

BLACK LEADER'S IDEA FOR SOUTH'S SCHOOLS

Interview With Roy Innis, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality

Is school integration a failure? The head of one civil-rights organization says it is—and proposes an alternative. Roy Innis came to the conference room of "U. S. News & World Report" to explain his plan for "true equality" without either forced segregation or forced integration.



ROY INNIS left a career in chemical research to join the civil-rights movement in 1963. Now 35 years old, he has been national director of CORE since 1968.

Q Mr. Innis, you've been talking to Governors and other officials in the South about a new approach to the problem of educating black children. What is it you're proposing?

A We're proposing a unitary school system that would provide the best education for both black and white children.

At the present, in segregated school districts, two systems are in existence—one attended by blacks, one attended by whites. This is illegal. The boards of education in those districts are almost always white, and, naturally, a little cheating takes place. Educational depression on the part of the blacks comes about as a by-product.

This supposedly is being changed by integrating schools. But it really isn't. Blacks have lost a lot in this process, and gained nothing for what they have given up.

Q How have the black children been affected?

A They suffer indignities in the integrated system because of hostility of the teachers toward the black kids. In case of a controversy between a black and a white kid, the black is automatically wrong.

Even worse, the curriculum is selected by whites, and relates to the life style and interests of white kids, not black kids. Black kids are suffering educationally, psychologically, and sociologically. The whole black community is suffering.

Q Are you saying that the black child in the South is worse off in the schools today than he was before integration began?

A I am saying exactly that: that the plight of the black community, the black professionals and the black students—and, consequently, the plight of blacks in the South—is worse, at least in the average schools. And it will get worse still.

Q Are you talking strictly about the South?

A No, these remarks are also very valid for the North. There are also dual systems in places such as New York City, even though they call it a unitary system.

Under the old system, the school and the church were the main two institutional structures in black communities that acted as stabilizers. It can be proven very easily that Southern black communities are more stable sociologically than Northern black communities, partly because the school—even that decrepit dual-school system—acted as a focus, a coordinator of social activities. That now is lost under the integrated system.

The social disorganization you see in the Northern black areas is because of the lack of a relationship to an institution. There is no relationship between blacks and their schools in the North.

Q How would your plan change that?

A What we have tried to do is remove the obnoxious and disgusting features of segregation while retaining the more positive features that exist in a black school in the South.

We started out by staying within the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown decision, and the 1969 Holmes County decision on schools which stated that dual-school systems are illegal and must be replaced by a unitary system in a district.

I read those decisions very carefully. The Supreme Court didn't use the word "integration" once. They talked about "desegregation." They spoke of a "dual school system," "unitary school system," and school districts. That's the same kind of approach I used.

I say let us create two districts—one predominantly white and one predominantly black—where you now have one district. Each district will create its own board to manage the school system. Each will hire a superintendent. Each will be autonomous and truly equal.

Q Would each district get the same amount of money per pupil?

A Yes. That's the only way you're going to guarantee equality, because you sure can't guarantee equal per capita expenditure in an integrated system when somebody else is managing that system.

To avoid getting involved in a legal battle, the district should be drawn along natural community lines. That means that in most places in America you can draw a district that would be a majority black or a majority white. It doesn't mean that you exclude one or the other race from it. If there are any whites in that black district, they will go to that black school, if they want to. If there are any blacks in the white area, they will go to that white school, if they want to.

The result would be school systems that are predominantly black and school systems that are predominantly white. Most important of all, there would be a board with a black majority on this side and a board with a white majority on that side.

This would be completely legal, and each group would have a chance to maximize its own resources. You would also have disengaged the two groups to reduce antagonism. We all know that the country, in general, is about to blow over one issue—integration of schools.

Q Where are you going to test your plan?

A The first test will probably be in Mobile, Ala. We picked Mobile because it's large. I want to see large, efficient systems—not so large they become cumbersome, like in New



"Let us create two districts—one predominantly white and one predominantly black—where you now have one district," says Mr. Innis. "Each district will create its own board to manage the school system. Each will hire a superintendent. Each will be autonomous and truly equal."

York or Washington, but large enough to be efficient. But, at the same time, the people have a certain homogeneity and a desire to be in the same institutional unit and manage their own resources.

Q Wouldn't this bring about almost complete separation of black children from the white community?

A No, no more so than in the separation of different kinds of people that goes on naturally. You didn't have *de jure* segregation in the North, but black kids still stayed in their own areas. It's natural that people of a particular interest or ethnic background tend to congregate together. That's the way we do everything in our society.

Q Have you given up on integration as the answer to the problems of Negroes?

A I am for it, for those who want it. But I'm different from most. I say that integration should not be an end in itself. It should be a means to an end—toward true equality and justice. But if it's obvious that integration is not achieving those ends, then you seek other means. I blame the Easterners and the Northerners for this emphasis on integration. They steam-rolled the whole country into feeling that there was something synonymous between integration as a means and integration as an end.

My system offers true equality. We call this the true-equality plan. This is how you really have equality—groups being able to organize themselves and maximize resources.

Q What kind of reception did you get to these ideas from the Southern officials?

A That was very heartening to me. In the North, the Eastern and Northern "liberals" chopped me up. But in the South I saw a different situation. We spoke to four Governors: Governor McNair, of South Carolina; Governor Maddox, of Georgia; Governor Williams, of Mississippi, and Governor McKeithen, of Louisiana. They agreed that this plan seemed to have more viability than any other offered so far. They wanted to study it. Of course, they were cautious—and reasonably so, since the idea came from CORE. But the feeling I got from the Governors and the State officials was that they could live with it.

We then moved on to the local white community, and there was the same kind of reaction to the plan. They also felt that they could live with our plan. The one question they all asked was: Would the black community go along with this?

Q How did the black people react?

A This is where we had to really do a lot more work. We had to first convince them that we weren't talking about restoring segregation. We had to show them the difference—how, under our plan, blacks would be able to pick their own superintendent, to have their own board, and manage their own resources. Then they agreed that it made sense.

Q In your travels through the South, what did you observe about progress toward racial integration generally?

A It has been very slow progress, and the antagonism left in its wake is going to be catastrophic for both sides in the future, unless someone can do something to defuse the situation. The effect has been to embitter relations between blacks and whites even more. The blacks are frustrated with the "Mickey Mouse" integration plans because they aren't working. And the whites are frustrated because they think the blacks are getting something.

Q Some civil-rights leaders appear to oppose your plan, saying it's illegal and that they're going to fight it with court suits. How does that affect your ideas?

A When you say "civil-rights leaders," you are talking about the Eastern-Northern civil-rights aristocracy and their Utopian friends. To be very frank with you, I'm going to ignore those guys. They can roll along with me, or we'll roll on by them. You know why? Because I want to appeal to the local black community, the people who are affected by this.

In one place, we have got black people ready to be plaintiffs in a suit—black principals, black teachers and parents. These are local people. In some counties, we even have the local NAACP guys either pledging neutrality or willing to join. Some of them stated that the home office would probably bust their knuckles and force them into war against us.

Q What kind of suits will you bring?

A It depends upon what strategy we use. We could bring an injunction against the school boards for the plans that they have—either planned integration or the old segregated system—or we could just get the State legislatures to redistrict.

The crux of this plan is this: I must have the State officials and local whites and blacks together in common agreement—kind of an out-of-court settlement.

Q Do you think that the federal courts will accept this?

A I am certain the federal courts will accept this because it's a unitary plan. There's no coercion and there's no circumvention. It's a matter of the three affected parties working out a pragmatic solution to their own problems.

Q Would your plan re-establish neighborhood schools and eliminate busing?

A Yes, it would eliminate busing, except for those students who want to do it voluntarily.

Furthermore, under our system, the neighborhood-school concept comes back—the neighborhood school as a true, important community institution. And this time it comes back in an honest way. You had the neighborhood school in the old Southern segregated system, but it was dishonest, because the neighborhood school was run by another neighborhood.

Q Would black children come out of these schools better equipped to compete?

A They would come out of these schools ready to compete in any society.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "File", is positioned at the top center of the page.

A TRUE ALTERNATIVE TO SEGREGATION--
A PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Preliminary Proposal

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INTRODUCTION

Education in its deepest sense is the improvement of man so that he will be a thinking individual, not afraid of the validity of his conclusions even though they may deviate from what may be acceptable and safe at the moment.

--Heald

This proposal for a pragmatic, achievable alternative to school segregation is motivated by the conclusion that:

All pet theories--be they liberal or racist--which have contributed to the present impasse in the public schools must be debunked and scuttled if we are to get on with the important business of educating our children.

And is informed by the further conclusions that:

The attendance of White and Black pupils at different schools does not constitute segregation, ipso facto.

An integrated school system is not a guarantee, ipso facto, of equal or quality education for all pupils, Black and White.

Segregation, when properly defined, should be equated with inequality of education.*

Desegregation should not be equated with integration to the exclusion of other possible ways of organizing a school system. Integration is but one of the forms desegregation can take.

The history of the Black man in America has been marked by a constant struggle for equality. Yet in most areas of American life, the enjoyment of opportunity equal to that of any other American continues

*Because of the social dynamics peculiar to segregation, it should be defined not so much in general terms of spatial relationships, but in more specific terms of the socio-political-economic relationship between the producers and managers of goods and services and those who are the recipients of those goods and services.

to remain outside his grasp. But it is in the crucial area of education that inequality of opportunity has caused the most damage. It has been said that the future of a people rides on the shoulders of its youth, and that if those shoulders rest on a weak foundation, a doomed future for all concerned is the inevitable result.

It is therefore no simple accident that so much of the overall fight for equality has been directed at the schools during the past two decades. Even though Blacks cheered that most significant fruit of their effort, the 1954 Supreme Court School Desegregation Decision, they have had ample reason for wondering if that celebration was somewhat premature, for it has taken the courts sixteen years to level the first significant attack on the vicious system of school segregation.

In the period since 1954 when no change seemed imminent, we could afford to make any demand whatever in the hope of inducing even minimal movement away from segregation. However, now that the courts are moving to back up earlier rulings, it is of the highest importance that Black people sharpen their perspective and make the clearest possible assessment of their aims. They must chart their own course before they enter any new phase of the struggle, and they must make one final examination of even the most cherished beliefs and assumptions.

Keeping their eyes fixed on the goal of dignity and equality, Black people must choose the path which will be in the best possible interest of their children and, ultimately, of the entire race. It is too costly an indulgence to make decisions based on the heat of emotion and hurt generated by the brutal system of segregation. Rather, it should be in the light of cold reason and hard facts that decisions are made.

Today, it is not a matter of why we won't wait; but, in the words of

Martin Luther King, why we can't wait. We cannot afford to wait any longer for some long-promised, but still distant, Utopia. We cannot allow our minds to be imprisoned by old assumptions and pet theories, and we cannot allow those who have become prisoners of their own futile rhetoric to throw stumblingblocks in our path as we attempt to devise and implement dynamically new solutions to the problems of Black people.

Historically, man has been motivated more by self-interest and that which is achievable than by what should be. We see this as the crux of the school desegregation struggle.

The ideas presented in this paper grew out of firsthand observation of public school systems in the North and the South. These observations plus discussions with parents, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, etc., substantiate our belief that this proposal for COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS structured along natural, geographic lines is the best possible way of destroying segregation and insuring equal education for Black children.

SCHOOL SEGREGATION: ITS TRUE NATURE

School segregation is a system designed and structured to serve the needs of Whites at the expense of Black pupils. When normal standards of educational excellence are applied to Black schools under segregation, it becomes clear that they are inferior to White schools. This is a fact with which no one can argue. Unfortunately, it has caused those who did not in the past and do not now understand the true nature of segregation to arrive at the faulty conclusion that all-Black schools are inherently inferior under any set of circumstances. A simple extension of logic prompts the following questions:

If racial exclusivity means inferior schools, then why are the schools--White and Black--not equally inferior? If the racial composition of a school in and by itself causes that school to be inferior, where then are our inferior all-White schools?

Let us take the "isolation equals inferior schools" theory to its farthest logical extension: President John Kennedy and many of his socio-economic class attended schools that were not just isolated from Blacks, but from Whites belonging to different socio-economic classes as well. Needless to say, one would not even consider looking for the kind of inferiority in Mr. Kennedy's schools that so often characterizes Black schools.

The "inherently inferior" theory is not only spurious on its face but insidiously racist in its implication that Black children alone among the different races and groups of the world must mix in order to be equal.

Blacks who subscribe to this theory are suffering from self-hatred, the legacy of generations of brainwashing. They have been told--and they believe--that it is exposure to Whites in and by itself that makes Blacks equal citizens.

Years of heavy propaganda from liberal well-wishers on one side, and ugly declarations from racists on the other have further confused the issue. This confusion must be cleared up now if we are to proceed in an orderly fashion toward the achievement of true equality in education.

Whether or not a given school is inferior or superior has nothing, as such, to do with whether or not it has an admixture of racial and/or ethnic groups, but it has everything to do with who CONTROLS that school and in whose best interest it is CONTROLLED.

Many social scientists who have issued papers and written books on education have missed this very salient point. They have shown too much concern with spatial relationships, and not enough or none at all with the relationship between those who govern a school and those who are served by that school.

No, the problem is not simply that Blacks and Whites attend different schools. A look at segregated school systems, whether de jure or de facto, will show that they generally have, aside from attendance of White and Black pupils at different schools, three common characteristics which make segregation the obnoxious system that it is.

The first of these is that Whites set Blacks apart, by law or in fact, without their choice or consent. This constitutes the arbitrary imposition of authority from without. The act of Whites telling Blacks what schools they can or cannot attend stigmatizes Blacks and is a slap at their dignity.

The second characteristic of a segregated system is that the local school board, usually all White or predominantly White, exercises control over both White and Black schools and favors the White schools. The school board enjoys a more intimate relationship with the White community and White parents than it does with the Black community and Black parents. It is more sensitive to their problems, their needs and aspirations than it is to those of Blacks. This deprives Black educators and pupils of much-needed support from the policy makers and managers of the schools and literally guarantees the failure of the Black school to achieve excellence in education. A positive relationship between parents and those who govern the school is one of the most important factors affecting the quality of schools. Under segregation, Black parents have not enjoyed that kind of relationship.

Finally, the local school board systematically deprives Black schools of resources. The money allotted by law to each and every school district when received by the local board is directed as the local board sees fit. Traditionally, part of the money intended for Black schools has been directed by the local board to White schools. This is true of Southern schools as well as Northern schools.)

In short, it is the local school board, the dispenser and regulator of money, rewards, good will, and other benefits, which makes Black schools inferior. Under segregation, Blacks have been locked into a system over which they exercise no control, for which they have no responsibility and for which they are powerless to effect meaningful change.

When segregation is placed in its proper context and defined in terms of who manages and controls the schools, it becomes apparent that the chief characteristic of a segregated school system--the imposition of oppressive outside authority--makes school systems in the North no different from those in the South.

The surest measure of how much Blacks can trust any school system to educate their children is how much actual--not illusionary--control they have over that system. Therefore, whatever is proposed to replace segregation must be measured strictly in terms of how much control is held by the Black community itself. This is the surest possible guide to determining the potential success of any proposed new system.

SCHOOL INTEGRATION: IS IT A GOOD ASSUMPTION?

Having learned from bitter experience that White schools are favored by White school boards and having become tired of the stigma attached to being told where their children could go to school, it was natural that Black people considered sending their children to White schools. Since 1954 at least, the assumption has been that the segregated and unequal treatment of Black children could be rectified by integrating them into White schools. What is basically wrong with this assumption?

1. There is a failure to recognize Black people as a valid special interest group with needs that are unique to Black people.
2. There are a number of agreed upon components of a good education. It has not been established that integration guarantees these components.
3. Equal education implies more than just equal physical space in the same classroom, the same teacher, or the same principal. It implies equal right in the curriculum; equal access to all available resources; and equal access to school policy makers and managers. The question is: Does integration guarantee Black parents these additional rights?
4. An integrated setting is as potentially damaging psychologically as a segregated setting. The assumption that integration cures all the evils of segregation does not take into consideration what the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders affirmed--that is, the essentially racist character of American society. Since there is no indication that racism will disappear overnight, Blacks must approach all institutional settings with extreme caution.

Where integration is mandated and there is unwillingness on the part of Whites to integrate schools, Black people lose much more than they gain in such a merger. One such community was studied by the National Education Association. The following is an excerpt from their report:

The desegregation of East Texas schools is proceeding at a faster pace than in most southern states. School officials of most districts studied can report that they are in compliance either with federal desegregation guidelines or with court orders. But, as the study made abundantly clear, it is only a paper compliance. As desegregation continues, the grievances of the black community become more wide-spread and more severe. There is every evidence of racial discrimination in the continuing displacement and demotion of black educators; there is every evidence of racial discrimination in the increasing employment of white teachers in preference to blacks; there is every evidence of racial discrimination in the frequent exclusion of black students from participation and leadership positions in the student organizations of desegregated schools; and there is every evidence of racial discrimination in the treatment that black students commonly receive from white classmates and, in some instances, from their white teachers and principals as well.

These grievances have long remained unresolved; they continue to be unrecognized by school officials. And finally, now that the Supreme Court has ordered the immediate elimination of dualism in all southern districts the prospect is that the situation will become worse--in East Texas and throughout the South. The frequency of teacher displacement and student mistreatment that accompanied desegregation "with all deliberate speed" is likely to accelerate as the rate of desegregation accelerates. The laws, including desegregation laws, have never worked well for black people. Unless present trends are halted, the new Supreme Court ruling will serve them no better than did the Brown decisions of 1945-55.

The fact is that the court can offer Black children, teachers and administrators very little protection from the crippling abuses which arise daily in an integrated setting where Whites don't favor the union. Some of the stories of injustices and psychological abuse emerging from integrated settings in the South are difficult to fight with litigation, but that does not make them any less damaging to the psyches of Black children, parents, teachers, and administrators:

- Item: White teachers have been known to absolutely refuse to look at Black children when addressing them in the classroom.
- Item: The principal of an all-Black school became the assistant principal of an elementary school under integration in one Southern town.
- Item: The principal of a Black high school was replaced by a younger White man with less experience and fewer formal credentials. The principal became an assistant principal under the new White principal.
- Item: Examinations are geared to favor the White child. In fights, Black children are always assumed to be in the wrong.

The sad fact of the matter is that in most cases where integration has been tried, the same White board of education that once ran the dual school system--one White, one Black--is the same board that runs the integrated system. The superintendent of education under the old system becomes the superintendent of education in the new system. The policy makers and managers are therefore the same. Since their negative attitudes towards Blacks and favoritism towards Whites remain the same, Black parents can hardly expect that any attempt will be made to change the curriculum to reflect the needs of Black pupils, or that they will have any say in the running of the school. In other words, even where integration has come about, the schools remain White-controlled.

It must not be assumed that things will get better with time. The dynamics of forced school integration are very different from those of forced desegregation of hotels, restaurants, buses, and other public facilities and services. These are what might be called transient settings of Blacks and Whites sharing or functioning in the same approximate space. Integrated schools, on the other hand, constitute an ongoing situation that is seen as far more threatening. This is underscored by the fact that the relatively mild and short-lived resistance to the desegregation of public

facilities and services was nothing compared to the massive resistance that has been mounted and that will be continually mounted against integration of the schools. Moreover, when integration does occur in the schools, the few strengths Blacks did have are rapidly eroded so that with time they operate less and less from a position of strength.

Blacks who have gone along with integration have done so in search of dignity, but have found humiliation at the end of the rainbow. They integrate for equality but find they are together but still unequal. They have less control and less influence, if that is possible, than ever before. In short, the integration that Blacks are likely to get in most instances, North or South, has proven to be token equality, mere show and pure sham.

What about those areas where White resistance is not so high as to frustrate the integration effort? Even then we should keep in mind that effective integration is more than mere physical proximity of White and Black students. We should seriously consider whether the dispersal of Black pupils would help or hinder the chances of meeting their unique needs.

Integration, as it is designed, placed the Black child in the position of implied inferiority. Not only is he asked to give up much of his culture and identity, but with the dispersal of Blacks he loses many of the communal ties which have traditionally been the cornerstone of the Black community. Moreover, there can never be true integration between groups until there is a real parity relationship existing between them.

It is an established fact that children learn best in a supportive environment--one in which they can develop an appreciation and acceptance of self. Self-appreciation must come before one can truly appreciate others.

White schools at this time do not constitute the kind of environment which can foster the healthy development of Black children. White school boards make it difficult for even Black schools to respond to the special needs of Black children. In this respect, however, many Black teachers and administrators have tried, within the narrow limits allowed them, to try to satisfy these needs.

With the guarantee of equal resources and with the freedom to proceed as is expedient, Black schools would be a superior learning environment and could graduate students who can succeed in an interracial world.

What about the stigma attached to going to an all-Black school? That stigma was half destroyed when Blacks succeeded in smashing the laws which restricted their freedom to choose. Inasmuch as the stigma arises in part from the established inferiority of Black schools, the remaining stigma would be destroyed completely once the Black community has a board of education which could be called theirs and which would guarantee a truly equal, truly democratic education for its children.

Furthermore, Black people today have a very healthy attitude towards themselves as a people. They are not ashamed of being Black and see nothing wrong in being together and doing things together. They see strength in unity, not guaranteed failure. More than ever, Blacks place a premium on working together for progress. They are beginning to feel that it is through their strength as a group that they will win human dignity and power. If reality is taken into account when Blacks chart their course, it will become abundantly clear that in some situations school integration may not be the most effective means to equality.

From a financial, legal, economic, political, social, psychological, and most important, educational standpoint, the integrated school emerges

wanting. This set of parameters must be consistently used when examining integration, segregation, and any proposed alternative to the two.

THE NEED FOR A NEW ALTERNATIVE

Desegregation is now the law of the land. Because the road is rocky and treacherous, Blacks need to chart a careful course if they are to land on their feet. The next section will offer a desegregation approach applicable primarily to urban areas, North and South. In these areas we generally find natural definable communities made up of persons with common interests and special problems.

Within Mobile County, Alabama, for example, there is a natural community comprising the Davis Avenue, Toulminville, Bullshead area. This community alone has more students than do many existing school districts throughout the state. The citizens and students in this community happen to be Black Americans. The schools attended by the youth from this community have been badly run by the Mobile County School Board. For years, the talent and energies of the best citizens of the community have been expended in fighting the school board--but without significant results. This community has many special needs different from those of the general population of Mobile County. A healthy pride and sense of purpose is evident and growing in this community. The educational hopes of the residents, however, are continually frustrated by a school board which has shown no sensitivity to their problems. The residents of this community have lost irretrievably all faith in the school board's capability of being responsive to their needs.

The tragedy is that the human input needed to solve the major educational problems which have plagued this community are within the reach of

this community. The talent and energy displayed over years of struggle for relief prove that. The material input needed to solve this area's school problems lies in the public money the law presently allows if the money were to arrive directly from the source to a truly local school board. The rising aspirations, the dashed hopes, and the displaced energy will result in a steadily rising level of hostilities which will inevitably spill over into the surrounding communities.

We contend that it is possible to bring dignity and true equality of opportunity to this community without denying the human and constitutional rights of any other community. Only good sense and meaningful alteration of a faulty structure can avert this. It is in the spirit of attempting to avert chaos and establishing harmony that this proposal is presented.

THE SOLUTION: NATURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The people of the above-mentioned community are seeking to exercise their basic human and constitutional right to form an institution that is accountable to them. They are seeking to be delegated by the State of Alabama to exercise its exclusive competence to determine its own educational needs and set its own educational policy, as do other peoples in America, by becoming a duly constituted state school district under the state law.

This move is not without considerable precedent in American history. One such precedent occurred early in the history of this country and culminated in a document which begins with the words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident," and includes the statement, "That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends"--these ends being the securing of certain inalienable rights and "governments being instituted

deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . . It is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

THE PLAN:

To desegregate public schools by creating state school districts which correspond to natural community lines, where the parties affected are in agreement.

THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Within each school district so formed the residents would elect a school board. Each school board would be a legal entity enjoying all the rights, privileges, and obligations as provided for by the State Education Law. Each school board would run a unitary school system within its district.

The community school board would, pursuant to state law and as every other school district in the United States does, seek out persons with educational expertise--a superintendent who meets state qualifications as chief executive officer of the board of education, and a staff of professionals to administer and execute the policy established by the board. The board would seek the best man possible to fill the position of superintendent by selecting from a special screening committee and would solicit advice on candidates from the leading universities and professional associations as well as other organizations and individuals. Once employed, the superintendent would submit names to fill the other top-level administrative positions to the screening committee of the board and the board would choose from among the resultant list of candidates.

For the position of superintendent, the board would seek a man of unquestioned executive ability who indicates an openness to new solutions to the desperate educational problems of the community's children, and a willingness to all newly available educational innovations such as the reading program developed by the Institute for Behavioral Science for the Washington, D. C., public schools, programmed instruction with audio-visual teaching machines, and use of media techniques. Most important of all, the board would seek a superintendent who is community oriented.

The community school district would hope to attract the best minds as consultants to the staff to help design the program. This would be a truly pioneering effort in the field of education.

THE TEACHING STAFF: The community school district would welcome all teachers presently in their schools, who are excited by the prospect of being a part of this pioneering effort. Every attempt will be made to recruit to the teaching staff the best teachers regardless of race, creed or national origin. The community school district will offer in-service training programs, for up-grading, if necessary, so that all teachers in the district will have the security of having skills and training that are relevant to the unique needs of the children of the community.

The community school board would adopt fair practices with respect to teachers employed in that it is in the interest of the district to satisfy the most essential ingredient of a school system--the classroom teacher.

The community school board would seek to allow for maximum participation in the school program by encouraging strong parent associations and establishing people from the community as teacher aides and teacher apprentices so that every child will have in-depth contact with a caring adult, and the teacher will be freed to teach.

FINANCING: The community school district will receive public funds directly from the presently existing sources of education money--the state, the federal government and the local government unit.

State: The community school district would receive state moneys according to the existing provisions in the state law prescribing state money to school districts.

Federal: Federal moneys would come to the school districts according to the existing provisions described in the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Local: A legal and formal agreement will be made whereby the local educational dollar will be directed to each school district on a per student basis.

IS THIS PLAN LEGAL?

It is of extreme importance that the Supreme Court's ruling on school desegregation be clearly understood. Confusion on this point has abounded, aided and abetted by those who have fallen into the trap of viewing desegregation as synonymous with integration. Integration is only one possible way--not necessarily the best or most pragmatic way--of desegregating and creating a unitary school system. The plan herein described is another way of desegregating and creating a unitary school system in a school district. It would destroy segregation, and it clearly provides for equal protection under the law. Moreover, unlike integration, this plan makes it easier to guarantee equal protection under the law.

A careful and unprejudiced reading of the decisions of the Supreme Court on school desegregation shows that this plan does not violate the letter or the spirit of the law.

The Supreme Court has ruled that each school board must run a unitary school system in a school district. That is, if there are White and Black children in a school district, the school board may not set them apart.

Each district proposed in this plan would be run as a unitary system. Moreover, the process of redistricting proposed here can only be done with the consent of the persons affected and with the legal agreement of the state. This is equivalent to the parties to an action arriving at a settlement out of court, without violating any law.

CONCLUSION

Schools are the transmitters of values, the molders of self-image, the instrument for providing youngsters with the technical and psychological equipment necessary to function properly in this highly competitive society. The schools in most Black communities have failed dismally on all three counts. They have not and will not, under the present school system, perform their proper function.

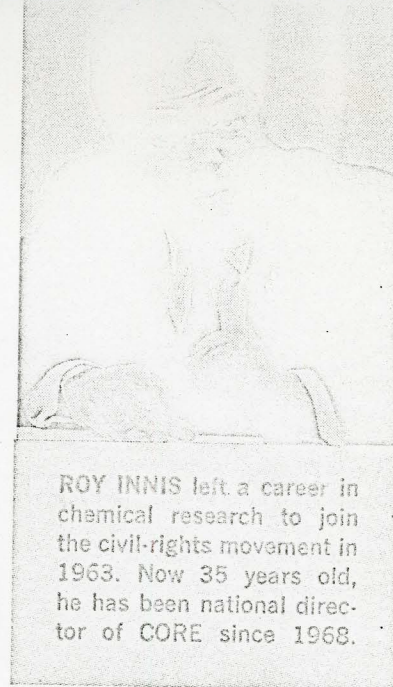
Integration as the means of addressing the educational problems of Black people, even if attainable, is of questionable worth. Where integration has occurred, the results suggest that it causes more problems than it solves.

Black people have tried everything there is to try under the present school structure. The escalating school crisis and the unprecedented hostility between Blacks and Whites are vivid reminders that patience is wearing thin all around. Blacks are now searching for a real solution, one which can provide dignity and true equality. We submit this plan as that solution.

BLACK LEADER'S IDEA FOR SOUTH'S SCHOOLS

Interview With Roy Innis, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality

Is school integration a failure? The head of one civil-rights organization says it is—and proposes an alternative. Roy Innis came to the conference room of "U. S. News & World Report" to explain his plan for "true equality" without either forced segregation or forced integration.



ROY INNIS left a career in chemical research to join the civil-rights movement in 1963. Now 35 years old, he has been national director of CORE since 1968.

Q Mr. Innis, you've been talking to Governors and other officials in the South about a new approach to the problem of educating black children. What is it you're proposing?

A We're proposing a unitary school system that would provide the best education for both black and white children.

At the present, in segregated school districts, two systems are in existence—one attended by blacks, one attended by whites. This is illegal. The boards of education in those districts are almost always white, and, naturally, a little cheating takes place. Educational depression on the part of the blacks comes about as a by-product.

This supposedly is being changed by integrating schools. But it really isn't. Blacks have lost a lot in this process, and gained nothing for what they have given up.

Q How have the black children been affected?

A They suffer indignities in the integrated system because of hostility of the teachers toward the black kids. In case of a controversy between a black and a white kid, the black is automatically wrong.

Even worse, the curriculum is selected by whites, and relates to the life style and interests of white kids, not black kids. Black kids are suffering educationally, psychologically, and sociologically. The whole black community is suffering.

Q Are you saying that the black child in the South is worse off in the schools today than he was before integration began?

A I am saying exactly that: that the plight of the black community, the black professionals and the black students—and, consequently, the plight of blacks in the South—is worse, at least in the average schools. And it will get worse still.

Q Are you talking strictly about the South?

A No, these remarks are also very valid for the North. There are also dual systems in places such as New York City, even though they call it a unitary system.

Under the old system, the school and the church were the main two institutional structures in black communities that acted as stabilizers. It can be proven very easily that Southern black communities are more stable sociologically than Northern black communities, partly because the school—even that decrepit dual-school system—acted as a focus, a coordinator of social activities. That now is lost under the integrated system.

The social disorganization you see in the Northern black areas is because of the lack of a relationship to an institution. There is no relationship between blacks and their schools in the North.

Q How would your plan change that?

A What we have tried to do is remove the obnoxious and disgusting features of segregation while retaining the more positive features that exist in a black school in the South.

We started out by staying within the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown decision, and the 1969 Holmes County decision on schools which stated that dual-school systems are illegal and must be replaced by a unitary system in a district.

I read those decisions very carefully. The Supreme Court didn't use the word "integration" once. They talked about "desegregation." They spoke of a "dual school system," "unitary school system," and school districts. That's the same kind of approach I used.

I say let us create two districts—one predominantly white and one predominantly black—where you now have one district. Each district will create its own board to manage the school system. Each will hire a superintendent. Each will be autonomous and truly equal.

Q Would each district get the same amount of money per pupil?

A Yes. That's the only way you're going to guarantee equality, because you sure can't guarantee equal per capita expenditure in an integrated system when somebody else is managing that system.

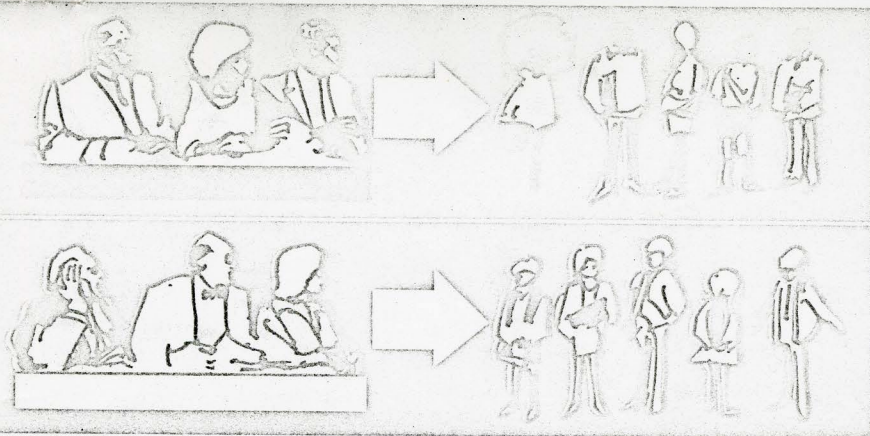
To avoid getting involved in a legal battle, the district should be drawn along natural community lines. That means that in most places in America you can draw a district that would be a majority black or a majority white. It doesn't mean that you exclude one or the other race from it. If there are any whites in that black district, they will go to that black school, if they want to. If there are any blacks in the white area, they will go to that white school, if they want to.

The result would be school systems that are predominantly black and school systems that are predominantly white. Most important of all, there would be a board with a black majority on this side and a board with a white majority on that side.

This would be completely legal, and each group would have a chance to maximize its own resources. You would also have disengaged the two groups to reduce antagonism. We all know that the country, in general, is about to blow over one issue—integration of schools.

Q Where are you going to test your plan?

A The first test will probably be in Mobile, Ala. We picked Mobile because it's large. I want to see large, efficient become cumbersome, like in New



"Let us create two districts—one predominantly white and one predominantly black—where you now have one district," says Mr Innis. "Each district will create its own board to manage the school system. Each will hire a superintendent. Each will be autonomous and truly equal."

York or Washington, but large enough to be efficient. But, at the same time, the people have a certain homogeneity and a desire to be in the same institutional unit and manage their own resources.

Q Wouldn't this bring about almost complete separation of black children from the white community?

A No, no more so than in the separation of different kinds of people that goes on naturally. You didn't have *de jure* segregation in the North, but black kids still stayed in their own areas. It's natural that people of a particular interest or ethnic background tend to congregate together. That's the way we do everything in our society.

Q Have you given up on integration as the answer to the problems of Negroes?

A I am for it, for those who want it. But I'm different from most. I say that integration should not be an end in itself. It should be a means to an end—toward true equality and justice. But if it's obvious that integration is not achieving those ends, then you seek other means. I blame the Easterners and the Northerners for this emphasis on integration. They steam-rolled the whole country into feeling that there was something synonymous between integration as a means and integration as an end.

My system offers true equality. We call this the true-equality plan. This is how you really have equality—groups being able to organize themselves and maximize resources.

Q What kind of reception did you get to these ideas from the Southern officials?

A That was very heartening to me. In the North, the Eastern and Northern "liberals" chopped me up. But in the South I saw a different situation. We spoke to four Governors: Governor McNair, of South Carolina; Governor Maddox, of Georgia; Governor Williams, of Mississippi, and Governor McKeithen, of Louisiana. They agreed that this plan seemed to have more viability than any other offered so far. They wanted to study it. Of course, they were cautious—and reasonably so, since the idea came from CORE. But the feeling I got from the Governors and the State officials was that they could live with it.

We then moved on to the local white community, and there was the same kind of reaction to the plan. They also felt that they could live with our plan. The one question they all asked was: Would the black community go along with this?

Q How did the black people react?

A This is where we had to really do a lot more work. We had to first convince them that we weren't talking about restoring segregation. We had to show them the difference—how, under our plan, blacks would be able to pick their own superintendent, to have their own board, and manage their own resources. Then they agreed that it made sense.

Q In your travels through the South, what did you observe about progress toward racial integration?

A It has been very slow progress, and the antagonism left in its wake is going to be catastrophic for both sides in the future, unless someone can do something to defuse the situation. The effect has been to embitter relations between blacks and whites even more. The blacks are frustrated with the "Mickey Mouse" integration plans because they aren't working. And the whites are frustrated because they think the blacks are getting something.

Q Some civil-rights leaders appear to oppose your plan, saying it's illegal and that they're going to fight it with court suits. How does that affect your ideas?

A When you say "civil-rights leaders," you are talking about the Eastern-Northern civil-rights aristocracy and their Utopian friends. To be very frank with you, I'm going to ignore those guys. They can roll along with me, or we'll roll on by them. You know why? Because I want to appeal to the local black community, the people who are affected by this.

In one place, we have got black people ready to be plaintiffs in a suit—black principals, black teachers and parents. These are local people. In some counties, we even have the local NAACP guys either pledging neutrality or willing to join. Some of them stated that the home office would probably bust their knuckles and force them into war against us.

Q What kind of suits will you bring?

A It depends upon what strategy we use. We could bring an injunction against the school boards for the plans that they have—either planned integration or the old segregated system—or we could just get the State legislatures to redistrict.

The crux of this plan is this: I must have the State officials and local whites and blacks together in common agreement—kind of an out-of-court settlement.

Q Do you think that the federal courts will accept this?

A I am certain the federal courts will accept this because it's a unitary plan. There's no coercion and there's no circumvention. It's a matter of the three affected parties working out a pragmatic solution to their own problems.

Q Would your plan re-establish neighborhood schools and eliminate busing?

A Yes, it would eliminate busing, except for those students who want to do it voluntarily.

Furthermore, under our system, the neighborhood-school concept comes back—the neighborhood school as a true, important community institution. And this time it comes back in an honest way. You had the neighborhood school in the old Southern segregated system, but it was dishonest, because the neighborhood school was run by another neighborhood.

Q Would black children come out of these schools better equipped to compete?

A They would come out of these schools ready to com-

EXCLUSIVE FROM

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"U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT"

Interview With Roy Innis,
National Director, Congress of Racial Equality

BLACK LEADER'S IDEA FOR SOUTH'S SCHOOLS

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 17

LG:

From McLaughrey

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "B" and the name "Brad" written in a more fluid, connected script.

Len

2/28/70



Behind the Semantics

Roy Innis

A classic and stupendous collision of the irresistible force and the immovable object is but a whisper away. The Supreme Court is demanding segregation (what seems to be integration) and the White Southern Establishment is refusing to budge.

At the dawn of this impending disaster, great men yet refuse to sit down in the cool light of reason and expose a grievous error, an error of *semantics* overlooked and perpetuated since 1954.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled *segregation* of public schools illegal and ordered heinous conditions under which Blacks were educated, or mis-educated, in the South must come to an immediate end.

Up to this point we are concerned with two words: SEGREGATION AND DESEGREGATION. A working definition of each term is needed. Let us consider *segregation* to be an involuntary and undesirable setting apart of a particular group for reasons uncontrollable by that group; this condition to be enforced by a controlling group whose interests are served by the arrangement. Consequently, *desegregation* would be any and/or all systems whereby the dissolution of that condition was accomplished.

If the fight for desegregation of schools, North and South, had been focused around these issues, the country would have been spared the verbal and physical battles now threatening to hurl us into another civil war. Blacks, by now, would have recognized that education is nearly the largest industry in the country and would have moved to control those educational institutions in their areas, thus establishing roots into communities. A natural decision, an obvious pursuit.

Not long after the 1954 Supreme Court decision, white liberals set about the tasks of 1. interpreting that decision, 2. implementing it. Unfortunately, due mostly to the sincerity and spirit of the liberal civil rights movement, no one, at that time, challenged the accuracy or pragmatism of their interpretation. No one, that is, except the old, die-hard segregationists whose sinister and crude methods convinced everyone that the civil rights were right indeed. From that point on, the country became engaged in a debate which should never have taken place. A new feature was thrown into the dynamics and our arguments became polarized around an irrelevant concept: **INTEGRATION!**

Nowhere in the Supreme Court ruling can you read the word *integration*. The Supreme Court speaks of segregation as being illegal, and desegregation as the course to be immediately embarked upon.

"Well-meaning" white liberals then proceeded to indoctrinate a country, using the well-oiled machinery of the eastern seaboard Civil Rights Aristocracy. They made white folk (and some Negroes as well) believe that the only way for little Black Johnny to get a good education was to sit next to little white Mary Jane in class. (I am convinced that those Blacks who did subscribe to this "glamorous" proposal did so with the hope that little Johnny could piggy-back a ride via Mary Jane to a good education). That Johnny's school should be in

control of his parents, operated by his community, with teachers who looked like and could understand him was a closed subject to the white liberal who in all his zeal began to "know what was best" for all the little Johnnies.

Integration became the obsessive force behind the Civil Rights Aristocracy driving them past all laws of reason. Guilt-ridden white ministers, youth, and members of the middle-class took to the open road in mass marches for the cause — *lavish, ecstatic energy devoted to a cause destined to fail*.

Had those same liberals been able to see the disservice committed — in the name of liberty — to a people whose *organized power* can only mean real liberty perhaps a new analysis would have been made. And that analysis would have indicated that Black people constitute a very *special* interest group with very *special* needs, therefore *special* goals. Integration, consequently, would not have been the first consideration, but rather the aggregation of power for a powerless people — achieved in the same way that, for decades, other Americans have gained the control of their institutions.

Obviously, integration does not become unlawful; it is merely put into proper perspective as a condition forcing neither blacks nor whites to do that which is unnatural, while, simultaneously, Blacks have gained a position of parity with the white community. Many find the logical consequence of this proposal ultimately being integration. And, if this is true, it will certainly be a matter of choice, not force.

CORE, in its Southern School Project, is attempting to restore calm and reason in a time-bomb atmosphere. We have talked with governors, legislators, civic and parent organizations, Black and white. We have uncovered shocking statistics dealing with the injustices committed against Blacks because of forced integration. There has been a loss of status, jobs and role for professionals. Black/white student blood-baths are but part of the total disaster. Black people are looking for an alternative and see CORE's as the most logical.

Our meetings with Southern governors were not for the purpose of obtaining an "agreement", but rather to serve notice on *what is coming*, to help facilitate the smooth transition of power from the hands of white segregationists to the Black community.

We are running a race against time. The errors of men who sat, and yet sit, on the benches of justice could be corrected so easily. It is in the interest of peace and tranquility that we make a final appeal for the reappraisal of the mistake we made for 16 years; *Integration* is not synonymous with desegregation; *integration* does not satisfy the needs of Black people; *integration* is not about to happen, North or South.

The idealistic, the visionary and the dreamer should not be found leading the struggle of the oppressed. The time for such luxury has been well spent. In the final hours before our destruction or our victory, liberation is our goal, pragmatism our liberator.

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