on our hands is a whole lot of niggers. And what makes this particularly

grim is that the student has less chance than the black man of getting out of his bag. Because the student doesn't even know he's in it. That, more or less, is what's happening in higher education. And the results are staggering.

For one thing, damn little education takes place in the schools. How could it? You can't educate slaves; you can only train them. Or, to use an even uglier word, you can only program them.

Educational oppression is trickier to fight than racial oppression. If you're a black rebel, they can't exile you; they either have to intimidate you or kill you. But in high school or college, they can just bounce you out of the field. And they do. Rebel students and renegade faculty members get smothered or shot down with devastating accuracy. In high school, it's usually the student who gets it; in college, it's more often the

teacher. Others get tired of fighting and voluntarily leave the system. This may be a mistake, though. Copping out of college, for a rebel, is a little like going North, for a Negro. You can't really get away from it so you might as well stay and raise hell.

How do you raise hell? That's a whole other article. But just for a start, why not stay with the analogy? What have black people done? They have, first of all, faced the fact of their slavery. They've stopped kidding themselves about an eventual reward in the Great Watermelon Patch in the Sky. They've organized; they've decided to get freedom now, and they've started taking it.

Students, like black people, have immense power. They could, theoretically, insist on participating in their own education. They could make academic freedom bilateral. They could teach their teachers to

thrive on love and admiration, rather than fear and respect, and to lay down their weapons. Students could discover community. And they could learn to dance on the IBM cards. They could make coloring books out of the catalogues and they could put the grading system in a museum. They could raxe one set of walls after another and let life come blowing into the classroom. They could raxe another set of walls and let education come blowing out and flood the streets. They could turn the classroom into where it's at — a "field of action" as Peter Marin describes it. And believe it or not, they could study eagerly and learn prodigiously for the best of all possible reasons — their own reasons.

They could. Theoretically. They have the power. But only in a very few places, like Berkeley, have they even begun to think about using it.

## Churches play host for CIH

Once again this year during the Christmas holidays, churches across the land will be playing host and providing hospitality for international students in the United States. Forty-five hosts in twenty-four states provide a pleasant alternative to an empty dorm or a deserted university campus.

Sponsoring committees in the various communities provide housing in private, home or educational buildings which become temporary dormitories. Christmas International House offers a way for the international student to enjoy Christmas in a local community and with other international students.

Activities vary according to the host community, but usually includes tours to local attractions, visits with city leaders, parties,

opportunities for dialogue, and just plain rest. Christmas International House is open free of charge to all international students regardless of race, nationality or religious background. Reservations are necessary. If you are interested, see Miss Mildred English or Dr. Loy H. Witherspoon for locations from east to west and north to south and for an application blank.

Although the Christmas International House is free, the student is responsible for financing his own trip to and from the host community. Everything else, once the student arrives, is provided as a free service to international student.

It is imperative to get your reservation in early—especially if you want to go to Florida or California.

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