

- Government subsidy to education need not mean government control of public education.

THE STATE CONTROL AND THE SCHOOLS

Participatory government requires an informed citizenry, but the way citizens analyze and judge the information is determined by the precepts and attitudes instilled in them as they grow to adulthood. The nature of the society depends not so much on the factual information known to the citizens, but on their philosophic conditioning, resulting from their total environment of which the school is one of the most important elements. The purpose of schools has ever been to produce the kind of adult components needed to insure the survival of the tribe. Schools have never been for children's benefit but for the profit of society, and those who refuse to be molded by the school are indignantly excluded from society's best benefits. The mastering of techniques has never been a sufficient goal for schools

since a skilled and trained adult who refuses to play his ordained role because he doesn't accept the goals of the society, is a hazard to it. This attitudinal conditioning is in fact the thing by which society judges the success of the school. Moreover, acceptance of the philosophical basis by the student is vital to the success of the transmission of technique. The delicate emotional part of the learning process is turned on or off by the substance of the philosophy and by the way it is projected.

Free peoples in a pluralistic nation must decide the kind of adults that the schools are to produce. To yield this right to the bureaus of the state is to invite fascism, and to risk the oppression of one tribe by the majority.

But the case for community control does not depend

solely on the fact that without it school systems fail to educate. City school boards, by regulations designed to protect the professional educators from capricious interference have usurped the parental authority. The legal requirement that parents be responsible for the training of their young have been countermanded at the school door by regulation not law and, in the case of black parents, without their consent. Such usurpation is more reprehensible in states where education is compulsory and operates most devastatingly on the poor who must keep their youngsters in public school.

The requirement that the state insure a chance for education to all its young citizens does not inherently mean that a governmental agency must actively run the schools and it is unfortunate

that public support of schools developed this way. The proper distribution of governmental subsidies, educational or otherwise, is directly to those subsidized, in this case the parents of the children. Tuition vouchers adequate to the cost of good education and redeemable by schools in good standing, is by far the better way for government to support the intimate process of education. All cultural and religious issues raised by the doctrine of separation of church and state would become moot. The child is subsidized period, and he takes his voucher to the school of his and his parents' choice. Also there would be no confusion in the minds of the faculty about where their loyalties were owed, they would be true professionals with clients again. — *From the UUA Now by Ben Scott, March 5, 1969.*