

in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. What purpose did he see in Afro-American history courses? "To get the black children to feel they are worthwhile people. To give them a sense of identity and dignity." Kellock obtained his teaching license last summer. He feels JHS 271 is the most promising place to teach in the entire city.

Teachers Go Sour, Children Lose Interest

David Rogers in his blockbuster of a new book, *"110 Livingston Street: Politics and Bureaucracy in the New York City School System"* quotes an authoritative earlier professional study of the city's schools by Strayer and Yavner. "The greatest failing of the schools today," they found as he did, "is the failure to use the creative ability of teachers." When I read this afterwards, I understood the enthusiasm I had found in the two schools I visited. I had thought of community control as a kind of lesser evil, a way of appeasing black dissatisfaction. I did not realize what a dead hand the bureaucracy has fastened on the schools and how much could be done just by lifting it. "Not many teachers come into the system sour," said Percy Jenkins, the Virginia-born Negro who is now principal of IS 55, "but they don't stay long without becoming sour. The kids come in with lively minds but by the fourth grade they too have lost interest." Jenkins himself, a graduate of West Virginia State College, had been in "the system" 15 years and risen to assistant principal before he was chosen to head IS 55 in this community control experiment. "What you see here," one white teacher explained later, "is a function of the principal, of the fresh directions he maps out and of the commitment brought to this experiment by young liberal arts college volunteers with new ideas."

I spoke with Rhody McCoy, the head of the district; with his assistant, Lloyd Hunter; with the principal of JHS 271, Wm. H. Harris, and with his white assistant principal, John Mandracchia. I have never met a more devoted group of people. All of them are harassed and overworked but sustained by a combination of desperation and joy, desperation because they fear the experiment may soon be wiped out under union pressure, joy in a chance to demonstrate in the little time they have what community control could accomplish. They are enlightened men; one forgets all the nonsense of black and white in talking with them; color vanishes. They fear black extremism as much as white misunderstanding. And their focus is on the child.

That cannot be said of their opponents. The child, whether black or white, seems to be the forgotten bystander in the teachers' strike. The Union's rallying cry is "due process", i.e. for teachers and its concern is their tenure. Its alliance is not with the parents for better education but with the employing bureaucracy for the maintenance of their common privileges. The "due process" issue they have raised is a monumental bit of hypocrisy. The best analysis of it may be found in the report by the New York Civil Liberties Union, "The Burden of Blame."

A Prestigious Voice Against The Teachers

"We recognize that the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy has been made use of by the United Federation of Teachers and the Council of Supervisory Associations and other organized forces of entrenched interests to discredit the possibility of successful, responsible community involvement in the schools within lawful guidelines that protect not only the best interests of professionals in the schools but of the children."

—Statement released Oct. 1 by the prestigious Public Education Association quoted by Nat Hentoff in the Oct. 17 Village Voice, where he noted that the statement had not appeared in the New York Times.

The unsatisfactory teachers were transferred, not discharged, and transfers normally are made without hearing or charges; the teachers prefer it that way, to keep their records free from blemish.

The real problem is how to keep teachers in ghetto schools. The Board of Education regulations are designed to discourage teachers from fleeing them. The contractual procedures between the Board and the Union limit the teacher's freedom to transfer. "Yet," the civil liberties union reported, "in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the UFT sought to ignore all these procedures and claimed the right for unlimited numbers of teachers to transfer out at will for the duration of the experiment, to abandon the experiment for as long as it continues and then to be free to return, presumably when 'normal' conditions had been reinstated. . . . Significant numbers of teachers did leave . . . Months later, when the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Local Governing Board attempted to exercise a similar unilateral right of transfer, the UFT cried foul."

The Board of Education's notions of "due process" are as one-sided. I have read the full text of the decision handed down by Judge Francis E. Rivers as trial examiner in the case of the transformed teachers. It is by no stretch of the imagination the vindication it appears to be in the headlines.

The hearing, by screening out all but professional witnesses, and barring not only parent testimony but that of para-professional school aides, and by applying strict rules of evidence unsuited to administrative procedures, managed to acquit the teachers without any real exploration of the charges against them.

The Board of Education is past master at manipulating regulations and procedures to achieve the ends it seeks. The Rogers book shows how hard it is even for teachers and principals to find out how it operates. Only a Kafka could do justice to the murk it generates. In a column on Due Process in the *New York Post* Oct. 24, Murray Kempton provided an incisive glimpse of these operations in the pro-

(Continued on Page Four)

Civil Liberties Union Blames The Teachers Union and The Board of Education

"The current school dispute in New York City has yielded nothing but discontent, disorder, disobedience. The chaos was not a result of local community control. From the beginning the central Board of Education attempted to scuttle the experiment in Ocean Hill-Brownsville by consistently refusing to define the authority of the Local Governing Board. The United Federation of Teachers has used 'due process' as a smoke-screen to obscure its real goal, which is to discredit decentralization, and to sabotage community control.

"Ironically the demand for decentralization or, more properly, community control of the schools began with the failure of the central board to effectively implement integration. Board of Education administrators often said

that they could not and would not 'tell the principals how to run their schools.' Integration failed at least partly because it was resisted by many principals, and because the system was already administratively decentralized to the point where recalcitrant principals were not forced to comply with Board policy on integration.

"Integration was not abandoned by black parents but by the Board of Education. The demand for community control was a direct response by ghetto residents to the lack of access to decision-making processes that vitally affected the lives of their children."

—Abridged from *The Burden of Blame: A Report on the Ocean Hill-Brownsville School Controversy*, by the New York Civil Liberties Union, 156 Fifth Ave. NY 10010.

Sabotaging Community Control as They Sabotaged Desegregation

(Continued from Page Three)

ceedings now underway against four JHS 271 teachers accused of threats, or acts of terror, against attempts to reinstate the transferred teachers. Their attorneys were forbidden to see the reports on which the charges were based. When one attorney asked, "Do you proceed under any rules and regulations?" the reply was "We do not." After all this talk about due process, Kempton commented, "we suddenly discover that in this system there is no protection for anybody except the conscience and good-will of the Superintendent."

They Fear Democracy

All bureaucracies are secretive, none more so than the New York Board of Education. The Rogers book is an eye-opener, particularly in its account of how desegregation was sabotaged by the Board. It did not work, Rogers concludes "because the bureaucracy and the staff made them fail." It was out of the frustration created by the failure of integration that black and Puerto Rican parents turned to community control. This, too, is being sabotaged by the Board and by the union. They fear the loss of power and privilege if democracy is substituted for bureaucracy. They have the support of all the unions which do business with the educational system, a billion dollar business. The New York trade union movement, like its educational establishment, has been a stronghold of white supremacy. This is where and how the racial issue arises, and the Jewish community is being enlisted because teaching has been a Jewish preserve in New York as it was once an Irish Catholic preserve. If community control is crushed, the racial struggle will take on more violent and hateful forms to the detriment of both the black and Jewish communities.

The Jews, as the more favored and privileged group, owe the underprivileged a duty of patience, charity and compassion. It will not hurt us to swallow a few insults from overwrought blacks. It is no more wrong to invoke the

No Way To Get Rid of Incompetent Teachers

"Relations between teachers and ghetto parents are severely strained in New York City. The size, the rigidity, and the militaristic nature of the school bureaucracy are one reason . . . Teachers and parents, both victims of this system, have been taking it out on each other, and the ultimate victim is the child. The teachers, frustrated by the board's failure to provide adequate facilities for the so-called 'disruptive child' . . . initially demanded the right to remove these children from their classes . . . Many Negro and Puerto Rican parents were enraged by this demand and countercharged that incompetent and poorly motivated teachers are mainly responsible for the poor education of their children. Both have a point. The board is developing procedures to give better services to children who are judged disruptive, but it has not yet developed adequate procedures to remove, retrain, or supervise more closely incompetent teachers."

—110 Livingston Street by David Rogers, p. 480.

better Jewish tradition against Jewish bigotry than to invoke the better American tradition against white racism. The genocidal threat, if any, in this situation lies in the slow death and degradation to which so many blacks and Puerto Ricans are doomed in our slums. To wipe out the slums and help save their occupants would be the truest memorial to those who died in Auschwitz. When an idealistic young Mayor and the Rabbi who tried to defend him are howled down in a synagogue, it is time for the slap that can alone bring hysterics to their senses. Lindsay was saying "a Jewish philosopher—" when he was forced to leave. The philosopher he was about to quote was Spinoza. He, too, was thrown out of the synagogue in his time. We ought to have better sense today.

Oct. 29

* About three-fourths of the non-striking teachers in Ocean Hill-Brownsville are white and about one half of these are Jewish.

We'll send a reprint of this issue to a friend if you send a stamped self-addressed long envelope

If You Enjoyed Stone's New Book, You Might Like A Copy of His Earlier Collection, "The Haunted Fifties" Out of Print in This Country—
A Few Copies of The English Edition Are Now Available at The Original Cut Price of \$4.95

FOR STONE'S NEW BOOK

For the enclosed \$6.95 send I. F. Stone's new book, In A Time of Torment (Random House) regular price \$7.95

(To) Name

Street

City Zip..... State.....

Indicate if gift announcement wished ☐

Please renew (or enter) a sub for the enclosed \$5:

Name

Street

City Zip..... State.....

I. F. Stone's Weekly 11/4/68

5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C. 20015

I. F. Stone's Weekly

5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W.

Washington, D. C. 20015

Second class

postage paid

at

Washington, D. C.

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Published every other Monday at 5618 Nebraska Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C.
An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: \$5 in the U.S.; \$6 in Canada;
\$10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: \$17 to Europe; \$20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.