

QUEST 1981

The idea behind QUEST

I can't think of a more dangerous time in history, both in terms of education and social policy. And I guess that ~~years~~ ago when we decided to hold these conferences that the reason that we projected, which was that while we were a union and we were dedicated to the idea that it was about time that teachers had some power and that many of the problems that we had faced in the past were due to our powerlessness, that these conferences were based on the idea that while there in power is membership, power in money, and power in political action and power in collective bargaining, and power in affiliation, and power that can be brought to bear through strikes, or other actions, that there is also power in ideas. / And we are meeting at a time when the major problems that we have, and they can be divided into the problems that we have in terms of the national economy and the overall budget cuts and economic programs that are being proposed and those that are particularly addressed to and targeted to and concerned with education. That overall, the problem that we face today is that ideas, what people used to believe and were somewhat helpful, they no longer believe, or not as many people believe, or they don't believe as strongly. And new ideas, ideas which in many cases are completely wrong, are now embraced. And I'm not saying embraced only by those of another political party or political persuasion, but embraced by many of our own members. And I would be surprised if they were not embraced by many in this room. And so it's good that we have these annual meetings so that we can discuss the ideas which affect what will be happening to us and to public education. And many of them, of course, you've discussed in other sessions and there isn't the time to touch on them here. But I've talked about the two major areas that are before us. One is the broad economic area and the other is that which deals with us, specifically in education.

Now in the next few weeks I'll be sending out materials, some of them will be our materials, but mostly they will be articles and speeches that I have read and which I think are the text, they are the criticism, the ideas, the readings,

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or to put it, to anticipate a little bit, we all know that there's just a certain amount of time you spend in school and if you give a lot of homework, and if the kids do it, they'll learn a lot more if they do it. Well I'm going to have some homework going out to all of you and others because with a major change like the one that has taken place and continues to take place, we have a lot of homework to do, and mostly that homework is knowing, 'How can we handle ourselves, how can we answer the arguments of the opposition, how can we win over our own members, how can we win over parents and people in the community?' They're now hitting us with a lot of new ideas. We had them a few years ago. When they said teachers shouldn't have collective bargaining, we had an answer. Teachers shouldn't have unions, we had an answer. Teachers shouldn't have strikes, teachers shouldn't be involved in political activity, we had all, merit rating, I mean we could have a whole list of issues that have appeared over the years. We had answers. Do we have answers to the problems that confront us today? Well, first in the economic area I want to refer to you one reading, there are others, but this morning a New York Time Magazine section has a long piece by an economist. We don't have to agree with everything in the article, or with the economist but it's an outstanding piece. Lester Thoreau a long piece analyzing the question of whether or not the proposals made by President Reagan will end inflation and bring prosperity to America. And, a second one which I will send out is a speech made by the head of the Carnegie Foundation, Allen Pifer, he recently made a speech to the Federation of Protestant Philanthropies in New York about what was going to happen in the next ten or twenty years and it wasn't the usual narrow focus, it was something that will help us in responding. And in his speech he talked about the problem that we now have in Congress and the Legislature and with our own members, and we says that there are a number of myths out there that people believe. And because they believe these myths they are lead into the ranks of those who are ready

to slash and to cut budgets and to do away with programs. Well, what are they? Well, the first one is the myth that Americans are worse off now, that we've declined and we're worse off now than we were in the recent past, that there's been some sort of a big loss. Well, and obviously that the loss is due to administrations and to policies of spending and etc. Well, what are the facts? The facts are that if you look at 1960 and 1980 that Americans are now in real dollars, I'm not talking about just phoney inflation or anything like that, but that our purchasing power today is 70% greater than 1960. And that these policies have brought us tremendous progress. In 1960 22% of the people in this country were below the poverty line and we're now down to 11%. So that's a lot of progress. Of course that doesn't change a certain reality. We can be a lot richer and we are. But how do people feel? You talk to the average person and he feels or she feels something, that we're losing. Why is that? Well, the reason is simple. We got so used to getting more every year that when the more stopped being as more as it was the year before, when it slowed down a little bit, we started feeling that this is terrible, that we have to turn everything around, we have to destroy and abolish all those things that brought us a 70% increase in our standard of living in a 20 year period of time.

Then there's a second myth, and that is because of what we've been doing in all of our programs that the middle class has been suffering and has been paying taxes and that all of us have been ripped off by poor people. The middle class has been paying the taxes and out there are a bunch of poor people who don't want to work. And we have been paying our taxes so that they can get all the money and live in, if not comfort, at least they don't have to work and that's what they want. They just want to take our money and live that way and thank God we now have an administration that recognizes that, and is going to change that. That's part of it. There's no question that that's part of it.

The last election, let me just interrupt myself and say that I'm not trying to undo the last election, that's done. And with the letters that we've written and whatever we can do in the next day or two with, telephone calls and telegrams, we will either succeed or not succeed in the budget cuts. But we're not talking about one election or one budget, we're really talking about what's going to happen next year in the House of Representatives. What's going to happen two years from now in the President? What's going to happen over the next 10 or 15 or 20 years? And if we're not equipped to win over our own members and all the people that they influence then the last election is a first step, and not the last, or it's not a standoff. And so we ought to know that those, including many of our own members who believe that the last 20 or 30 years or 50 years has been a process of stealing from the middle class, the hard working people and giving it to the lazy, and those at the bottom and all of the epithets that go with it. We really ought to take a look, and they ought to see that most of the money that's been collected by government has been used for college education for the middle class and for transportation and airports for the middle class, and even for helping workers who are middle class who are laid off in certain industries to live for a year or two or to move. And if you look at the two major national programs that are designed for the poor, food stamps and Medicare. Those costs have actually gone down as a percentage of the national budget. And then look at Social Security which is largely a middle class program, especially now that it's indexed to the cost of living and Medicare. 25% of the whole national budget is devoted to these middle class programs. So that the idea that the nonproductive, unemployed section of society has been ripping off the rest of us. It's there. Our members have it, go to a lot of meetings, talk to a lot of people, a lot of my friends. We keep saying that first we should know it's not true. And secondly, we should

know it hurts in terms of what members of Congress, the state legislatures do if we keep talking and thinking that way. And then the third notion: that federal spending, well, we've got to stop that because that causes inflation and it's really gotten out of hand, and thank God somebody's finally gonna go in there, who's gonna put the lid on. Well, twenty years 1960-1980, twenty years ago federal spending was 18% of the gross national product. And today it's 23%. Huge? Lower than almost any industrial country in the world.

So we get to the next myth, and that is that all this government spending is what's causing inflation and if we want our dollars to mean something we better cut it out. Well, does government spending cause inflation? Sure it does. As much as the rise in energy cost, or food costs, or interest rates. And finally, and this is a very important part of what we face in education, is the notion is that well, the government tried to do all sorts of things and they failed. Government intervention has failed and it's about time that the federal government gets off your back because all it does is bring in rules and regulations and it doesn't solve any problems. Well, it does bring in rules and regulations and a lot of them are asinine and burdensome and they ought to be gotten rid of. But the fact is that we've made progress in education, in health care, in eliminating poverty, in a whole bunch of areas. Now we have to be prepared in the years to come, not just, this is not for the day after tomorrow, or for next year. We are not going to be able to function as teachers, as teacher unionists. We are not going to be able to preserve American education. We're not going to be able to preserve the jobs of our members or the programs that we offer students, unless we can reverse the attitude that exists generally, which I've been describing, and therefore we can't just go out and say, 'You need another teacher' or 'You need another guidance counselor' or you need this program or you need that program. Our members must be able to go out and talk to hundreds, and thousands, and millions of people about the general philosophy

of budget cutting and the administration. Because it's not just the education cuts that are going to hurt us. When they cut monies at the state level for transportation, the state is going to have to find money somewhere to make up for it. When they cut money in higher education, the state's gonna have to find money. When they cut welfare costs or Medicaid and Medicare costs, when they modify Social Security formulas, when they get rid of CETA programs, every single one of those results in a renegotiation, a restructuring, a change of everything that you've now got because the state and the county and the local government, and the tax payer, and everybody has to start asking the question all over again. One, which of these programs do we preserve, where do we get the money? And who gives money and where do we take? Who gets? We are involved in a massive renegotiation. And down somewhere are the things that we do, including our contracts. It's not just education. Every single cut, every single program to redistribute is something which at some point will raise the question, "Can't we take the money from state aid to education?" Now, that's a tough thing to go back and talk to our members about, that they cannot be concerned with education cuts only because. Every single cut in these programs is potentially an education cut if some level of government decides that what is being cut cannot be cut and the money has to be found somewhere. And the somewhere is where we are. Now that's not an idea that we will get across in one day. Maybe not in one year. But we have to start. Now, I think that the second is that our members in addition to believing many of these myths and in addition to not understanding that every one of these cuts is potentially theirs. They also are like other Americans. They listen to the President. There's a problem with inflation, there's a problem with productivity in our society, and the President presents a program and the tendency is a good one. It's a good instinct. The President has a program, support him. I have that tendency. Most of you do. Not only

with the President of the United States, but with the president of your local union and the president of your state union and with all sorts of organizations that you're in. It's a natural tendency of people. The question is whether the President's program will work. And unfortunately it won't. It won't work because it will actually, and this morning's article which I refer you to gives you very extensive specifics, but essentially it will not work because the idea that by giving a tax cut that people are going to save and invest money and that the business people who are able to then go to the banks and get this money will then start making fine automobiles so that we can compete with the Japanese is a very wonderful theory. And if I believed it I would support the President's program, even though it would be tough in education for one or two or three or four or five years but I would be coming before you and saying, look, if we could just get those automobiles rolling again people would be buying them and paying taxes and we could support schools and I would be standing in front of you asking you to tighten belts because the main thing we've got to do is get the country rolling again. But there is no evidence that these tax cuts will be used that way. According to this morning's article, there's a long history where American tax payers, if they get money they save 6% and they spend 94%. There is very extensive evidence that that will happen now, that very little will be saved. If you really want people to save money, you ought to say that any money that you put in the bank, that you've earned during the year is tax exempt. You really want people to save money, say 'You're earning \$25,000 a year, put \$5,000 in the bank, you don't have to pay taxes on the \$5,000.' But the government taxes the interest that you get in a savings bank even though it's lousy interest. You want to get people to be productive, discourage them from borrowing money so that money is available for industry instead of for somebody to buy some personal pleasures. How do you discourage them? Well, tax borrowing. In other words

don't say that if you borrow from a bank your interest payments are tax deductible. That encourages you to go out and borrow. Well, there are a lot of things in there that could be done if you want a target. But the fact is, and we will get materials out, the ideas are wrong, they will not work. The sacrifices that people are expected to make are really for nothing. By the way, the sacrifices that we're gonna have to make if we want the United States to get rolling again, and we have to because there will not be money for education, higher education, elementary and secondary, early childhood, continuing education. There won't be money unless this country is prospering, unless people are rolling in money, they're not going to be willing to give a part of what they have for education. They're not going to say I'm going to give up my house or my car or something else. If they're getting a lot of new money they'll say I'll give up part of my new money for this, but they're not going to. So we have a stake, a very important stake in this. There will have to be sacrifices if we're going to build roads and factories, and reindustrialize and rebuild the country. But not the way that it's been proposed where you give somebody a tax cut and he doesn't have to build a factory or create jobs or do something about American automobiles or American steel. He can take his money and invest it in Japanese stocks, or antiques, or a shopping center or whatever. It's not a targeted program so it doesn't work. So the advice I have to give to President Reagan, who is about to take a lot of money and give it to business communities, is that you cannot solve problems by throwing money at business.

Let's get to education. The last few weeks we've had a Coleman Report and we've had a bunch of other reports. I want to tell you that you don't have to be paranoid to have enemies. I have noticed that in the last 20 years when people were about ready to do something to us, a bunch of reports came out. They all seem to be objective and scientific. They were all sort of nonsense if you

really looked at them. But the fact is that when the report came out it made front page and it made Time and it made Newsweek, and everybody's talking about it, and it's now science. It's James Coleman and it's science and it's out there. And then when Coleman himself writes a letter to the New York Times saying that's not exactly what he meant, well that's in the 'Letters to the Editor' column two weeks later, and very few people read that. We have an attack which, if you didn't feel it five weeks ago or ten weeks or forty weeks ago or fifty weeks ago, please notice. Coleman report saying that private schools, That's what the reports were, that's not what the evidence is, that's not what the facts are, that's not what even Coleman now says he said. But two weeks ago what he said was that private schools do a better job. Students, regardless of their background, achieve more in private schools than in public schools. We had a three week series in Newsweek. The articles were very good. Sure they had a few things saying that we have problems, but the problems that they talked about are the problems that we all talk about. We all know that there are problems in schools. They listened very carefully. They spoke to many of you and to me and to others and they did a very fair job in reporting that. But what was the front cover? There was a pencil twisted like a pretzel and a headline "Why Our Schools are Failing". Why our magazines are failing. They're not failing. They're succeeding. And what they have found is if you put a headline on the front cover which is exciting, even if it has nothing to do with reality or truth, that's the way to sell the magazine. Now, in order to take care of your conscience, then inside you tell the truth. And the first sentence in the article says, well, it's pretty surprising but American schools are doing better than they ever did before. That's the first sentence. But that isn't the cover. Well, how many of you read the article? How many of you walked by the news stand and just looked at the cover? And inside the article there were

some pretty fantastic figures. They commissioned a Gallup Poll which showed that the overwhelming majority of the American people believe that their kids are getting a better education than they got when they went to school. And the schools are doing a very good job, so how you get a failing mark on the front page and then inside you get the consumers of education saying something different. Well, it tells you something about how to sell magazines, and it also tells you something about the problems that we face. We have Coleman. We have the tax credit fight. And, just a few sentences on that just to say that many of our own members are not yet aware of how important their fight is. They think it's only \$500. They think it's not going to hurt. They think that the kid in the suburbs is so happy with his school that he isn't going to go anywhere. They aren't thinking that tuition tax credits of \$250 or \$100 or \$500 is just the opening of a door with federal tax credits which will begin at that level and grow and grow and grow and local tax credits and state level tax credits and that we're not talking about a small amount of money to the poor family that is now sending a child to private school. We are talking about a new system of education in America with public funding of non-public education. Where the public schools are required by law to do various things and the private schools able to be superior because they can get rid of all the problems or not accept the problems in the first place. Our own members don't understand that. I want to move now to our problems. And I want to be somewhat inaccurate, which I have to be because of time in categorizing. I think we've got problems because of several reasons. First, the public schools in the last twenty years have lost a substantial amount of popularity and public support because we have been compelled by law and or the effect laws, regulations, legislation, court decisions to accept a number, adopt a number of programs that are basically

unpopular with the general public. And I'm not now saying that these programs are good or bad. I believe some of them are good and I think some of them are bad. Everybody sitting here will differ on these issues. But we won't differ on the fact that the moves by the courts on certain integration programs have been generally unpopular. By the way, with both blacks and whites according to the polls. That bilingual education, with the general public, is overwhelmingly unpopular. Education of the handicapped, not a question of whether handicapped should be educated within our society, but in terms of the general public, popular or unpopular? And we could go through this list. With each obligation which the schools have taken there are a certain number of people who've said well, I used to support the public schools and I wanted kids to grow up and be educated and do this and that but now they're spending their money on this and that and now I'll be damned if I'm going to go out of my way. I'm going to go against this candidate or the school budget or something else. So that is one package there that there are series of unpopular programs which have reduced the public support for the schools. Now a second one has to do with the fact that the schools in the last 20 years have reacted. We used to have, and I guess we all know that, sort of a elitist school system. Kids from homes where they did very well stayed in school and did very well and we didn't care very much for a long period of time about poor kids, black kids, hispanic kids, immigrant kids, working class kids. They wanted to drop, fine. We certainly had no program to keep them there. No program to reach, and then came the 50's and 60's and 70's and something happened. We did reach out to these kids. And the reading scores and the math scores and retention scores and college scores and everything else shows that the fact that we concentrated on kids who were at the bottom has worked. They are going to school, they're going to school longer. They're graduating high school, they're going to college. They're reading better. The national assessment scores last week and three weeks

ago on every measure, those students who were targeted by the federal government had done well. It worked. The very opposite of what we're being told, spending money doesn't work. It works. However, in the process we have created a backlash, a feeling that we no longer care about the kids who are bright, and who are going to be the future nuclear physicists and the future doctors and lawyers etc. The feeling is that once upon a time the only people we cared about the small bunch up here who were going to make it. And now the feeling is that we don't care about them at all. The only people we care about are the kids who are probably not going to make it all and we're going to rescue them a little bit. And this is a major problem that we face in terms of gaining the support of the American public. Because the feeling out there now is that we have abandoned quality in order to pursue equality. And that in a sense, instead of bringing the bottom up to the top we have brought the top down to the bottom. That we have abandoned standards. And when you read these articles and these attacks and supports for vouchers and tuition tax credits, the thing is give those who want quality and standards a change^c to go out there and get this wonderful education that they want. So that is something that we have to face. And I hope that I don't have to stress too much the fact that I don't believe that we ought to go back to the time when we should abandon everyone and merely educate the top 10% or 15% or 20%. That the problem we have is holding on to both values. That you reach those at the bottom and the middle but that you have to provide an adequate and challenging education for those at the top because otherwise you're going to get what you have now, which is a tremendous reaction on the part of the public.

And then I think the third thing is kind of a tactical program, that is we used to, and some people still do and many of us still do, we used to appeal to people to put money into education because of what it did for poor people and for minorities. And I have no trouble saying that right now and saying it again.

I will continue to. But you know every decade has a kind of thrust, a kind of major problem that people are concerned with. In the 1950's, late 1950's, people were grabbed by the fact that the Russian Sputnik was up there before we were up there. And there's a great article last week by Konracke of the New Republic in the Wall Street Journal in which he says "too bad the space shuttle went off without any problems". Just think what happened for American education when the Russians were ahead. Now that we got the space shuttle off and there were no problems you can cut the education budget because there's no problem with education. And he used that to make a point, an important point. In the late 50's people said we've got to put money into science and mathematics and languages and international understanding because the Russians are beating us. And in the 60's and some of the 70's people said well poverty, civil rights and minorities. Well, by the way those are both still true. We still have problems with international competition and we certainly haven't solved our problems in terms of discrimination and minorities, but that isn't what grabs people today. What is it that does grab people today? There are two major issues. One of them is the fact that the United States is not productive as it used to be, that our automobiles can't compete with Japan, that our industries are moving out of the country and are shutting down. And that something has to be done to rebuilt this country. We need better cars. We need better machines. We've got to compete with other countries. And that includes building new factories and machinery but it also means investing in human talents in terms of having better designers and better scientists, etc. That is something which grabs alot of people. If you talk to people out there and say we can't cut the education budget because it's going to hurt poor people, if you've got somebody sitting in front who agrees with you, you've got an old fashioned liberal. And there are fewer of those around.

If you read the New York Times front page this morning, there's an 11% jump within one year of people in this country of people who consider themselves Republicans rather than Democrats. One year. So there's a rapid change. You've got a much better chance if you're talking to somebody saying you shouldn't cut the education funds because, look, why is it that we can't produce an American automobile? Don't we need some people who are smart in mathematics and physics and engineering? And if you don't invest in that right now you're not gonna have a car that's gonna be able to compete with the Japanese, ten years from now if you don't make that sort of an investment. I wish we were still in a period where we could use justice questions. We're not. But if we're giving people the wrong answers to what bothers them, they're not going to be listening to us. And the second issue that they are concerned with is defense. I know it's very difficult for teachers who always get up and stand up and say 'Well, if they would only reduce the defense budget we'd be able to have more money for education.' If you want to continue saying that you can. But I hope we would go out there with a line that is a correct line, that says that most of the people who are in the armed forces do not know how to read the instruction manuals as how to operate any piece of military equipment that we now produce. As a matter of fact the Army and Navy are rewriting all of the instructions. Walter Reed Army Hospital, right here in Washington, is rewriting all the signs in the hospital so that the reading level on the signs in the hospital is at a third grade level because they find that many of the military personnel cannot find their way around the hospital with the signs that are there right now. One Navy member just turned the wrong knob and ruined one half million dollars worth of equipment because of an inability to read a simple instruction written at a seventh grade reading level. So I don't want to talk about whether we need more or less. I say yes, the United States needs greater military and defense

capability. We need people who can read the instructions as to how to use the gun. We need people who may be able to design a better one ten years from now. And instead of fighting we ought to take the two major issues that are before the public now, and just as Sputnik added to American education in the 50's and the Civil Rights movement and the war on poverty added in the 60's and 70's, the two issues of productivity in the country and productivity doesn't just mean giving some guy the money to build a new building. It also means educating enough smart people to design the machines and the right products to be able to compete with others. That human talents are every bit as important as the material things that they're talking about. And that you just can't buy more war equipment without having people smart enough to use it. Those are two very important things that we have going for us.

I have in front of me, Education Daily. I talked a few minutes ago about things that are done by law enforcement people in education that make life difficult for us. There's a Texas judge who ruled that a certain program for Hispanic children was deficient. Maybe he was right. I have not seen the program. He may very well be right. But one of the reasons that he said the program was wrong and violated the Constitution of the United States was that the program was "trying to Americanize the students". Now can you imagine the support for public education that we're going to get in the United States from people at every level if we say that judges can come in and say that a program designed to Americanize students has to be thrown out and is unconstitutional. So one of the things we've got to do, is we have to be very careful about programs that are unpopular. I'm not saying we should never support an unpopular cause. We've done it and we'll continue to do it. But we've got to weigh it when education is endangered. We've talked at previous meetings. And I will just say that one of the things that we've got to do is to organize the education establishment. That includes our own members. It includes school board people, superintendents; It means reducing the amount of conflict. The more we attack school boards for

for being people who just put a lot of money into administration, merely political, don't give a damn about children, this and that. Everybody says that's great, let's have tuition tax credits. Why the hell should we give local money to a school board that's like that? And the more they say that teacher's unions are just defending incompetent teachers and tenure does the following and preparation periods are nothing but, and etc., they more they are. And by the way we've got to do that at the local level. First of all we've got to stop hitting them on these things because the public is loosing confidence. And we've got to say, look you stop hitting us and we'll stop hitting you. Right now there is a bigger problem. Let's find a more quiet way of dealing with the problems that we differ on. The second point I've already mentioned. That is reach out to new groups that we've never talked to before. Go out and talk to a local Army Reserve outfit about what the effect of education cuts is going to mean for the future of our defense preparedness in the United States. I'm going to do it with national groups. I've already started doing it. I'm going to meet with people who are concerned with the future security of this country. By the way, I happen to be concerned with the security of this country. I think that the Russians are stronger than we are. I think that tomorrow they could take the Middle East and we couldn't do a damned thing. We might not be able to get a helicopter in there or anything else. Which would mean that Europe and Japan having to buy their stuff from the Soviets. I'm concerned. If you're not concerned then you just use it as an argument because it's a good argument. But if you're concerned you'll do it with a conviction that I will do it with because I believe it's true. Talk to military people and say I'm concerned with the military needs of this country as a teacher. Do you know that the baby boom is gone and we're now about to go to the baby bust. You're gonna have to take from some of these kids that are dropping out. They're going to be your

future military people. Who goes into the Army? What are we going to do, schools and military people to educate them? And the other group of people to go to are people in the business community. I found out something a few weeks ago, and that is if you look at the Fortune 500 list of major cooperations in this country most of them have set up their own schools for the employees who start working for them. They just assume that they didn't learn a damned thing throughout their education career. They're going to teach them. What does that mean for us? We ought to be going to local business people. Georgia, I understand, has done it. I understand that they have somebody in the state education department who goes over to Germany and Japan and says if you will build your factory here, we'll tell you that by the time you've built your factory we'll have workers who will have the skills that you will need. I don't know if they do it or not, but they've been pretty successful at attracting people. But one of the things that we ought to be doing is going to.. Don't assume that the local business guy, because he doesn't want to pay taxes and because he voted for Ronald Reagan and he's a Republican or a conservative or because he doesn't like unions, he's all those things. But you know something, he would like to have people coming into his place who can read and write and spell and count. He'd prefer not to have to run a school. Banks are not schools. Factories are not schools. They would rather have us do the job. Do you know how amazing it would be if teachers went and spoke to the local bank president and say we're concerned with the quality of people that you're getting and we want you to show some interest in the schools so that we can produce people for you who will be able to do the job that you need to run your bank? We've never talked about that before, but it's a very, very important part of maintaining education.

Now the other thing we've got to do with Coleman and all these other people,

I know how to close down, you know how to close down all the private schools in America, except those that are dedicated to a special cause like teaching religion.

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You want to teach religion? Well, we can't do that in public schools. You want to teach racism, or you just want to keep it absolutely segregated, we can't do that in public schools. You want to teach a political ideology, we can't do that. But if you take those schools that are devoted to these special purposes, beyond those we can close down all those private schools that are dedicated to providing a superior education for students. How would you do it? It's very simple. Why shouldn't we open up schools in the public sector that have the same standards that private schools do? Why shouldn't we be able to go to the parent who is paying \$3,000.00 to go a private school and say we want your kid in our school and we're going to have the curriculum and we're going to not permit kids who are violent and disruptive to stay there. We're going to have the same code of conduct and we are going to maintain standards. We're not going to give out marks just because somebody is breathing or living. We're going to give out marks only if people meet certain standards. And your kid will have to read Dickens and Shakespeare and the kid will have to learn mathematics and science and hard subjects and we don't have very many electives. This is a tough program and this is the school and there is no reason in the world, except if you want to get rid of money, why you should go out to a private school. Because we have the same thing for you and we also don't have a value-free or value-neutral curriculum. We're not going to say if somebody kills 50 people in Atlanta or 20 somewhere else we're not just going to say, you should understand the murderer because his father wasn't a very nice guy. We're going to have an orientation or our country and on values and it's all going to be there and you can have it and you don't have to spend \$3000 for each of your children. Come here, bring your child to this school and go to the next school board meeting and write your member of Congress and write your legislature and support the public schools because they are for your child and they provide a quality education.

If we can't do that, we're going to lose. We are not going to going to win the battle of whether vouchers and tax credits and funding because we have a strong union. We're not going to win because we're going to go out on strike. That's good for other purposes in other contexts. We are now in a situation which is very much like the automobile workers. How do you sell your car when there are other cars around that people think are better? And maybe they even are better. And if the other car is better you have to start asking yourself, why. Can we produce a better one and will we produce a better one and will we advertise enough so that everyone out there gets a restoration of that confidence?

Once upon a time this conference was a kind of an add-on where in addition to union activities we were doing some professional things to show that we also have professional interests for some of those teachers who were not involved in some of bargaining process. But, I think what we are doing in the area of professional development and issues, this is the life and death issue. What we determine in collective bargaining is very important. It determines how much a teacher earns next year. I don't think that's unimportant. But, what we're doing in this area determines whether there will be public schools five years from now. The questions are of a different order. Now I would like to conclude this talk with a quotation from a president of a private college. His name is Stephen Trachtenburg. He's the president of the University of Hartford, a private institution. He gave a speech to the 9th world wide Armed Services Education conference. Department of the Army, University of Maryland. This was given on April 9. He tells two stories. The first of them deals with the question of money and maybe it even deals with the question of money and education. The second deals with, what I believe is our role in the next year or two in putting education back together. On the money question, he says, he starts by quoting my idea that maybe education should be put into

the Pentagon and he disagrees with it. But he says it may be the way farmers save a certain amount of seed for the next year. That the education budget ought to be indexed to the military budget. But then he talks about, I don't mean to make too much of this, and I would summerize this thesis by relating the story of an economist who upon learning that all the best people rode horses, went out and got one for himself. Since this was the first venture into equestrian matters he was a little green about how to stable his mount. But he was after all an economist and so he decided to use those skills in negotiating a good deal with the stable. When he visited the first stable and asked how much the cost would be, they explained that it would be \$200 a month. He knew that horses generated fertilizer and that the fertilizer could be sold to people who kept gardens. So he asked the stableman who keeps the fertilizer. He was told, why you get the fertilizer. So the economist thought that was fine and he planned on selling the fertilizer and offsetting that against the cost of the stable. But before he closed the deal he decided that he would like at a second stable, and as luck would have it, the second one asked only a hundred dollars and he once again said, this sounds real good but who keeps the fertilizer? And the answer was you do. This fellow was a prudent sort so he decided to look at a third place and he went to a third one. He was told the stable there would be only \$50 a month. He thought that was really marvelous. But before proceeding to sign on the dotted line he put his usual question, who keeps the fertilizer. The stableman answered, "Mister, for \$50 a month there ain't no fertilizer. Think about that for awhile. I don't know much about horses either. I read that a few weeks ago and I just realized what it meant this morning. It's something about throwing money at problems or something.

Finally, there's a delightful story about where we are. That is that we have to be.. I don't see any other group in this country that realizes the

importance or urgency of the problem that we've been talking about. I stand here with great pride that we had our journalists on Friday night, they were so bad and you were so good in getting up and demanding of them that education has standards, that if their view prevails we won't have much education. But we're the ones who are going to have to sit with principals, school board members, commissioners, superintendents and start telling them if we don't restructure education so that we can handle the problems of discipline, law and order, and the problems of quality in the schools, and the problems of values; if we don't handle these three problems there isn't going to be much of a school system. Trachtenburg ended his speech, and I'll end by reading just what he says: "I began my remarks today by recalling my junior year in college. Permit me to conclude with a story about the school from which I received my elementary education. At public school #254 all the seventh grade boys took a course called 'shop'. There we were exposed to the wonders of wood-working and taught to distinguish a brad from a nail, and a crosscut from a rip saw, and provided other similar bits of information thought likely to be useful to us as adult males. The girls, of course, were at cooking class while we boys were busy at our bench; a clear violation of the law today. Our carpentry instructor was named Mr. Vogel. He was a lovely man, an artisan and educator who welcomed the chance to teach his craft to young people. I was however, a source of some despair to him. Everything I touched seemed to splinger. Bookends never ended, tie racks never racked, and lamps never lit. Nevertheless, I came away from the experience informed in at least three ways. First, I developed a great and lasting respect for skilled workmen. Second, from that day to this I have done my best to avoid hammer, chisel and vise. Third, I remember what Mr. Vogel used to reply to me when I went to him with my project in pieces and said, 'Look, Mr. Vogel, it broke'. He would say, Trachtenburg, it didn't break. You broke it. You fix it.' Our schools didn't

break. We broke them. We should never have to confront another Sputnik.

No professor should ever have to challenge his students as citizens of a second class power. We hear talk of the reindustrialization and the revitalization of America. Their time has come. Our schools are the place to start. They can be fixed. We can fix them with your help.