



A new "scab" teacher with his students during recess at Ocean Hill-Brownsville PS 144.

"Scab" Teachers

OUTSIDE THEIR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL at the northern tip of Manhattan, in the middle-class Inwood area, two lines of kids stood waiting. One group was almost all black, the other was white. The white kids were going to be taken to a "freedom school" at a synagogue a few blocks away, which had been organized by striking teachers. The black kids were being ushered into the regular public school by teachers who were breaking the strike. One of the nonstriking teachers, furious at the sight of the two lines, ran up to one of the striking teachers and said, "This is the most vicious, destructive thing that's ever happened to this school." The striking teacher screamed back, "Scab!," and some parents threatened to get the dissenter fired when the strike was over.

To the surprise of most people, New York City made it through the summer of 1968 without a major riot. Nevertheless, paranoia and race hatred seemed thicker than ever in the lingering hot, sticky summer air that smothered the city during all of September. The teachers were on strike again, and Bronx housewives sat in front of their sweltering apartment houses, muttering about the blacks "trying to take over."

After the strike at a Brooklyn school, even the youngest black children had to walk a gauntlet of police nightsticks to get into their school, and a black parent outside the line of police and picketers denounced what she termed the "Jewish Mafia," which she said was responsible for such conditions. She was referring to the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), 55,000 strong and probably the most powerful white-collar union in

the country. The ethnic makeup of the teachers union, which is two-thirds Jewish, has led to an exaggerated perception in the black community of it's being simply a "Jewish union." And cooperating with the union during the strike was the Council of Supervisory Associations, which represents all principals and assistant principals. It is also predominantly Jewish.

In a school system where over 55 per cent of the children are non-white, it is little wonder that there is a sense of inequity, and that black and Puerto Rican parents and activists are trying to get a little more say about their kids' educations, in the same way that the Jews of 30 years ago had to confront the resistance of the Irish who then dominated the school system. Now the high proportion of Jewish names among the organizations in direct conflict with the black community has heated what is basically a black-white dispute into even uglier racial overtones. And to its discredit, the teachers union, particularly its president, Albert Shanker, fanned the flames by sensationalizing the issue of anti-Semitism in order to solidify and rally support from the powerful New York Jewish community.

[TROUBLE IN BROOKLYN]

THE TROUBLE WAS CENTERED in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn, a miserable stretch of slum dwellings connecting the two large ghettos of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville. Ocean Hill-Brownsville resembles Berlin after the war: block after block of burned-out shells of houses, streets littered with decaying automobile hulks.

by Sol Stern

Photographs by Ann Douglass

When teachers in the area's schools ask the younger kids to draw pictures, many of them turn in drawings of burning buildings, since that has been one of their most vivid experiences.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville has no shopping facilities or movie houses, and transportation is lousy. But there is still a fairly well-developed community spirit and a plethora of block organizations, parents' groups and poverty programs. In the spring of 1967, under the sponsorship and financing of the Ford Foundation, the parents met to elect a governing board for the school district. It was to be one of three demonstration projects in the city to experiment with the idea of decentralizing New York's mammoth, centrally directed educational system. Almost from the beginning, however, the governing board, and therefore the parents, found itself opposed by the UFT.

Almost forgotten as the crisis escalated into an ugly racial confrontation were the origins of the dispute—the 19 teachers and supervisors dismissed (or “transferred”) six weeks before the end of the last school year by the local governing board. The union says the governing board acted without cause, and went beyond its legally constituted authority; in retaliation, it pulled 400 teachers out of the district's schools, practically crippling the instructional program. Over the summer, a retired judge acting as an independent trial examiner declared that there was insufficient evidence brought by the local governing board against the teachers, and the city's central board ordered the local board to reinstate them. Not only did the board refuse, it recruited several hundred new teachers to replace the union teachers who walked out in support of the original 19. The refusal of the local board to accept what appeared to be impartial arbitration put the onus of unfairness on it, but the roots of the disaster lay basically in unwillingness on the part of the Central Board of Education and the City of New York to define clearly the powers and legitimacy of the local board. In an unclear and confused situation, the local board believed firmly that it was hammering out its own mandate.

By the beginning of the school year the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district had an almost entirely new staff, and its schools were open and functioning. Many of the original 19, as well as most of the union teachers who walked out in sympathy, have since voluntarily transferred to other school districts, but the union claims that 83 of the remaining teachers wish to return to their old assignments. The union called the city-wide strike to pressure the Central Board of Education and the mayor to use their power to force the local board to rehire these teachers. After several abortive settlements, the teachers were finally sent back to their schools under massive police protection, but the local governing board said it would not assign the teachers to regular classroom duties.

The union says the issue is due process for teachers and the protection of hard-won rights of job security and tenure. It invokes the ethic of militant trade unionism, civil liberties and professionalism against what it calls the dangers of “vigilantism” and disruption of the learning process by politically motivated black militants. Against the claims of many in the black community that the strike is racist, the union has mustered support from liberal intellectuals and labor leaders. The teachers, say their supporters, have one of the country's most progressive unions. They organized freedom schools in Prince Edward County in 1963 and in Mississippi in 1964; they sent a large contingent of teachers to join the march initiated

by Martin Luther King in support of the sanitation workers of Memphis, and they were one of the only unions in the country to actively support the Poor People's March.

In any event, could a “racist strike” be supported by such people as A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin and Michael Harrington? It could and was.

[“JUST TAKE CARE OF THE TROUBLEMAKERS”]

TEACHERS UNION HEADQUARTERS occupies several floors of a modern office building on Park Avenue South in lower Manhattan. It was there that the union teachers from Ocean Hill-Brownsville lodged their complaints whenever trouble flared in their schools. The day after the end of the strike, a dozen teachers, all white, reported frantically from Intermediate School (IS) 55: the principal had asked them to leave “for their own safety” when several student demonstrations, some led by militant black teachers, broke out in protest of the teachers' enforced presence at the school. The teachers were frightened and angry as they mingled in the hallway outside UFT President Albert Shanker's office. While waiting to see him, they let their hair down a bit.

James Owens, a rugged-looking man in his fifties, who recently retired from a government job and became a shop teacher, huddled with two younger colleagues. Someone mentioned that the cops had beaten up one of the black students during the demonstration. Owens replied, “Look, if the cops were let alone—if they roughed up a few more of those kids—all this wouldn't have happened. There's no problem teaching in those schools if we could just take care of the troublemakers.”

Mrs. Waxman, a librarian from IS 55, joined the conversation: “I've been teaching in that school for ten years. I helped start the experimental district. We wouldn't have any trouble if all those militants, the Sonny Carsons, the Fergusons, the Ralph Poynters, the Leslie Campbells, hadn't taken over. Leslie Campbell teaches his kids not to steal jackets from each other; he tells them to go get a piece, to go get ready for the war. The poverty program is paying for people like that to teach kids how to kill. How do you go about getting an investigation of the poverty program started?”

The reactions of these Brooklyn teachers are not atypical, although they don't fit the union's chosen image of itself as civil-rights conscious and racially liberal. On the picket lines outside the schools during the strike, you could hear the “law and order” argument over and over again: praise of the cops, denunciation of black militants. When teachers made picket signs for a demonstration at City Hall, they spontaneously used the slogans, “End Mob Rule in the Schools” and “Stop Teaching Racism in Our Schools.” Black members of the union's executive board were furious. The implication, they said, was that local black control of schools means mob rule and racism.

“Backlash” makes you think of Irish dock workers or Polish and Czech steel and auto workers. But caught in the cross fire of rising demands from the black ghettos in which they work, and confronted by the necessity of adapting to black authority, white middle-class N.Y. teachers may quietly vote for George Wallace. How that came to be is a case study not only in middle-class liberal racism but in the degeneration of a once exciting union.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN even the idea of a union for teachers was revolutionary. It was resisted by conservative "professionalists," who disdained trade union principles. Those who fought for the establishment of teachers unions were considered radicals and civil rights activists; they saw the union not only as a force for winning rights for teachers but as a progressive, liberalizing force within a stagnant trade union movement. In those early days it was the most adventuresome, the most socially conscious New York teachers who fought the union's battles and took the chances. The first teachers' strike in 1960 brought out only about 7500 teachers to walk the picket lines and jeopardize their jobs. The teachers with the civil service mentalities, those most concerned about job security, were the ones who crossed the picket lines. Today the situation is reversed: the success of the union in winning collective bargaining rights for all teachers has made it the instrument of job security, and now the conservative and the mediocre have become the union's majority. Now it is the radicals who break the picket lines. It is the conservatives, afraid of the black community, panicked about their jobs, who shout "scab" at those who oppose the strike.

One of these "scabs" is Sandra Adickes, a tall, blonde English teacher, who not only crossed the picket lines during this year's strike, but who also joined parent groups to force the reopening of closed schools on the Lower East Side. A nine-year veteran union activist, she walked the union's first picket lines and helped to organize the Mississippi freedom school. Now, like many blacks and idealistic younger white teachers, she is leaving the union. "I don't think the traditional trade union concept is any longer relevant," she says. "In six years the UFT has become middle-aged. When I started in 1960, it was relevant. We were making \$4800 a year and the union did a good job in improving conditions. But there's no pioneering trade union spirit here any more. It's all bread and butter, salaries and working conditions and job security. It used to be that young girls would teach for a few years hoping to marry a doctor or lawyer, but now they're marrying other teachers—you see them holding hands at meetings—and with two salaries they are really doing well. But their apathy is appalling.

"And now they're afraid of blacks and violence. They live in their little worlds, in middle-class enclaves. They automatically see blacks as hostile. They know blacks have suffered and they are afraid they are going to take it out on them. They know they are mediocre, that they're not doing a good job. They think someone is going to find out and get them out."

[A SOCIALIST LOBBY]

BUT DESPITE THE DEFECTION of teachers like Sandra Adickes, the union still affects a progressive image. This is partly due to a small but well organized lobby of social democrats and Socialist Party members grouped around Bayard Rustin and Michael Harrington who, in effect, act as a public relations lobby for the union.

An interlocking directorate between the teachers union and various New York social democratic organizations could easily be charted. Union President Albert Shanker was himself once a member of the Young People's Socialist League and is

now a member of the board of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), a socialist education organization. Charles Cogen, who preceded Shanker as UFT president and groomed him for the job, was once Socialist Party candidate for City Council. One of Shanker's two executive assistants, Sandra Feldman, is the wife of Paul Feldman, editor of the Socialist Party organ, *New America*. Shanker's administrative assistant is the wife of Max Shachtman, a mentor of Harrington and Rustin and the chief ideologue of one of the more esoteric old left sects. Rustin, Harrington, Paul Feldman and Tom Kahn, the executive director of the LID, are all personally close to Shanker and serve as a kind of "kitchen cabinet" for his union.

When you name all of the above, you have just about exhausted the active ranks of the moribund conservative socialist movement in this country. There is nothing subversive about the relationships, although they do provide an insight into the sources of intellectual support the union drew upon during its conflict with the black community. During the strike, major New York newspapers carried expensive full-page ads by two groups who supported the union's version of the dispute. One ad was signed by 25 white liberal intellectuals, who advertised under the rubric of an Ad Hoc Committee to Defend the Right to Teach. The address listed on that ad is the same as that of the LID and the committee's co-chairmen are Michael Harrington, chairman of the board of the LID, and Tom Kahn. The other ad was signed by black trade unionists solicited by the A. Philip Randolph Institute whose executive director is Bayard Rustin.

"The United Federation of Teachers," says Rustin's ad, "has made clear it accepts decentralization and will cooperate in its implementation." "Decentralization is *not* the issue," says the Harrington ad. "Decentralization of the city schools is under way. The United Federation of Teachers has pledged its full cooperation to make the reorganization succeed." Both ads claim that the issues are not racial—"The overwhelming majority of black teachers are supporting the UFT strike," says the Rustin ad. The issue, says the Harrington ad, "is understood by black and white teachers alike—which explains their strong solidarity."

This was all an ingenuous bit of shilling for the union—as well as a deliberate falsehood. The racial split within the union on the strike and on the union's opposition to any meaningful decentralization is a matter of public record. One week before the Harrington and Rustin ads appeared, a black caucus was organized within the UFT to oppose the strike. A press release was issued in the name of five of the six black members of the union's 50-man executive board, plus the only two black elected officers, denouncing the strike. Most of the black teachers who stayed home during the strike did so only because of the cooperation received by the union from the supervisors' association, which ordered its members to lock the schools. Only in those areas where sufficient community and parent pressure could be brought to bear were the schools opened, and in these schools most of the black staff members reported for work. The ads do not even mention this unusual collusion between the union and supervisors, or the use of the lockout—traditionally an employer's weapon. And the ads conveniently ignore the history of the unions' frantic lobbying activities against an important decentralization bill at the state legislature—one of the shadiest aspects of the whole story.

IN ALBANY LAST MAY, A SIGNIFICANT decentralization bill had been offered to the legislature by the State Board of Regents—the highest educational policy-making body in the state. Supporting the legislation were some of the most impeccable members of the establishment—the Ford Foundation, the state commissioner of education, the mayor of New York City. But in the legislature itself there was only a small handful who were in favor of the regents' proposal—all of New York City's black assemblymen and a handful of liberal reformers. Most of the other legislators were either indifferent or afraid of backlash sentiment. A determined effort by the handful of pro-decentralization legislators, which included threats of a sit-in in the governor's office to hold up his legislative program, succeeded in convincing legislative leaders and the governor to support a compromise decentralization plan. The compromise plan was still strong enough, containing broad powers for local boards. The plan also stipulated that local boards could fire teachers only for cause and only after "due process" protection for any accused teacher.

The passion aroused by a single piece of legislation that would have reorganized the administration of education in the City of New York can only be understood against the general background of the disaster of public education there. The struggle for school integration had turned into a total fiasco because of the resistance of the white community and the impossibility of integrating ghetto children into white middle-class schools. Ghetto schools, in the meantime, were in a state of extreme deterioration. Overcrowded, full of the violence and turmoil of the ghetto, they were staffed by administrators and teachers from an alien culture who looked upon their work as combat duty. The result was that the schools were run as semi-reformatories, and learning was nil.

It was out of this bleak situation that the demand grew to give the minority communities a chance to run their own schools. New York is the first city to face this conflict, but it is clear that it is an issue of national proportions, and its rumblings will soon be heard in most American cities.

When the issue was in the balance, the teachers union came to Albany with a huge lobbying effort to kill the decentralization bill. The union spent close to half a million dollars to bring over 500 teachers and parents to Albany. They descended on the legislature like a swarm of locusts—using backlash arguments and threatening wavering legislators with political opposition at the polls. Shanker directed the whole operation from the office of Assembly Speaker Anthony J. Travia. The union president said that there was a "hoodlum element in the schools" that would be let loose if decentralization passed. Union leaflets passed out to legislators warned that with decentralization, local school districts would be operated "on the basis of local prejudices based on color, race or religion." It was obvious that the teachers were appealing to racial fears; those who stood fast on decentralization were called "black power advocates." At a rally of the lobbying teachers in Albany, Shanker said, "If the regents' bill passes I will follow every legislator around who voted for it and kill them politically."

One of the leaders in the fight for decentralization was Jerry Kretchmer, a thirty-four-year-old quick-talking assemblyman from Manhattan's West Side. Kretchmer angrily recalls the teachers' tactics in Albany. Fifty or sixty teachers at a time

would crowd into his office, berating him for his stand and warning that decentralization would lead to chaos. The confrontations grew increasingly heated as the teachers threatened to campaign against him, but Kretchmer held his ground. At one point he told a group of teachers that if "decentralization leads to a year of chaos, I am prepared for it. *There's no education in the schools anyway.*" At that, an infuriated teacher spat in the assemblyman's direction.

With this sort of overkill, the teachers easily succeeded in stampeding the legislature. A bill introduced by conservative Republican Senator John J. Marchi was passed, in effect putting the matter off for another year. During that year, all power to decentralize specific districts was delegated to the New York City Central Board of Education. This was hardly a threat to the teachers, since the board, fighting for its own bureaucratic prerogatives, was totally opposed to decentralization.

Having won the legislative battle in Albany, the teachers returned home and engaged in an additional and unprecedented act of piggishness. Shanker was determined that the legislators who opposed the union on decentralization should be punished in a way that would impress the legislators with the union's political power. At the union's delegate assembly, held just before the state's Democratic primary, Shanker urged that the union "undertake an intensive campaign to support those legislators who supported its position in Albany and to defeat those who did not." This resolution put the union in support of some of the state's most reactionary legislators and in opposition to most of New York's black and liberal legislators. The resolution passed easily.

Shanker then proceeded to collect a slush fund of thousands of dollars and to take off after the political scalps of the pro-decentralization legislators. A Shanker associate confides that the union made a political distinction between those legislators who voted for decentralization because they came from predominantly black constituencies and those who supported it as independents. The union patronizingly excused the former; the latter it vindictively tried to destroy. One of the latter was Assemblyman Jerry Kretchmer, whose district is 55 per cent Jewish, 12 per cent Irish, 12 per cent Italian, with the remainder white Protestant, Puerto Rican and black. Running against Kretchmer in the primary was Thomas Daubner, an old-line Democratic Party hack, a former ally of the old Tammany chieftain, Carmine de Sapio, and a hawk on the Vietnam War. The union first threw Daubner a \$1500 cocktail party at the Park Sheraton Hotel, to which it invited all the teachers in the district. Then it sent out a letter on union stationery to all the teachers, a document which Daubner eventually used as a valuable piece of campaign literature. The letter said, "Mr. Kretchmer is the voice which preaches chaos in the schools. He would give local school boards the right to hire and fire teachers. He would promote Ocean Hill-Brownsville throughout New York City. I urge you to vote for Daubner. He supports the UFT's decentralization plan."

The letter was signed by Albert Shanker.

Teachers also went into the district to canvass against Kretchmer, and they organized a telephone campaign to reach all the voters, telling them, "Kretchmer is for black power." Asked to comment on such tactics, Dan Sanders, the union's public relations man, said, "Well, Kretchmer is a black power advocate. Every organization supports and opposes people. It's perfectly legitimate for us to do that. And we're going to

continue. In the future we are going to be even more active in the political arena. We can't survive otherwise."

[REDEFINING SURVIVAL]

SURVIVAL IS THE REAL ISSUE at Ocean Hill-Brownsville. But given the way this socialist-led trade union has now defined "survival," it is not particularly surprising that an increasing number of black leaders have been drawn to the conclusion that for the black community's survival they must somehow break the power of the union. True, some white teachers have been treated summarily at Ocean Hill-Brownsville, but that is not an unusual occurrence in the vast reaches of the New York school bureaucracy. The union is constantly asked to intercede on behalf of teachers who have been pushed around by supervisors or summarily transferred out of their schools for political reasons; the union usually does not fight very hard.

The New Coalition, the minority anti-Shanker caucus in the union, has documented hundreds of these abuses. In one not atypical case, Michael Levien, a young radical and union member who had been teaching for two years at Junior High School (JHS) 52, an integrated school in upper Manhattan, was told after months of harassment by the principal and his department chairman not to return to the school the following year. Levien's only offense was helping the students organize an anti-Viet-Nam protest off school grounds. He went to the union leadership for help, but they refused to exert any pressure on the principal—let alone call a strike in order to get him reinstated. Only action by parents sympathetic to Levien, in the form of a sit-in in the district superintendent's office, succeeded in forcing the principal to change his mind.

But the union did want to dispute the action taken regarding the teachers at Ocean Hill-Brownsville, and pulled all of its 55,000 members out in a strike that crippled the entire system. The issue here was closer to its heart: the forced transfers were massive and public. (It is important to remember, however, that at no time did any of the teachers lose a day's pay. They were merely ordered to the Central Board of Education for reassignment to another district.) Embattled all year in a running dispute about its powers both with the Central Board of Education and with the union, the local governing board decided to flex its muscles. Instead of finessing out the undesired teachers as is normally done in districts all over the city, or waiting for the teachers to leave voluntarily (as many were doing), the local board announced their action in a press release which said that the teachers were "dismissed"—without notice. According to published reports—which the local board has not denied—the Central Board of Education even offered to transfer the teachers quietly during the summer, but the local board was determined to make the matter public.

[ANTI-SEMITISM AND BACKLASH]

IN TERMS OF THE OVERALL BATTLE for decentralization, the seemingly crude and arbitrary action by the local board against the teachers was a blunder. It played right into Shanker's hands by making the union seem the aggrieved party. Shanker quickly seized the opportunity, stirring up the membership with scares about job security and the specter of teachers at the mercy of black extremists. Every incident of anti-Semitism was played up by the union chief. At one

meeting he said, "If community control, as we see it at Ocean Hill-Brownsville, wins, there will be 'Jew Bastard' signs and swastikas in all the schools." Whenever it could, the union made sure the press understood that most of the dismissed teachers were Jewish. The president of the 26,000 member Jewish Teachers Association, Dr. Herman Mantell, jumped on the bandwagon with widely publicized charges of anti-Semitism by the local governing board. Mantell also attempted to pressure the Ford Foundation into withdrawing financial support from the local board, saying in a letter to the Foundation, "I, and those to whom I have spoken, are beginning to have doubts about the anti-Semitic influence in the Ford Foundation and/or some of its officers and/or directors in their persistence in allocating funds to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Demonstration Project which we have charged with anti-Semitic prejudices in its dealings with the educational personnel."

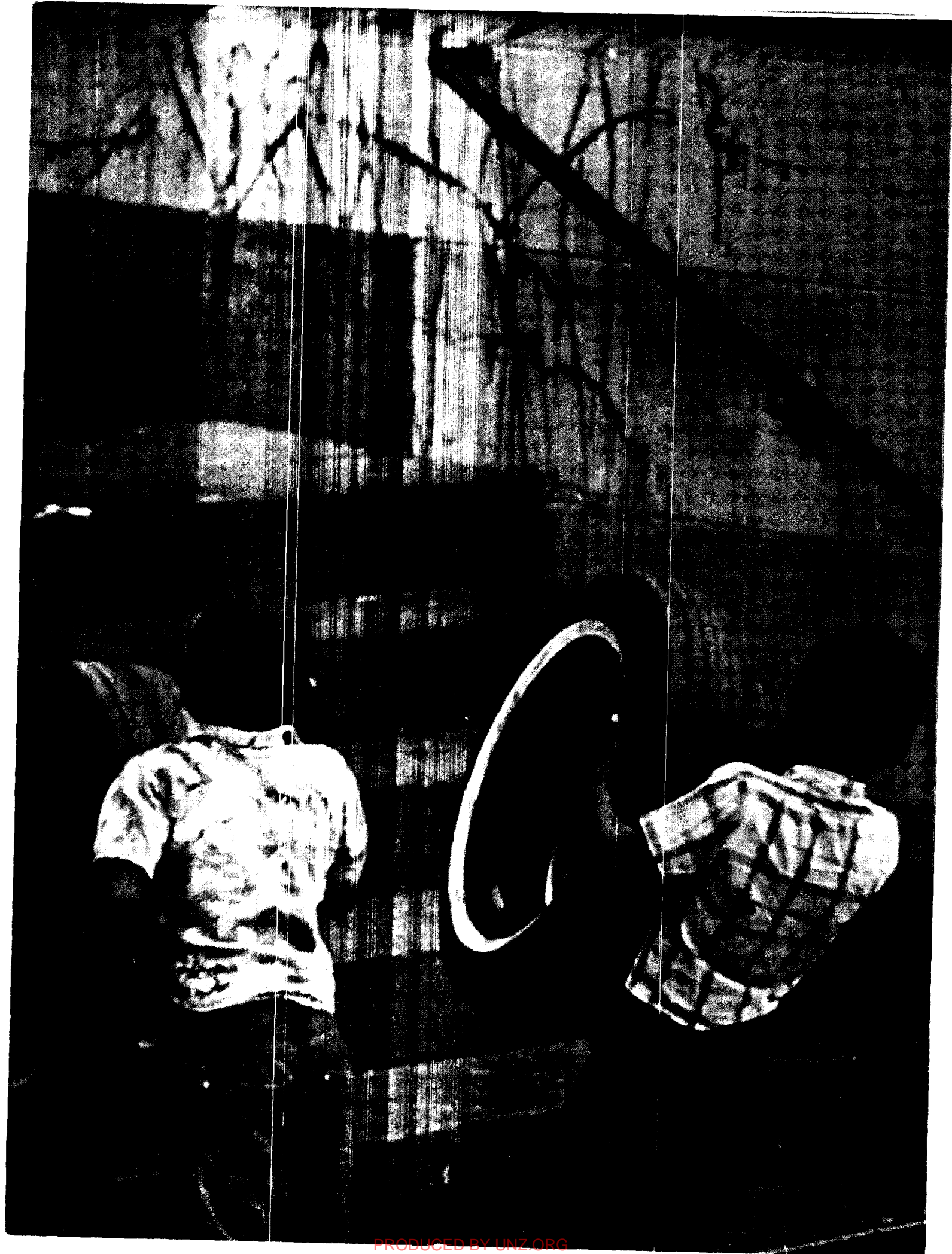
The charges of anti-Semitism and black racism spread hysteria throughout the New York Jewish community. Left unnoticed was the fact that most of the replacement teachers hired were white and Jewish. Thus obscured was the fact that the governing board's move was aimed not against white or Jewish teachers but against *union* teachers who, the board felt, used their union's power to obstruct the governing board and its appointed leadership from carrying out their policies in the district schools.

[SHANKER'S DOMINO THEORY]

THE UNION HAD VERY STRONG CHAPTERS in Ocean Hill-Brownsville when the new governing board took over in 1967, and it almost immediately tried to assert its influence. Teachers representing the board immediately came into conflict with the community members of the board over the issue of the hiring of a new unit administrator. The governing board chose Rhody McCoy, a black principal from outside the district, rather than the teachers' candidate, Jack Bloomfield, the white principal of Junior High School 271, Ocean Hill-Brownsville. The board chose five new principals, three blacks, one Puerto Rican and one Chinese. (They were, incidentally, the first Chinese and Puerto Rican principals in the school system.) But none of them was on the approved civil service list, so the teachers' representatives staged a protest walkout at the board meeting. Later, in September 1967, when the board refused to support the city-wide teachers' strike which shut down the public schools for 14 days, the teachers resigned from the board.

Having severed all connections with the local governing board, the union teachers came into increasing conflict with the new black administrative leadership of the district's schools. Teachers loyal to the governing board, both black and white, accused the union of using guerrilla tactics against the experiment. At JHS 271, the largest school in the district and the source of the most intense conflict, the principal, Jack Bloomfield, left in the middle of the year, taking 30 teachers, all the assistant principals and five of the six secretaries with him.

But he left behind a strong union chapter headed by Frederick Naumann. Naumann had a very special relationship with the old white principal; he only had to teach two classes per week, and spent most of his time on union business. When the new black principal, William Harris, took over in February,



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there was an immediate conflict about the prerogatives of the local chapter. Many of the members of the union felt more loyalty to Naumann than to the new principal. JHS 271 was in a turmoil all during the spring semester, and the governing board, rightly or wrongly, felt that the problems of discipline were being deliberately created by the white union teachers in order to prove that the experiment in community control, over which they no longer had substantial influence, was a failure. When the governing board finally acted, Naumann was one of those dismissed.

For President Shanker, however, Ocean Hill-Brownsville was one battle in a larger war. "Shanker," says UFT Vice President John O'Neill, "has a domino theory. He thinks that what happened in Ocean Hill-Brownsville will happen in 30 districts if it isn't stopped there. His basic philosophy is power. If he can destroy Ocean Hill-Brownsville, then no other district will try the same thing. They won't try to exercise their power to hire and fire for fear the union will destroy them."

The single-mindedness with which Shanker pursued his power struggle with the Ocean Hill-Brownsville board is indicated by the treatment meted out to O'Neill, the only white member of the union's top leadership who had reservations about the strike. When O'Neill publicly denounced Shanker's threat to call another strike in October and proposed instead a compromise settlement, Shanker convened the union's executive board and had O'Neill fired from his \$13,000 per year staff job with the union.

One of the reasons that O'Neill had reservations about the strike is that as vice president in charge of junior high schools, he was one of the union representatives dispatched to Ocean Hill-Brownsville last May when the conflict over the teachers erupted. O'Neill was appalled at the prospect of teachers being forced upon the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community by police force. He wanted to back away from a confrontation that he felt would permanently put the union on a collision course with the community, and at JHS 271 he sounded out Rhody McCoy, the district superintendent, on the prospects of reaching some compromise settlement. McCoy, also trying to avoid a direct confrontation with the union, seemed receptive to talks and even suggested the possibility of some sort of impartial hearing for the teachers. O'Neill, wishing to head off an escalation of the struggle, immediately got on the phone to Shanker, telling the union president that he saw the prospects of a settlement in what McCoy had said. Shanker replied, "Fuck you. I want those teachers in the classroom now."

Thus, from the beginning, Shanker had no intention of giving de facto recognition to the governing board through direct negotiations. Throughout the conflict, his strategy was to use the union's power to cripple the entire system as leverage to force the mayor and the central board to discipline and break the Ocean Hill-Brownsville board.

[COMMUNITY CONTROL OR UNION CONTROL?]

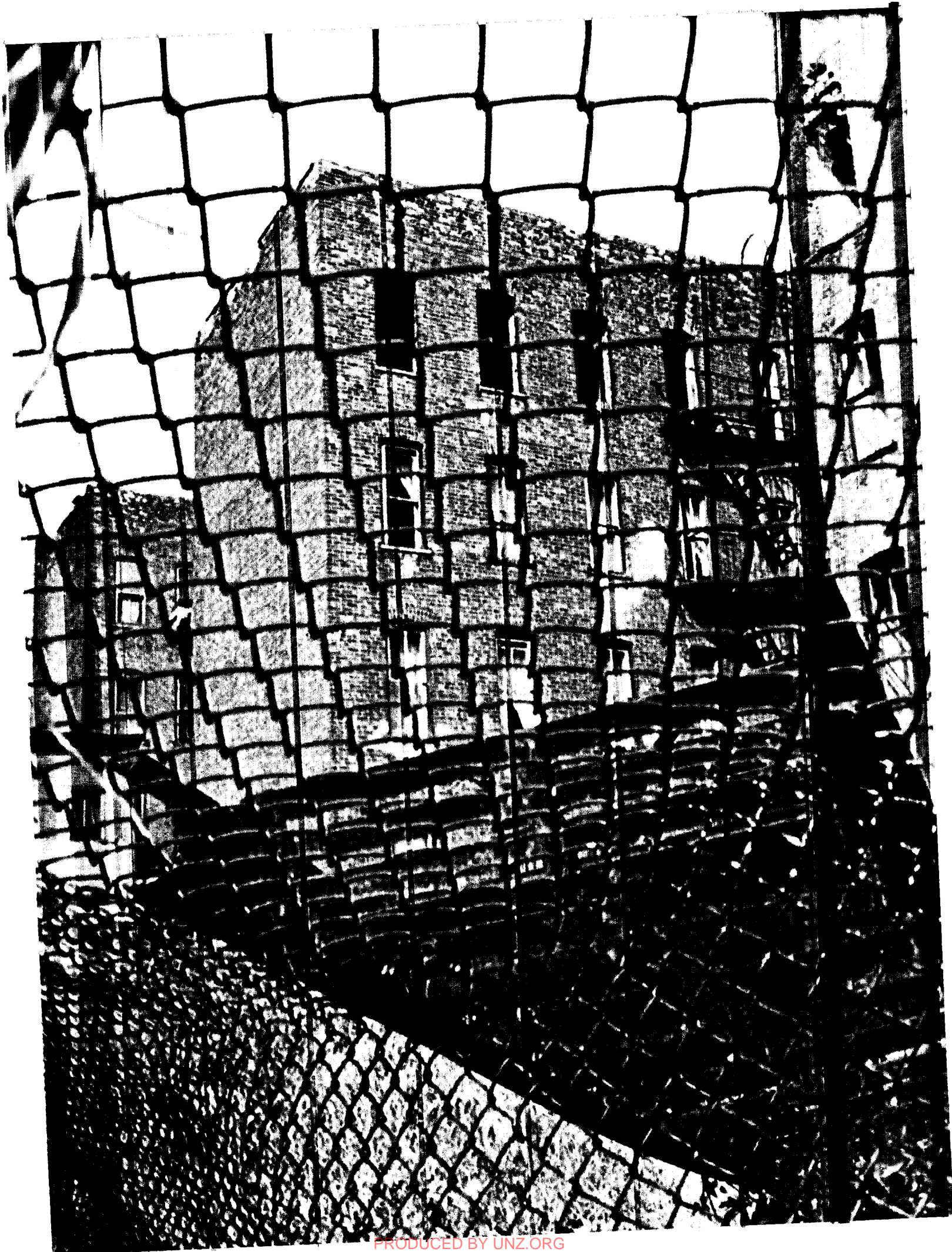
THE EVENTS AT SCHOOLS like JHS 271 prove that Shanker's actions do at least stem from an acute if limited sense of self-interest. Successful community control would radically affect the power of the union both at the chapter level and at the top. At the present time, when the union chapter at a school is strong, the chapter

chairman is sometimes the most important person in the school, next to the principal. Union members are answerable only to the administration of the school, which in turn is caught up in a central bureaucracy and is careful not to rock the boat. Community control would mean a new explosive element that the union member has to become accountable to—parents, particularly angry poor parents, and community influences, sometimes politically threatening. "Professionalism" is the teacher's defense against the newly threatened accountability demanded of him, and the union shields him from that prospect.

Of course decentralization and community control are no panacea for the disaster of urban public education. There is not yet any piece of objective evidence that community control leads to better education, and it would be easy to be cynical about the motives of the Ford Foundation in pushing decentralization. It gets politicians such as Rockefeller and Lindsay off the hook for the failure of education, and takes the heat off of the ghetto schools by turning the militants over to the black bourgeoisie to handle. A lot of middle-class blacks, those with civil service mentalities, are supporting decentralization for no other reason than the career opportunities it provides.

Yet, as one community activist said, "Ghetto schools are so bad—you could close them all now for the next year and it wouldn't have any effect on anyone." White, centrally controlled schools mean in effect not only no learning but an atmosphere of fear and alienation for teacher and child alike. Community controlled schools, as anyone who visited Ocean Hill-Brownsville must know, at least provide an atmosphere of warmth and dignity. I asked two fifteen-year-old girls who had graduated from JHS 271 last year, and who thus had lived through that school's agonizing transition from white to black control, what the difference was between the two principals. One of them said, "Well, Mr. Bloomfield used to hide in his office all day—whenever there was trouble he would send one of his assistant principals to check it out. He was like a scared mouse. Mr. Harris we could always see. And when he took over he asked all the classes to elect a delegate to come and meet with him and tell him what our complaints were. I remember once we asked Mr. Bloomfield if we could play soul music in the cafeteria during lunch, and he said no because there would have been riots. But Mr. Harris, when he came in, let us have the music and everything was OK—there was no trouble."

The issue is power—not due process and vigilantism, or anti-Semitism. Who shall exercise power in the schools, who shall make educational policy: the community through its elected representatives, or the union hiding behind the facade of "professionalism?" Obviously there will be dangers of violations of the civil liberties of teachers. Obviously there is anti-Semitism in the ghetto, and some of it is directed at teachers. But a community can't be made sensitive to those concerns by fiat or by police power. Had the union fought for strong decentralization, with adequate legal safeguards for the rights of teachers, had they cooperated with the local governing board at Ocean Hill-Brownsville in making decentralization work, they would be in a better position today to protect their members in the ghetto. As it is, the union's behavior has undoubtedly increased anti-Semitism in the ghetto and increased the black community's contempt for the average union teacher.



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THE CHAIR OF SOCIOLOGY

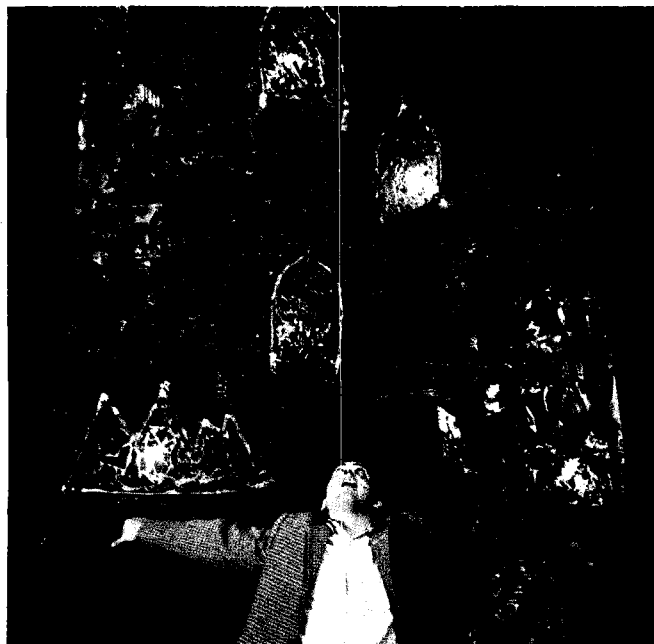
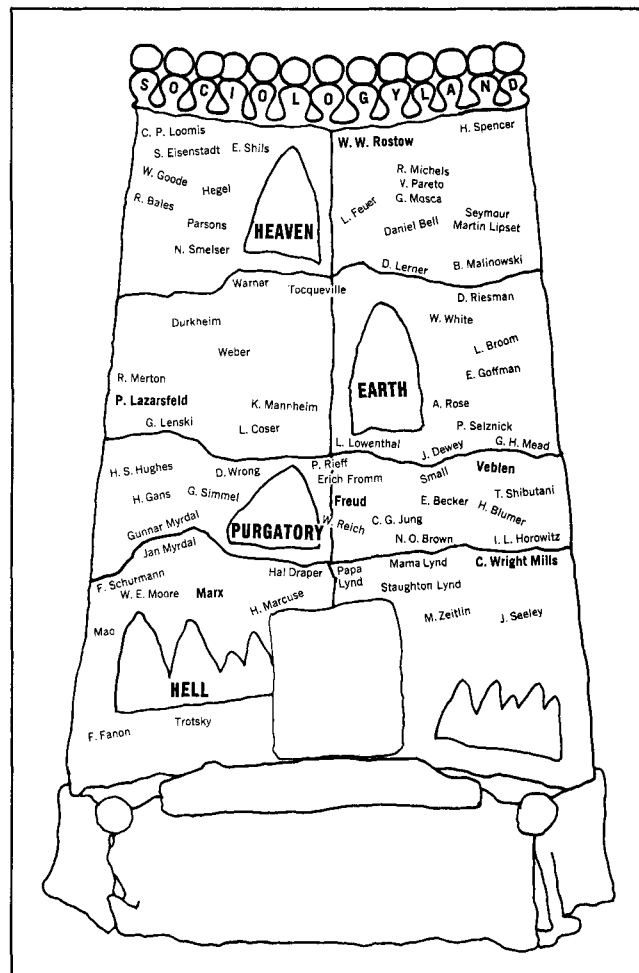
YOU CAN'T WRITE ESSAYS ABOUT David Wise's art; you have to sit in it and talk about it.

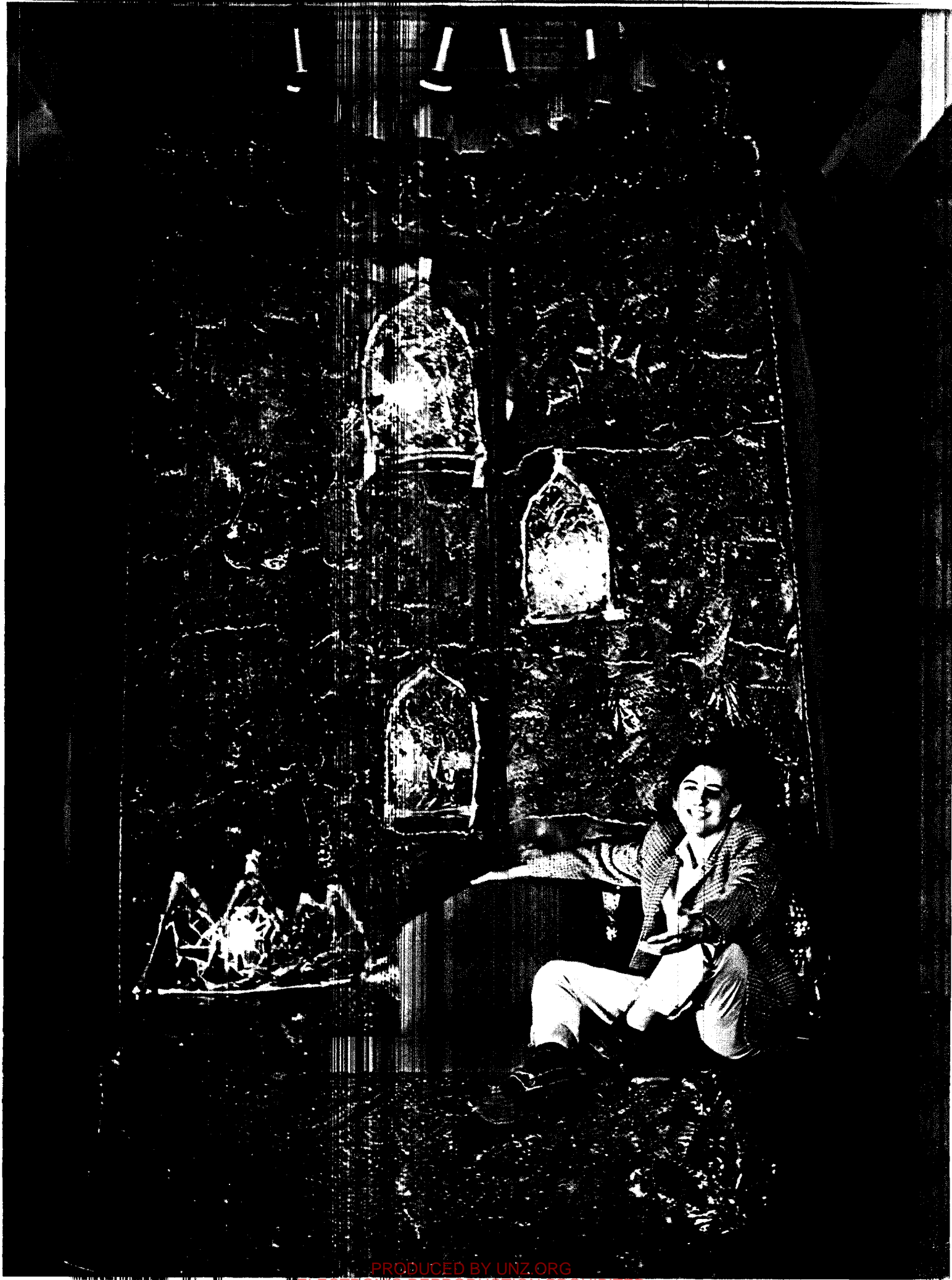
"What's that, man?" demands a sharply dressed, bereted black kid. "That's art, brother," his friend hisses. "Don't you know art when you see it?" "Man, I don't know anything about art, but that's far out."

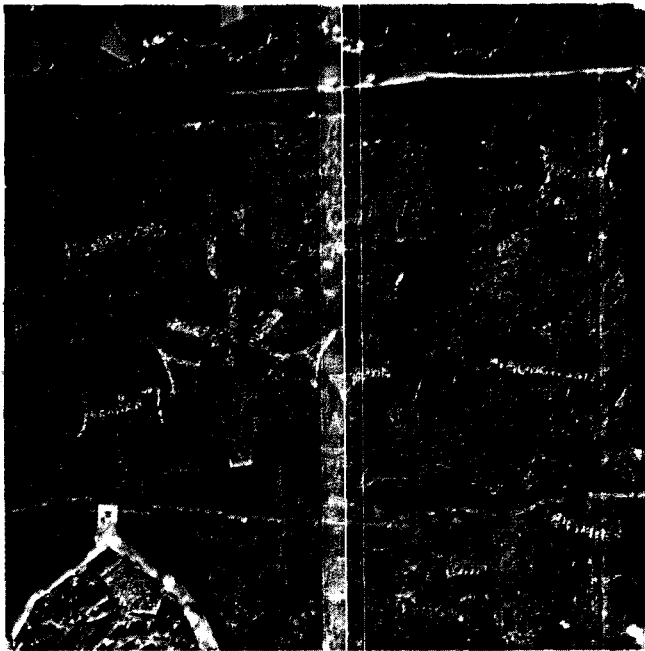
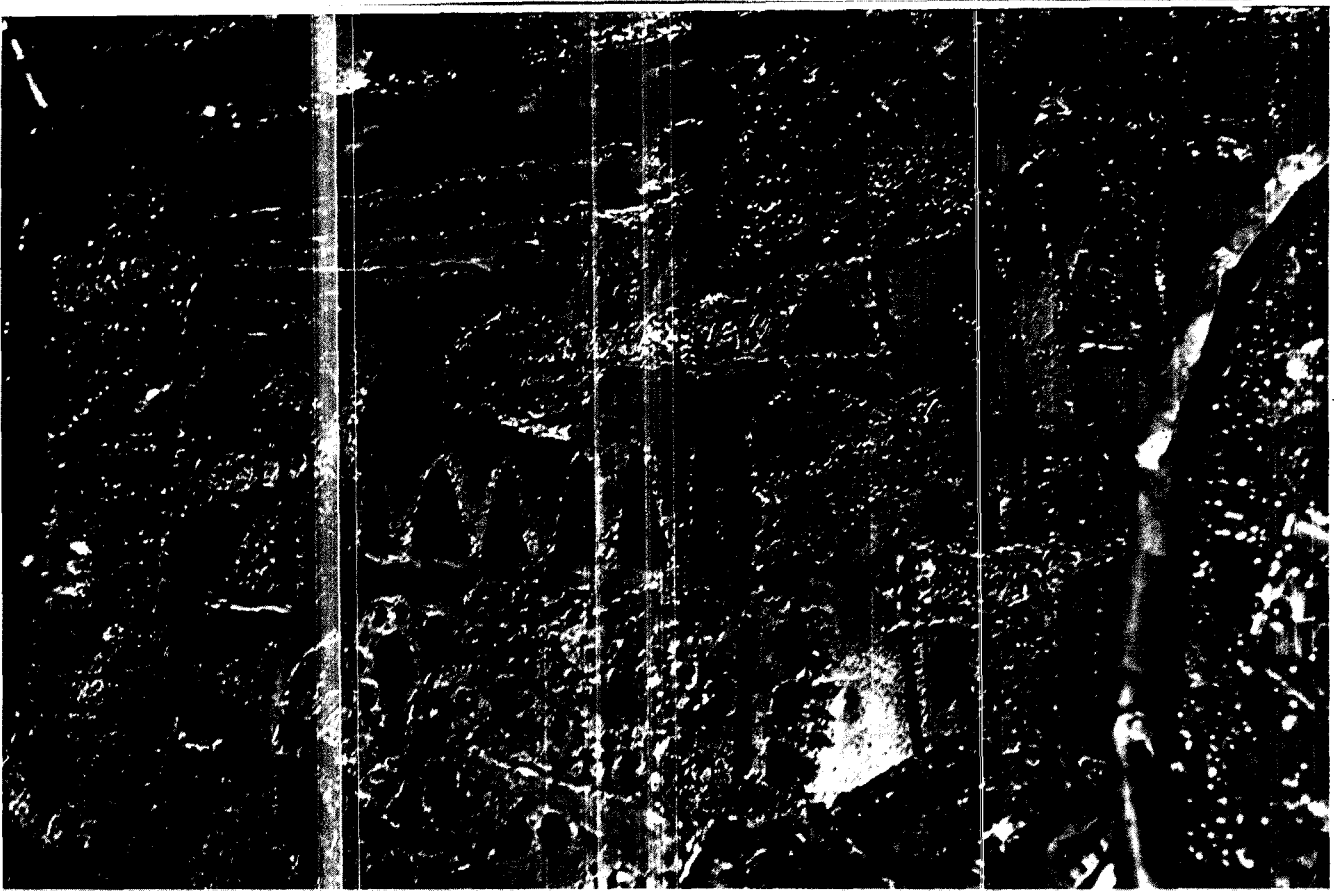
"That" is The Chair of Sociology, 14 feet of bronze, filigreed with a blowtorch, inlaid with stained glass, and strewn with an assortment of 85 rough human forms, each one bearing a name. Presently on exhibit in the lobby of the Student Union at the University of California at Berkeley, it is soon to be shipped for display at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. The Chair is the biggest effort yet by sculptor David Wise [see RAMPARTS, November 1967], second-year graduate student at UC and a teaching assistant in sociology. Originally sculpted as an unsolicited, surprise contribution to the 1967 convention of the American Sociological Association, The Chair caused instant controversy at its first appearance.

"What's this heaven, earth, purgatory, hell business?" sociologists asked one another. "Look," came a reply, "it's a map of the sociological universe. Some sociologists are in heaven, flying around as angels, and others are in hell depicted as devils. See, there's Seymour Martin Lipset up top and there's Herbert Marcuse down there in hell." "But why am I up there?" asked Robert Merton, a professor of sociology at Columbia. No one could discover an explanation for David's placement of individual sociologists, but professors climbed all over The Chair looking for their own names and trying to discover the principles of order in David's sociological universe.

The Chair of Sociology elicits pleasantly bewildered responses in its present resting place at U.C. "Ooo," one little red-headed hippie girl bubbles, "that's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. It looks like something medieval. Can I sit in







it? But what are all these names all over it?"

"Well, you see, these are all sociologists," David Wise explains to her. David is twenty-three years old, voluble and not at all ashamed to explain his work. "It is kind of medieval. Medieval artists used to arrange their altarpieces in a sort of hierarchy, with the angels in heaven, the saints and humans on earth and the demons down below. Everyone had his place in the cosmos. Just the same way every sociologist has his place in the sociological cosmos."

"But what's C. Wright Mills doing in hell?" asks the redhead. "I thought he was a pretty good guy. And Frantz Fanon and Marcuse, they're great."

"Listen," says David, who is as patient as he is talented, "the sociological cosmography isn't any more rational than the theological one was back in the Middle Ages. In sociology, respectability is a much more important criterion than sociologists ever admit. The sociologists up in heaven take the present order as given, and seem content to leave it that way. So they're the most respectable. See, up top there. I've got Walt Whitman Rostow [formerly of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, now in the State Department] dropping bombs on the Vietnamese. Durkheim and Weber are up there as the king and queen of sociology. They were the ones at the beginning of the century who put sociology on a really respectable footing. But down there in hell, there's Karl Marx; he's the biggest devil of all. He said that the task of sociology wasn't just to interpret the world, it was supposed to change it too. And Mao and Trotsky, way down there in the corner—they're the worst, because they actually did change it."

"And you see there in the middle, that's Freud in purgatory. He said some pretty unrespectable things about human nature, but on the other hand he justified a lot of kinds of repression as necessary for the preservation of society. So he's atoning for his sins. Wilhelm Reich and Norman O. Brown are below Freud because everyone thinks they're so way-out and freaky. But Erich Fromm is above him because Fromm acts as Freud's public relations man."

"But the whole thing's upside down!" someone cries out. By now a whole crowd has gathered around The Chair.

"Upside down?" asks David.

"Yeah, the bad guys are in heaven and the good guys are in hell."

"Well," says David, "it's The Chair of Sociology."

—JOHN SPITZER

My New Clothes

by
Gene Marine

I ATTENDED, the other night, a not very swinging party: a large fund-raising dinner, at the home of a friend, on behalf of an organization noted neither for its youthfulness (of outlook or membership) nor for any particular absence of stodginess among its adherents. Being over forty, I have been to many of these things before; I usually have to decide whether to wear the good old brown suit or to live it up with the tweed sports jacket, and because the dinner was at a friend's house, I might have been tempted in the past to be really daring and go without a tie.

What I did wear was a pair of hip-hugging, bell-bottomed trousers copied from a design by Courrèges, a shimmering green Mao shirt in what I believe is called velveteen, and two strands of beads.

An old friend named Joe—who was wearing a Brooks Brothers suit in the classic mold—was furious when he saw me. He had planned to wear a Nehru suit and his beads, and had talked himself out of it.

What's going on here? A year ago I wouldn't have been caught dead in beads, much less in green velveteen; even now I can't imagine Joe without the Brooks Brothers suit. Hippies, sure: I've always liked hippies and admired their individuality (and their courage) in hair and dress styles. But hell, they're young. And small-town though San Francisco is, I don't get invited to these Pacific Heights parties where everybody wears the latest rage. What the hell am I doing in hiphuggers?

And as everybody who's literate must know by now, it isn't just me. I can remember when the Duke of Windsor, who is supposed to be something of a

fashion leader, caused a furor by showing up somewhere in a plaid waistcoat. Now Leonard Whiting shows up at the Paris premiere of "Romeo and Juliet" in September wearing a brown velvet smoking jacket over a white turtleneck evening shirt. Brown velvet.

Okay, chorus my only slightly squarer friends. I won't do it myself, of course, but it's kind of an interesting fad. Beads, huh? Velvet? Crepe? Bell-bottoms? Plum-colored dress shirts? It's all right—next year we'll be back to dark blue suits.

Don't hold your breath, babies.

Whatever it is that's happening with men's clothing (or, more correctly, with men), it isn't a fad. It will be with us for a long time. And whatever it is, and wherever it came from, you can bet that somebody's going to get very rich on it.

For example: ever hear of Frederick's of Hollywood? They sell a lot of far-out women's clothing, emphasizing the daring and the provocative. Last year, between their mail-order and retail businesses, they took in about eight million bucks.

Now they're putting menswear departments into most of their 33 stores, and menswear—"in extreme cuts," the boss says—will be shown in their Christmas catalog. "Menswear will be a gradual buildup," says Frederick Mellinger, "but it will be with us on a full-time basis." He figures that it will account for 25 per cent of the chain's volume within five years.

Bonwit Teller, which is a pretty fancy place for a lady to buy her clothes (Pierre Cardin's ladies' boutique is there, for instance), now has three men's

(Text continued on page 32)



Sports jacket, Weinstock-Lubin, Sacramento, \$39.95 (1959). Trousers, Pauson's, San Francisco, \$19.95 (1964). Shirt, Arrow "Whip," Macy's, \$4.95, irregular. Tie by Ernst, \$2.50. Shoes, Bates, \$15.00. Socks, J. C. Penney, 39 cents.

Shirt, Alexander's Tomorrow Shop, New York, \$19.95. Trousers, Courrèges copy by Experiment I, New York, \$19.95. Wooden beads by Village Craftsman, New York (from Haiti), \$2.00. Colored beads, American Indian from Liberty House, New York, \$1.00. Boots by Valentino of Rome, \$70.00. Interwoven socks from Wilkes-Bashford, San Francisco, \$1.50.



boutiques—Cardin, Bill Blass, and a branch of London's Turnbull & Asser. Alexander's, a decidedly middle-class operation, also has three. And I. Magnin has opened one in San Francisco.

The point is that shrewd operators like the people who built Alexander's up from practically nothing are not about to tear out a big chunk of their second floor and rebuild it just to pursue a passing fad. If you don't think it's going to be around for a while, consider the fact that *Good Housekeeping* is going to start running a menswear section.

Probably the hardest-nosed businessmen in America are the old-fashioned barons who run the cosmetics industry—and virtually every one of them now has a complete line of male makeup. They call it “men's toiletries,” but take a look at, for example, Estée Lauder's “Aramis” line—all that's missing is eye-liner. Nobody is riding a temporary “fad” here, either. In 1962, five per cent of the cosmetics business consisted of men's toiletries. In 1966, the figure was 25 per cent—and the projected sales figure for men's cosmetics in 1970 is one billion dollars. There are, at the moment, more than 200 scented items for men on the market. One manufacturer claims that in 1948, 30 per cent of American men used an underarm deodorant, but that the figure now is 80 per cent, the same percentage, he says, as with women.

Does anyone doubt that sunglasses are related to fashion? I didn't know until recently that there is a Sunglass Institute of America, but there is, and it says that sales of shades have gone from \$60 million in 1960 to \$175 million in 1966—largely because of men. And then there are girdies. That's what *Exquisite Form* calls them when they are selling to women. When they peddle essentially the same nylon-and-spandex item to men, they call it *Mandate*; you'll find ads for it in most men's magazines, and *Exquisite Form* reports that sales are increasing “remarkably.” We might even note the existence of matching “his and hers” wigs. Seventy bucks apiece, identical except for the fact that “his” is four inches longer. They come in 22 colors from Mathews Hair Products in New York, which ships out something like 5000 a week; they're also available from, believe it or not, a firm called Mr. Teeny-Bopper, Incorporated.

IT APPEARS, then, that we males are already caught up in the Big Fashion Business about which we've been kidding the chicks for so long. It's not even unusual anymore for a couple of men to meet for a business appointment in the lobby of the Algonquin and for the conversation to begin, “What a beautiful suit! Is it a Cardin?” Two guys have already asked me where they can duplicate one of my strands of beads (it was made by some Indians

in Louisiana, and you can buy one like it at Liberty House in Greenwich Village).

The beads, the shades and even the cosmetics are incidental, however; the excitement is in the clothes. In September, my wife and I went off to New York City, to see what we could find to say about the fashion industry. We were thinking, of course, of women's fashions. What we found was that nobody “in fashion” is the least bit interested in women's clothes (“They're all terribly dull this year,” one fashion editor told us, and after we saw the fall collections we readily agreed, except perhaps for some stuff by Valentino and for Saint Laurent's pants).

A nice lady at Alexander's, however, was kind enough to invite us to a free booze bash and fashion show celebrating the opening of two new men's boutiques. The shops are for the wares, respectively, of Valentino of Rome (lots of velvet and a surprising amount of black, but I liked the orange-and-beige plaid sleeveless jacket with the orange turtleneck sweater and rust-colored trousers: \$150) and of Mr. Fish of London (Michael Fish did the clothing—most notably James Fox's—for a movie called “Duffy,” which you might enjoy for that reason but probably not for any other).

The show, featuring clothes by both designers as well as some stuff from Alexander's own men's boutique, was commentated (so help me, that's the word they use in the business) by Robert Green, who is fashion director for *Playboy* and who, unwittingly, made me realize what's important about “the peacock revolution” (as *Esquire* calls it). Mr. Green's commentary was, to use the exact descriptive word, bitchy. In addition, it was replete with thinly veiled references to the designers' “not being afraid to admit what they are,” and with coy assurances to Alexander's rather stuffy customers that they wouldn't have to be “afraid” to wear some of the clothes.

It's hardly news to anybody that a lot of fashion designers are homosexual. I suppose it can be argued that it may be a great release for some of them to be able to design some really swinging things for men—taking full advantage of color, of materials, of striking and dramatic effects in a way heretofore reserved for womenswear. (If, by the way, you're still a believer in the myth that the design of high fashion is a homosexual “revenge” against women, you're either being silly or you've never looked at, say, Jacqueline Kennedy.)

Certainly, in the show we saw (which admittedly featured the most extreme designs by both designers), there were some startling things. What the program listed, for example, as a “velvet double-breasted suit” turned out to be a simple business suit that happened to be in velvet; what made it really swing was that Fish

had done it in emerald green ("You couldn't exactly wear this to the office," said Green—which tells me something about his office; I could wear it to mine). A notch-collared double-breasted coat looks a little odd in ranch mink. And Valentino can get away with wearing a black velvet dinner suit with *moiré* trim and vest, but I can't.

If I wore a dinner jacket a lot, though, I'd be willing to take a chance with Fish's printed snakeskin, and I think I'd look sort of dashing in Valentino's green tweed suit (velvet trim and all) with matching full circle cape.

Because what Green's bitchy commentary ("I love the way Don wears clothes, but he always walks so fast") brought home to me is that the question of homosexuality has been overcome in men's clothing—the queer barrier has been broken. As recently as a year ago, had I gone to that same party wearing that same green velveteen shirt and those same hipuggers, every stranger in the room would have assumed that I was gay—or I would have assumed that they would assume it, which is what matters—and even some of my acquaintances would have whispered to their wives, "I didn't know that about him." Today, some of them might regard me as exhibitionistic or lacking taste or just plain nutty—but "queer" is no longer the first word that pops into their heads.

And to turn it around: something has happened to me, too, because I no longer give a damn whether that's what they think or not. Somebody said at that cocktail party in New York that to wear the really far-out stuff, no matter what your sexual predilections, you have to be pretty damn sure who and what you are—you have to be rid of all the up-tightness about your own sexual identity. It's an overstatement. I think, but only an overstatement; and one of the meanings of the revolution in men's clothing is that a lot more Americans, particularly young Americans, are relatively freer of sexual hang-ups than their elders.

Possibly because of my profession, I've always had some awareness of the role-playing that's involved when I decide what to wear in the morning. When I'm off to interview some Big Functionary, I have to decide, as a matter of craft, whether I want to appear as a soberly conservative type (the old brown suit), the stereotyped "reporter" (the old sports coat), the breezy chatterer (the new sports coat), or whatever. And inevitably, with the deliberately made choice comes a change in manner, even in personality, that is to some extent inadvertent.

A woman—in my lifetime, at least—has always had a much wider range of such choices available to her every morning. Always within limits, of course (including limits of the stereotypes by which she lives). She can be siren, gamine, intellectual, housewife, demure working girl or extroverted career woman:

she can don any one of a dozen roles, depending on whether she chooses the simple gray dress or the silver vinyl miniskirt. Now we can have the same freedom.

OF COURSE all this applies only on a certain level of affluence, but it's a long way from an upper-middle-class phenomenon. Leave the boutiques at Alexander's (where the emerald green business suit is \$149, the Valentino dinner suit \$300), and go across the floor to the regular menswear department. Neither the quality nor the style is quite the same, but you can buy an excellent orange turtleneck with French cuffs and a ruffled front for six or seven bucks, and pretty much anything else you want (try Bloomingdale's across the street, too). Stores like Experiment I in the Village or the Town Squire in San Francisco have some great stuff at reasonable prices, and if you're not after the most extreme things you can find, then any menswear department can help you across the revolutionary line (even staid Sears, Roebuck knows it's not a passing fad: they've redesigned their menswear departments so that it's easier for you to buy "coordinates").

Barring genuine poverty, then, the new freedom in colors and fabrics and designs, and the personal freedom that can go with it, are within reach of any American male who is willing to admit the one thing he has to admit: that he is a lot of different people, and that he isn't ashamed of any of them. He even has a strong feminine streak (I don't mean "effeminate"), if he will not merely admit it but affirm and enjoy it. A Minnesota firm, B. W. Harris, makes a coat for \$60 (wool melton with a polyester pile collar and lining) which they advertise with the slogan: "Wear a commitment, not a coat."

A great army of male Americans is afraid of change, and change is the one unavoidable thing about America, the one thing which too many Americans cannot bear to think about.

But change is as unstoppable as falling water, and if in a short time they are not wearing beads they will at least be wearing suits with six-button, double-breasted coats, or "Dr. Zhivago" shirts, or whichever aspect of the "peacock revolution" happens to drift down to where they are, as colored dress shirts and wider neckties already have.

I can't blame them for being boggled by, say, Stanley Blacker's Nehru cocktail suit in ruby velvet. I'm a little boggled by it myself. But I have at least learned that not only is change inevitable, it's also inevitable that the rate of change must increase. Things change more and more quickly, and this change, at least, I like.

