

BU:

Mr. Albert Shanker is head of the single largest local union within the AFL-CIO, New York's United Federation of Teachers. He is much in the news because an explosive disagreement between him and the superintendent of a school complex in an area predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican resulted in a strike of the teachers' union which lasted most of the fall of 1968. There were many issues, small and large, relevant and irrevelant, to educational administration that went into the strike. Even so, it confronted the community with several questions of national significance. Among them, what is to be tolerated under the rubric of community control? Mr. Shanker is a New Yorker, the son of a Polish Rabbi, who went to college at the University of Illinois, where he majored in philosophy and won honors, returning to New York for graduate work at Columbia University. He has always been interested in public affairs. In 1936, at the age of eight, he was accosting New Yorkers going to the polls urging them to vote for Franklin Roosevelt, the appropriate choice for eight-year-olds. At college he joined the ~~XXXXXX~~ Young People's Socialist League and in New York, the Liberal Party. He began by teaching mathematics in the public schools, then he joined the union, and a few years ago was elected its head. I should like to begin by asking Mr. Shanker whether he believes that the public school problem in New York is significantly worse than the problem in other major cities, say, Chicago, Los Angeles or Cleveland?

think

SH: I ~~think~~ that that ~~depend~~ depends upon how one defines the problem. If we define the problem in educational terms, namely, if what you are asking is the question: do children in New York City do as well or not as well, in terms of achievement, or in terms of entering colleges, or in terms of other standards that one might set for a school system? then I think that New York City is doing at least as well, and I believe better, than most of the other urban school systems in the country.

BU: Well, you said recently that although much progress has been made in the past 10 years, you cannot predict that the schools will avoid quakes disaster. That was your ~~ex~~ word. Now, that ~~xx~~ would apply equally to Chicago? In fact, I gather more so, since you are making in your judgment more progress than the public school systems in these other cities?

We're

SH: ~~xxxxx~~/making either the same or more, but not, the amount that's more just isn't significant, that is, I ~~xxx~~ think that most recent educational ~~xx~~ research, whether it's been the Cullman Report, or other works, have, generally tend to show that while schools make some difference, they don't make all of the difference and they don't make the major share of the difference, and that the family, and that the question of whether there is a family and the kind of job, and the socio-economic status and housing and all these other things have a much greater effect on the achievements of children than whether you have a class size of 40 or 37 or 32. Now, I do however believe that the New York

City school system is in a greater state of ~~xxx~~ deterioration, which is not educational, but political. And after all our public schools are political institutions and I think that what's going on here is quite different from what's going on in Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit and Washington, although

~~HXX~~ BU: How so? How so?

SH: in degree not in kind. Well, I think that a decision ~~ax~~ has been made, and I ~~xx~~ think it's been made by the Mayor, I think it's been made by the Ford Foundation, I think it's been made by high executives in businesses, I think it's been made by some liberal reformers, a decision which runs through various coalitions that may have existed before, conservatives, radicals, ~~x3x~~ reactionaries, all through which, pretty much for ~~different~~ different reasons comes out on the side of community control. The liberal does it perhaps out of a sense of guilt, black people have been slaves and persecuted for years, now let's give them something.

BU: Well, why does the ~~xxxxxx~~ conservative do it?

SH: Conservatives might do it out of a cynical sense. Well, they're pounding away, and they're always asking us for more money, and Federal aid to education, and compensatory education, well, instead of doing that, let's give them their own schools, and then they'll have only themselves to blame for not achieving ~~xxx~~

BU: In which category would say, Soloninsky (?) fall?

SH: I think that some people would fall in a number of categories.

I think that trying to put people in one

BU: _____ specified

SH: I haven't spoken to him on this, and I haven't seen any of the materials that he's ~~xxxxx~~ written on it, but I would say that Solinsky (?) would probably fall into a category which hasn't talked about yet, and it's one that I can identify with.

I'm in favor of a much greater degree of decentralization and community participation than now exists in our big cities. Not

BU: Even in unions?

SH: Yes. Even in unions.

BU: Separate unions?

SH: Oh, yes.

BU: But you work rather hard for. (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY)

SH: Well, I don't know what you mean by separate unions. I'm not I believe that the workers have a right to organize in organizations of their own choosing. If some of them decide to choose another organization, that'll be their choice. We'll campaign against them, but

BU: How would ~~ax~~ you do that?

SH: We'll campaign against them by issuing literature by sending speakers out.

BU: Why would you do that?

SH: Why? Because

BU: Why wouldn't you let them have their own union?
have

SH: Well, they ~~had~~/their own right now, and if some other group

wants to come along, that group has a right to come along, as a candidate competing for public office, and we see ourselves that way, too. We don't see ourselves as a permanent establishment, but as a candidate which is constantly competing for the loyalties of an electorate, and

BU: No, but if a particular, if the ~~xx~~ teachers, let us say, in a particular school district, asked to have their own union, would you oppose that?

SH: We would compete, well, let me put it this way, a lot would depend upon why and how. If the teachers in that district were selected by normal means, namely, they were selected on the basis of their college records, and prediction as to whether they were good teachers or bad teachers, and then as a group they came to the decision that they wanted somebody else to represent them, I think that they ^{would} have that right. On the other hand, if you had a particular district that selected its teachers on the basis of if we hire you will you get rid of that union, then I would consider that to be rather unfair practice, and we would very much oppose that.

BU: Well, but suppose that particular union was considered as ~~xx~~ the relevant oppressor? For instance, mightn't I vote for ~~somebody~~ somebody if he promises to get rid of this particular government?

SH: Sure. All I'm saying is that ~~xx~~ if we're to be involved in a choice on either a city-wide basis or within a district on the basis of relevant issues to the employees and to the public,

then I say that's fair. But, if you have a selection, if you have what amounts to employer domination, as implied, as that term is employed by national and state labor ~~xxxxx~~ relations boards, namely, it's not a free choice by employees, if you have employer domination

BU: Who would be the employer~~xx~~ in ~~the~~ a school situation?

SH: It would be, right now, it's the Central Board of Education,
BU: and how are they elected?

SH: but under the decentralization it might be a local board of
of education.

BU: How are they named?

SH: The Central Board?

BU: Yeah.

SH: The Central Board at the present time is selected by the Mayor

BU: And who names the Mayor?

SH: Well, the Mayor is elected.

~~SHx~~ BU: Okay. So, doesn't it follow, therefore, that there is at least
an assumed democratic backing there of the Board of Education,
which hardly makes them an employer in the orthodox sense, does
it?

SH: Oh, no, that's like saying that the king could have told any
of his subjects to do anything and they

BU: The king is _____, the king isn't elected.

SH: Well, whether he's elected or not, you see the business of
assuming that an election legitimizes something is one of our
more recent prejudices. But, in the old days, there were other
ways of legitimizing authority. I think that an elected

authority has no more right to be autocratic, ~~xx~~ dictatorial, and to treat employees as subjects, than a king does. I don't see why teachers or ~~xxxxxx~~ other public employees have to

BU: Well do elected authorities have the right to make laws?

SH: There is a constant difference

BU: The right to pass laws?

SH: There's a constant difference that's created in the public mind between a public employer and a private employer, namely, the profit motive. But you know there's a motive that John Lindsay has and that the President of the United States has, and the Governor of the State has, which is just as strong, ~~xx~~ and that's the motive to get reelected, and part of getting reelected is keeping taxes down, and one of the ways of keeping taxes down is to get hundreds of thousands of workers who are performing essential services to work for a lot less than they ought to be working for. ^{I think} And this is one of the things we oughta be concerned with in a democracy. Now, other democratic countries, Canada, England, Israel, permit collective bargaining, and more than that, they ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~impossible~~ even permit strikes by public employees, unless there is a determination by a court that there's an actual danger to health and safety in those strikes.

BU: President Roosevelt, whom you so ardently worked for at ^{age} eight, called strikes by

SH: Well, I changed my mind when I was 12.

BU: Well, I'm glad to hear that.

Called strikes by public employees unthinkable, and inexcusable,

but that was, ~~xyx~~ you think, a sort of an ancient ~~superstition~~ superstition? Well, let's pick up this argument again, because, and it's largely my fault, we've wandered into a number of alleys. ~~Bux~~ First of all, let's tie up this whole business of why you see the possibility of disaster in New York schools, and by extension, in other public schools, in Chicago, and so on. What is it that's causing this disaster at an age when (a) we have more affluence than we've ever had before, so I'm told and secondly, we have evolved a knowledge of ~~xx~~ education and of public school experience which ought at least to permit us to avoid disaster? Give me an idea of what ~~xxxx~~ disaster it is that you warn against. What could happen?

SH: Well, I think what can happen is, well, let me say this, I think that what the public school ~~xxxxxxx~~ should be doing, the big complaint of minority communities is that their children are not leaving schools with the ability to compete within our society.

BU: Compete with whom?
to

SH: Well, /compete with everybody else, and that essentially means (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY), that essentially means that they want their children to compete in a middle-class world, and

BU: But, 90% of the graduates of America are from public schools.

SH: That's right.

BU: So, who can't they compete with? The 10%?

SH: I'm saying that those who are black, and who are Puerto Rican, who are Mexican, those whose parents are earning less than

\$3,000 a year, or are on welfare

BU: Well, you're talking about racial minorities.

SH: I'm talking about racial minorities, I'm also just talking about the poor, and ~~they~~ there are many, many whites, more whites but the issue in terms of an issue is a lot more explosive as it is a racial issue, at the present time, than/as an economic issue~~xx~~.

BU: Why?

SH: It's more dramatic, it's easier to see that way, the racial concentrations are in the big cities whereas the poor whites in a are spread across the country, /more even way, but it has come to be largely racial, even though as a national problem it's largely an economic problem. But what I'm saying is that I will argue with the second part of ~~xx~~ your question. I don't think that we know very much about education. ~~xx~~ I think that~~xx~~ education in probably the greatest ~~problem~~ progress that we've made in/the last few years is to start admitting that we don't know very much and that there isn't a big body of knowledge, and that we're not too sure of what makes one child learn and another child not learn, and at what rate and so forth, and

BREAK

BU: Yes, Mr. Shanker, I interrupted you. I'm sorry.

SH: Now, the explosion is the great disappointment on the part primarily of minority group parents in ~~xx~~ our large cities, who say that the schools, you teachers, you have been paid all of these years to teach our children, and our children have not

learned, they're not getting the jobs, they're not going to college, they're not graduating, or if they are graduating, they're getting ~~they're getting~~ meaningless

BU: You're talking about the ~~xx~~ racial minorities?

SH: That's right. They're getting meaningless pieces of paper which aren't worth anything. And therefore there is a kind of search for an immediate answer, a cure for educational cancer, and there are a number of approaches to this, and my approach would be that the parent of the poor ought to have for their kids what the Rockefellers and the Roosevelts have done for their kids. Namely, if their kids didn't learn

BU: (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY)

SH: they got a tutor for them. They individualized instruction. They spent a good deal of time working with a child on a minute by minute, hour by hour basis, helping that individual child. And, what I am very much afraid of that's happening is that there is now a turning. Instead of developing some quality in the field of education, instead of trying to find out what works and what doesn't work, there is a kind of failure of nerve, and in that failure of nerve consists ~~xx~~/well, if they are yelling and screaming that the thing doesn't work, and if we don't ~~xx~~ quite know what to do tomorrow, or if it's too expensive to do something about it, let's turn it over to them and

BU: Well, yeah, but, now wait a minute, it seems to me, well, first of all, that you've said some very interesting things, but that the statistics seem to suggest that the dissatisfaction with the

the public schools in New York City, at least, has not been ~~merely~~ merely a phenomenon of the blacks and the ~~Puerto~~ Puerto Ricans, but it's also been a phenomenon of the whites. I give you, for instance, the following figure namely that in Manhattan, and the figures aren't very much different, as you know, ~~xx~~ in the Bronx and Brooklyn, almost 75% of the population in the public ~~schools~~ ~~is of~~ schools ~~xxx~~/these racial minorities. Now, there must have been creeping dissatisfaction along the line, inasmuch as the Negro and Puerto Rican representation in the population in ~~xxxx~~ New York City ~~xxx~~/is only 19%. Under the circumstances, we have more than three times as many Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the public schools in New York as one would expect consulting the population figures. Now, why? Why did so many white people leave the New York Public School~~x~~ system if not that they were dissatisfied with ~~xxxxxxx~~ its performance? With the ~~wx~~ quality of teaching, if you like, with the organization of the schools, if you prefer, or whatever, what is your explanation for that?

SH: Well, I think many of them, quite clearly, were not dissatisfied with the schools but many of them fled because of what they conceived to be the results of mixing their children with ~~xx~~ either children of other races or children who come from lower socio-economic groups, identifying all sorts of problems, whether it's crime, whether it's violence, or anything else, but I think there clearly, this is not a justification, I would rather I condemn ~~xx~~ it as a matter of fact (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY)

BU: Well, now, wait a minute, the same people

SH: but I think that that's, that there is absolutely no question but that a good deal of the flight of the white middle-class from the public schools has been a flight from the new entrance into the school systems.

BU: But the same people have urged the colleges to integrate. Many of them are liberals who put a very high score on integration, a number of them have urged ~~yx~~ Yale, and Princeton, Columbia had to admit Negroes. A number of them ~~xxxx~~ students in the Bronx High School of Science, which ~~xx~~ has always had Negroes without any particular difficulty, don't you think that, by and large, their protest has been, or at least they understand their protest to be, against a deterioration in the quality ~~xx~~ of the schools? And here, you said a moment ago, that in fact A.D. 1969 we know less and less perhaps about what it is that makes for high quality education. We find out from the Coleman Report from and/or other studies that the size of the class doesn't seem to matter so much. We even find out that the quality of the teacher doesn't seem to matter so much. It seems to be extra conventional considerations, and we're very much in a quandary aboutxxx it. Now, under the circumstances, don't you think that it is legitimate for people to wonder whether local control of the school mightn't be something that we ought to tolerate, in fact even encourage, so as to find out whether there might be some kind of a synchronization between the passion, the

energy, for education in a local community, and the adaptation of the educational forms, and don't you stand in the way of that?

SH: Well, some of the things that you've just saidxxx are reformulations of things which I didn't say. I didn't say that we know less about what makes for effectiveness in school. I just said that we're now intelligent enough to admit that we know very little. In the past, we've said that we knew all sorts of things, but we really didn't. But, let me put it this way. I think that the view that local, I think we ought to take a look at this question of whether local control is gonna produce educational effectiveness or greater educational achievement, and I think that it's not necessary~~ly~~ to conduct any additional experiments on that. We already have an experiment on that, all across the United States of America we have local control. We have local communities electing their own boards, adopting their own budgets. Those boards hire the superintendents, and hire the principals and they develop their procedures for doing everything else. Now, there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that the children of Plainview, Long Island, where they have community control, do any better than the ~~ex~~ children of Forest Hills or Riverdale, New York where parents make approximately the same amount of money, there is also

BU: Yeah, but wait a minute, wait a minute, excuse me, because I'm anxious to follow your argument. As I understand it, it is generally accepted that the resentment of the black community is something which has recently crystallized, and I quote you

as you said a few moments ago, that these ~~xxxxxx~~ pieces of paper
~~xxxx~~, these diplomas that they get, they find out in the free
surely
market aren't worth very much, which ~~xxxx~~ is an indictment
of these schools. Now, maybe they don't do well enough in
Plainfield, Long Island, maybe they also don't do well enough
in Forest Hills, New York, even though they might have an
a
equivalent intellectual performance, as measured on ~~the~~ standard
has happened
test, but as I understand what ~~xxxxxxx~~ in New York and
other parts of the country is that there is a release of
energy, and people want, themselves, the colored community, wants
itself to fashion a ~~xxxxxx~~ curriculum, standards, and so on,
to see whether or not they might come through with certain forms
and adaptations which will break ~~the~~ this resentment that
you identified first.

SH: Oh, well, I'm very glad you put it that way, because that's
just what I don't want. I don't want to break resentment. I'm
interested in keeping resentment, and I'm interested in
building resentment, I'm interested in channelizing resentment,

BU: You're ~~xxxxxx~~ word-playing, now.

SH: No, I'm not word-playing. What I'm saying is this: I'm saying
that affluent communities within New York City, without community
control, and outside of New York City, if you will tell me
how much money the parents ~~make~~ make in a given community, then
I can pretty much predict how the kids are doing in that
community, and if you go out to an area with community control

on Long Island, where you've got a bunch of poor kids from broken homes, with rotten housing, with community control they are doing just as poorly and maybe worse than kids in the City of New York without community control. ~~Withxxx~~ In other words,

BU: Oh, come on.

SH: The mere participation of parents in an election once a year or once every two years have no effect on the educational achievement for children. By the way, I want to challenge your other statement in your preface, which is your ~~xxxxxx~~ remark about the Coleman Report showing that class size doesn't make ^{very} much difference. Remember that Coleman could only test the differences in class size which were actually available in classes for him to measure. And he did show that between 40 and 30 doesn't make very much difference. But he didn't show that there was no difference between 30 and 8 or 30 and 5 or 30 and 3 because there was no place for him to measure a class of 3 or 5 or 8.

BU: Yeah, I think that, I agree ~~xxxx~~ that we're not talking about a thousand people in a class, but we ~~xxxxxx~~, we're talking about a difference of 10 or 15 concerning which there has been some

SH: By the way, most communities across the country are consolidating their districts because they feel that they're too ~~xxx~~ small and there doesn't seem to be a big hue and cry that by making the district larger they will somehow water down the community control and they won't be as effective, they seem to think

that they will be more efficient, that they will run more economically, that they will be able to offer more educational ~~xxx~~ programs if they have larger systems and it seems to me that in both cases they're wrong. ~~Thaxx~~ What they're, in one case they're attributing educational failure~~xx~~ to smallness and in other cases they're attributing it to largeness when actually both are wrong. We have failed educationally mainly because we have a starved institution and we haven't been willing to train teachers, ~~wh~~ we're ~~xxxx~~ satisfied with systems where we hire teachers on a basis, you know the average teacher all across the country is employed for three years, and then leaves. And we know that it's a profession that people are supposed to come into at their convenience, and after a few years, that's it. We don't train for it, we do very little research in it, we put people in big classes, we're satisfied with very little research in curriculum, and

BU: I think every profession, yeah
now we

SH: I ~~xxxxxx~~ just say that _____ just change the size of the district, and everything is going to be terrific, and I think we're just kidding people.

BU: No, now, wait a minute. It's wrong to assume that there is a magic solution, it is also wrong to assume that there is any profession in the United States that doesn't have its complaints. I, as a journalist, have mine, you, as a teacher, have yours. But, let's focus ~~xx~~ for a moment on a couple of postulates that you ~~xxxxxx~~ transfuse into this discussion, one of

them being that there is ~~an~~ a correlation a direct correlation between poverty and educational attainment. It seems to me plain, if only by citing the Jewish experience in America, that this isn't true. The American Jews came here poor and in very short order had done brilliantly in every field of _____

SH: (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY) There's one other example, and only one, that you can cite, and that's the Chinese. These two groups happen to be the only two groups that came both poor and literate. But we have groups that came poor and illiterate, you can't cite that example.

BU: Well, after all, Jack Kennedy's grandfather was poor and semi-literate.

SH: Oh, when you cite individuals, you know that you're not proving anything. We're talking about large groups of people

BU: Well, I'm taking him as a synecdoche. It seems to me not obvious that the Irish population in Boston is underprivileged. Of course, it is practically the population of Boston, so you (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY)

SH: It took a very long time for the Irish to move up in this country and for the Italians and for practically every other group that came to this country without

BU: Yeah. Okay. I grant, all I am saying is that I appreciate your adding one more example to disprove your generality, namely the Chinese. Then, I'm going ~~on~~ on to say that what seems to me to make a difference is what people want. Ideally, it

seems to me, and here I quote you once again, when you talk about the education available to the Rockefellers and the ~~Vanderbilts~~ Vanderbilts, and so on, shouldn't a ~~xxx~~ school be as close to being a private school as is feasible at all? Why should we penalize students who go to a public school, or the constituency to that school, in virtue of its being public. If a particular community desires so to fashion its school, to what extent is it our concern that they fashion it in ~~xxx~~ lines that ~~xxxxxxx~~ you and I approve or disapprove of? Why should we distrust Negroes to fashion their own school, anymore than we distrust our whites? You and I, tomorrow, ~~and~~ the people ~~who~~ ~~xxx~~ in this room are free to organize a school and do pretty well what we want with it, subject to certain minimal standards, why ought we to stand in the way of ~~xxx~~ other people ~~xxxxxx~~ exercising the same prerogative?

BREAK

BU: Yes sir.

SH: I don't distrust Negroes any more than I distrust whites, ~~and~~ in running schools, and I don't think that the important thing
 institution
 is whether an ~~institution~~ is a public institution or a private one. There are plenty of rotten private ~~xxxx~~ institutions, too, probably just as many. Of course, you have the great advantage that people are satisfied when they spend money and they exercise choice, even though ~~xx~~ they buy a rotten product. But I happen to believe that the education of citizens is just too important to leave to that sort of mechanism. And I'm not

trying to make somebody satisfied, I'm not trying to go out into the black community and make people happy, or into a white community and make people happy. I am in the business of trying to see to it that children are educated, that they can leave school with a sufficient amount of literacy and other skills so that they can compete, so that they can earn more money, so that they can get decent housing, and if they

BU: Who, who, who appointed you a dictator of education in ~~the~~
~~the~~ New York?

SH: No, I'm not a dictator. It's the same person who appoints a doctor a dictator of health when he looks at somebody and if somebody says to the doctor well, will you please do something to help my child die, or to help my husband die, it's the doctor's job to try to see to it that that person's rescued. And it's a teachers job to see to it that a person is educated

BU: Now, now wait a minute.

SH: even if a lot of people in the community don't give a damn about education, but may be interested in a lot of other political stuff.

BU: I think this is, this is an audacious moment to put forward your claims, your desire for education when you just deprived a million students of four months of it, in pursuit of your particular hostility to Mr. McCoy. Now, if your concern for education ~~was~~ was your primary concern, why did you permit a million students to go without any education at all over a

period of four months, while you were having your inter-Nicaean war with a local colored administrator?

SH: Well, ^{our} ~~that~~ war wasn't with the local administrator, as you well know, it was with the city authorities, and with the Mayor of the City of New York, who failed to comply with the decisions of Judge Rivers and ~~xx~~ even with their own public statements. I think it was

BU: Since ~~xx~~ when were you concerned with ~~xx~~ what judges tell you to do? They told you to stop striking.

SH: Well, if the judge who ruled that the teachers who belonged back in those schools, had been listened to, then I certainly ^{even} wouldn't have/had to listen to any judge telling me about stopping the strike. (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY) You're confusing what comes before and what comes after in ^{this} ~~the~~ situation. I think ~~xxx~~ that it's a terrible thing that students lost all of this education, but I think it would have been a much worse thing if, in every district in the City of New York, a Rody McCoy and a Reverend Oliver had come up and decided ~~xx~~ that today, without any due process, without any reasons, without any legitimacy, had the right to fire anybody they wanted to simply on political grounds, on the grounds that they disagreed with them.

BU: Now, wait a minute, they didn't fire them, did they? They transferred them.

SH: Well, when they transferred, when a district superintendent

transfers somebody to another district that's about as legitimate as the ~~legitimate~~ district superintendent of Yonkers transferring somebody to the district of Chicago, and if I were about to transfer you to another television network, that wouldn't be a transfer. If you got ~~xx~~ that letter and a little ~~while~~ ~~while~~ from now, you would understand the meaning of that letter. And the teachers understood the meaning of somebody in a district transferring them elsewhere. Now, there were no other jobs for them elsewhere, the superintendent of schools of the city had not agreed to transfer them, the Central Board of Education had not agreed to transfer them, they weren't being transferred, they were being ousted from that district without regard as to whether they were gonna go anywhere else or not.

BU: Well, now wait a minute. As I understand it, their salary was not jeopardized, is that correct? So that the issue of security is a false issue. It may be that

SH: It was jeopardized only because the district superintendent had no right to ~~xx~~ transfer them out. (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUS) And therefore they were ~~legally~~ legally there.

BU: Therefore, it was not jeopardized, therefore, the issue of job security was not actually as I understand it evoked (?)

SH: That isn't so. Look, if you take a guy who's a doctor or a lawyer or you take somebody who's a television performer and you tell him you're gonna pay him for the rest of his life, but he can't practice his profession, don't tell me that you haven't jeopardized something. You take

BU: Well, who said he can't practice his profession?

SH: Not there, he can't. He's been ousted.

BU: ~~Well~~ Well, not there, but this is a completely different ~~xxxx~~
~~xxxx~~ argument.

SH: Well, why do you raise these questions about the teachers, why
that
don't you ask the question as to why it is ~~the~~ Federal Judge
no
Travia had ~~the~~ right to do this, and the State Court of Appeals
has said he had no right to do this, and the Mayor ~~has~~ said
so, and the State Commissioner said so, and we waited from
May 9 till September 9 ~~for~~ for those teachers to be returned
there, and none of those public officials acted, and why do you
then turn against the union and say well, why, after all these
months and full-page ads in the Times and other papers pleading
with the Mayor and others to act in accordanced with their own
public statements

BU: Look, look, don't make it sound like such a hardluck story.
I am perfectly sympathetic with the 19 teachers, but I also
recognize that if, in fact, there was going to be decentralization
decentralization is meaningless unless the local ~~authority~~ authority
assumes some control. Now, if somebody took over the editorship
of my magazine, he might turn to some of the editors that I
selected, and they might be brilliantly qualified editors, in
fact they are, and say frankly I want to get other people,
I understand this to be the meaning of authority.

SH: Well, that's because they aren't (?) brilliant enough to form

a strong union to prevent that. But the Ford Motor Company is a very strong company, and they've got hundreds of thousands of employees, and they've got ~~xxxxxxx~~ very strong management, but that management cannot swoop down into the company, and pick a worker from the assembly line, who has been working there satisfactorily for 20 years, and just say, you are fired.

BU: Yes, but you see, Mr. Shanker, when you say they cannot do so, it isn't really clear why they can't do so. Is it, can they not do so because they go to jail? Can they not ~~xx~~ do so because somebody will take their money away from them that they need to support themselves? The answer is, of course, that you have so far as I can see reduced the quarrels in New York, and I think there's a lot of right on your side, you've reduced the quarrels in New York to ~~xxx~~ the question who has the most power. You think absolutely nothing of simultaneously telling the students that you want law and order and define law and order yourself, as you most conspicuously have done. You think nothing of

SH: I've never used that phrase
leverage

BU: the ~~xxxxxxx~~ (?), no that's right, you are too sensitive (?).

~~xx~~ You think nothing of the, using the leverage of a million students who don't go to school in order to protect not even job security, but the positinning of 19 teachers in ~~thex~~ a

SH: You're ignoring some history, though~~xx~~,

BU: particular school.

SH: namely, that when these teachers were ousted on May 9th, we

didn't go out on strike. We asked for arbitration, and the local board refused. And then we asked for mediation and the local board refused. And finally a ~~xxxx~~ Trial Judge Examiner was appointed and we agreed to abide by the decisions ~~xx~~ of that Examiner. And later we agreed to abide by the decisions of the State Commissioner of Education, prior to his making them. And that we constantly over a number of months looked for a mechanism which would avoid conflict and which would not decide it on the basis of power, even though we had had a substantial amount of power in the situation.

BU: Mr. Shanker, that's only comparable to the President of the United States ordering the atomic liquidation of North Korea if they don't give us back the Pueblo. If ~~he~~ ^{you} had done that,

SH: No, no

BU: if you had said to ~~them~~ ^{him} well, what steps ~~should have been taken~~ did you take in between, (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY) it's perfectly easy to recite

SH: No, on the contrary, yes it's

BU: the ~~many~~ numerous steps _____, the question is it justifiable to violate the explicit law, which I assume somewhere along the line, you have pledged to defend, and is it justifiable to make a million pawns as a result of something the meaning of which is not discernible other than that you are protecting 19 teachers' rights~~xxx~~ to teach in a particular school

SH: No, we were protecting more than

BU: which they don't really want to teach in anymore.

SH: 19 teachers. Your analogy is wrong. It would be something like the President of the United States taking pretty drastic action after he had submitted an issue ~~xx~~ to the United Nations and to the World Court and to a lot of ~~xx~~ other places, and abided by the decision in each case, but the other side didn't, ~~xx~~ and then decided to take action, that's what we did. Now, however, I don't justify it on that basis. I justify it on the basis of the consequences to the million children of our not having taken action, namely, what kind of teachers would there have had in their districts when similar types of vigilantes and extremists would come forward, which they already have in districts in Brooklyn and in Manhattan, and in Bronx, and in Queens, and come forth and decided that this teacher can't teach because the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ teacher's white, or is black, or is ~~BUxx~~ ~~Yxx~~ radical, or is not Puerto Rican

BU: Mr. Shanker

SH: or is Puerto Rican, or is something else
you know that

BU: I think/I deplore the extremists as much as you do, but considering what happened to Columbia University last Spring, it seems to me hardly relevant to suppose that extremists were invented by Rody McCoy. This is a problem that we have from coast to coast, and the question really is, how to deal with extremists, and are we prepared to abandon a belief in law, I won't say order, because you object to that, but are we prepared to abandon the rule of law because you uniquely see a transcendent, have a transcendent moral apercu on the basis of

which you simply feel free to take law into your hand.

SH: Well, if the Mayor of the city had taken the law into his hand, and had properly administered it, we wouldn't have had to have done that, but I do think that, I agree with you, if extremism or was not invented by Rody McCoy ~~at~~ Ocean Hill-Brownsville; but certainly the success of extremism there would have lent an example to every other district in the school system, and other McCoys would have been forthcoming to say that if some teacher as is here that doesn't agree with me, and ~~at~~ Judge Rivers' decision pointed out, he said that a number of these teachers were dismissed merely because they constructively criticized the experiment at a Christmas party.

BU: Okay. Now, let me ask you this: why is it that fear local control by Negroes, but don't fear it by whites in Long Island, for instance?

SH: Oh, I do. I think it's just as rotten by whites. You see, I was against States' Rights. I didn't believe that they, in community control in Mississippi, or Alabama, I don't believe it on Long Island, I really don't. I have

BU: Have you pitched (?) against Plainfield, Long Island?

SH: I have a much better feeling about the Federal Government

BU: What is it (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY) that they should all join your union, in Long Island, so that you can see to it that ^{they} maintain (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY)

SH: Well, in Plainfield they are members of our union.

BU: Well, wherever it is that they're not, or is there such a place left?

SH: Oh, yes. (LAUGHTER) Unfortunately, most places.

BU: Certainly, I want to ~~xx~~ know why you say that ~~xxxxxxx~~^{you moved} against Ocean Hill-Brownsville ~~xxxxxxx~~ in order to protect the people from abuses, which leads us to suppose that except for your intervention, this place would be totalitarianized, and I ask, is this not really, in effect, an anti-black assumption, since you're not prepared to make the assumption about places like, oh, Scarsdale, say?

SH: Oh, I'm very prepared to make it about other places, including within the City of New York. There is no doubt in my mind that under decentralization that there will be white districts in the City of New York who will push out Puerto Rican and black teachers from those districts, and that we'll have to take precisely the same action. There are plenty of white extremists around.

BU: Yeah, ~~xxxxxx~~ plenty of white extremists around, and what characteristically do ~~xx~~ the black extremists that you're talking about do, and could you explain to us why it is that you predicted it would take over the community? These are people who ~~xxxxxx~~ teach white ~~xxx~~ hatred and anti-Semitism and that ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ stuff, and you predicted they would dominate but for your intercession?

SH: In Ocean Hill-Brownsville.

BU: Why?

SH: I'm not saying that that's gonna be true in every district

BU: But, why would they dominate there?

SH: Well, it's pretty obvious~~xx~~ what actually happened. I'm not, why explain why? The fact of the matter ~~xx~~ is that in Junior High School 271, ~~we~~ ^{you} do have~~xxxxxx~~ a Mr. Campbell and Mr. Van who have, who do publish a periodical, and one ~~xxxx~~ article by Mr. Hatchett, and now a more recent article, both of which are ~~quite~~ quite anti-Semitic. Now, why they are there, and why it's coming out of that district, I don't think that's for me to explain, but certainly I can condemn it and certainly I can see to it that whenever that sort of an ~~xxxxxx~~ attitude brings about the firing ~~xxx~~ of people, prevents them from teaching the truth, as they see it, prevents them from constructively criticizing, limits their free speech, and if we offer arbitration and mediation, and to abide by decisions of legal authorities and if no one steps forth to do anything, then I think we have no choice but to defend ourselves.

BU: Umhm. Well, I agree that we should all defend ourselves, but I normally think of law as the instrument of principal defense, and under the circumstances tend to think that those who defy the law, like you and the Ku Klux Klan, for instance, show a strategic disrespect for precisely what we most need in order to guard civilization.

SH: I think we ought to have a little distinction though between the two. I think that you have the Ku Klux Klan and others who

have violated the law and who have ~~xx~~ tried to destroy the right of people , and I think that you have a movement of civil disobedience in this country which ~~xx~~ includes the _____ Martin Luther King, and which includes the union movement, and which we have violated the law on ~~xx~~ occasion, not to restrict the rights of people but to expand them.

BU: Well, I know a few parents with a few children who didn't go to school who think that you violated their rights, but let it pass.

SH: Well, I can only subject that to a referendum.

BREAK

BU: Mr. Shanker, we have questions from our panel, first from Mr. Greenfield, who, I suppose total disclosure requires me to announce, is an aide to Mayor Lindsay.

GR: Right. But that doesn't affect my ~~xxx~~ position at all.

BU: Thank heavens.

GR: You ~~xxxxxx~~ helped elect him, for which we're eternally grateful, and I'm sure Mr. Shanker isn't. Mr. Shanker,

SH: Oh, I helped him, too.

GR: That's right. I know. Both ~~xx~~ of you can join forces against him next time, if there is a next time. But passing by the accusation of extremism in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, since that and Campbell, the two teachers are not Rody McCoy or Oliver, and since 70% of the new teachers that they hired were white, more than half of those Jewish, let's see if we can get on the

educational aspect of this. As I understand the Coleman Report, which you cited, one of the points it makes is that the expenditure of money, also, is not the key educational determinant in fact they seem to suggest that there are outside forces which play upon a child's experience in school that indicate how he can learn and what they are, as you've indicated, seems to be some mystery. Your more effective schools program, that the United Federation of Teachers has proposed, seems to emphasize facilities, seems to emphasize more money pumped in, team teaching, smaller class sizes, and yet the local control that you say is unrelated to educational advancement seems to have been the place in New York where real experimentation is beginning. Rody McCoy, after the first grade, has begun this end to locked-step (?) education, as you ~~ex~~ no doubt know, with this new experimental teaching. IS 201 in Harlem was a school where they began teaching black history

SH: What new experiment in teaching?

GR: The California experiment which is designed to break the locked-step education and devote the attention of teachers to an individualized instruction, which I take it/^{was what} you endorse ~~earlier~~ earlier in this program.

SH: Yeah, well I think we should not kid ourselves. In the first place, Coleman didn't say, as I pointed out before, he did not say that money ~~doesn't~~ doesn't make ~~the~~ the difference. What he did say is that money insofar as he was able to measure it, in other words, if he found some districts that spent \$600 a child and

others \$750, that within the range of what is now being spent, any on a widespread basis, that you couldn't see very much of an effect, and that's ~~xxxx~~ correct. And in our proposing of more effective schools, what we were really saying is that ~~wx~~ if we wanna prove once and for all that money either does or does not make a difference, let's do it ~~wxxx~~ within a range which is outside of what's usually done, so that we could find out. In other words, double or triple the expenditure, instead of just changing it by 5 or 10 per cent.

GR: And, of course, since 1965, there's been more than ten-billion dollars in Federal aid, largely pumped into the so-called _____ schools.

SH: Well, most Federal aid has been spread out on just this sort of a basis, of 5 or 10 per cent, and it's not noticeable, you couldn't see it. I could give a long talk on how Federal aid has largely been wasted and has been unproductive, but let me go to this question of community control and experimentation and education. Now, most educational experimentation in this country is absolutely phoney. You don't really have educational experiments. You know, ~~xxxx~~ there's a slogan around that says that every educational experiment is doomed to succeed the moment it starts. It's all public relations. Now, take a look at Long Island, where you have 120 districts. You could take any other suburban, rural or other place. What you have there is not experimentation. You have a game of educational musical chairs. Every three years the community decides that the guy

who's there, the head guy, is no good and they trade him for the guy next door, ~~who's about to be kicked out~~ who's about to be kicked out by that community, and they exchange programs, and the thing that's failed next door is adopted here ~~next door~~, there isn't anything in the way of scientific controls or real experimentation or real evaluation. Has there ever been anything, remember Higher Horizons, in New York City, what about teen teaching, what about micro-teaching? I can give you a list of things just within the last ten years that's a fantastic list of so-called educational experiments. Most of them have been proven to be educationally irrelevant, and have been dumped by the district that started them, five or six or seven years ago, and now they're being picked up by other districts.

XXX BU: Which doesn't mean ~~that~~ of course that the ~~next~~ next experiment is going to be irrelevant.

SH: No, I'm all in ~~favor~~ favor of experiments under control

BU: every single experiment, yeah, to find a cure for cancer has failed.

SH: Yes, but what I'm against is taking the same failure and moving it from patient to patient merely because the next guy hasn't tried it yet.

GR: No, no, but the significant

SH: You don't have to have 50 people die of the same experiment after you've concluded

GR: No, now that's one of those ~~metaphors~~ metaphors that really isn't very helpful about ~~the~~ dying

SH: No, I'm not talking about metaphors.

GR: Yes, you are. You're talking about dying of the same experiment. The question is why did it take this mostly black board 201, composed of mostly people who have been in disagreement with you, and whom you've disagreed with recently, to institute a new way of teaching black history. And why has it taken Mr. McCoy

SH: What is the new way of teaching black history?

GR: It's mostly an idea of letting people have some pride in their racial heritage.

SH: No, wait. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ What is the new way? ~~xx~~ I'm in favor of teaching pride.

GR: That is exactly the new way, Mr. Shanker.

SH: No, excuse me, that isn't the new way.

GR: It's something that

SH: It's been done before, and it's been talked about before. Ocean Hill-Brownsville.

GR: Has it been done in New York before?

SH: Yes, it has. You know who did it? Stanley Lisser, the principal who was kicked out of IS 201, his materials are used in black communities all across the United States, and he developed those materials 15 years ago. Now, you show me what's being done that's new. Now, don't give me public ~~xxx~~ relations. Talk education, and tell me what's really being done that's a new experiment.

BU: Wouldn't that be hell if we discovered that whites wrote black history? That's all we need, isn't it? (LAUGHTER)
Miss Williams.

WI: Uh, Mr. Shanker, first of all, I objected to your ~~analogy~~ with analogy ~~to~~ General Motors, firing somebody who had been working satisfactorily for 20 years. The point is that unlike GM, the New York School System doesn't work satisfactorily at all, and I'm sure if GM had it it would probably close it down as a plant.

SH: Wait. Now on what basis do you say that it's not working satisfactorily?

BU: In literacy? (?)

WI: For so many of the things that we've already discussed today, the fact that a black kid gets a diploma from the New York City school~~xx~~ system, and he goes out and he tries to get a job, and he finds

SH: (BOTH TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY) Yeah, but our method of doing that isn't unsatisfactory, unless you can prove that somewhere in this world there is a way of doing it satisfactorily. And there isn't

WI: Well, there is a satisfactory way of teaching children.

SH: There isn't in France, and there isn't in Germany, and there isn't in Russia, and there isn't in Israel. Every country in the world has precisely the same problems that we have in terms of educating the poor, and educating min~~orities~~orities, and you can go over to England and get the ~~Plowden~~ Plowden ~~Report~~ Report, and you can go all over the world, there are reports on ~~xxxxxxx~~

precisely the same problem, And, therefore, don't tell me that we're failing. We're doing precisely what everybody at the present state of knowledge knows or doesn't know how to do. Now, failure ~~xxx~~ implies, now, we can recognize that we oughta be doing something different. But that everybody should, but until and unless you can show me that somebody has the pill, or the cure, or the something or other, then the word failure has to be used in a very specific sense, namely, not as a criticism but as a recognition that change is necessary.

WI: Well, if we can't give the pill, we can perhaps look and see some of the things which are wrong, and try and change those ~~xxxx~~ piecemeal, if you like. Now, in Hx Jonathan Kizill's (?) book on The Boston Schools' Death at an Early Age, he indicated that one of the main problems in the schools, as he saw them, were teachers who had given up on the idea that a black child could be taught. And every day in blatant or insidiously small ways, they were making these children suffer to the point where they ceased to learn. Now, it seems to me that if you're going to try and change, uh, make any change in the education of a child, in a black community, that it's impossible as long as you have people teaching with this sort of an attitude. And I wonder ~~xx~~ if you think that it's possible to bring change even if ~~xxxxxx~~ we're not talking about the over-all wonder change, but to make ~~xxxxxx~~ small change with people working who have this kind of an attitude? In other ~~xxxx~~ words, was it possible to

avoid the firing of those 19? 19 people in Ocean Hill-Brownsville

SH: Well, when you're talking about attitudes, you're talking about something that's just very difficult to get at. In the first place,

WI: But ~~it~~ ^{it} isn't/the essential really?

SH: No, it isn't the essential at all. It really isn't. You measure, you see, I could find you somebody, I could find you teachers in my own childhood, ~~xxxx~~ teachers who had very strong feelings about me, and about my people, and they didn't like them, but they were crackerjacks and they were tough teachers, and I learned in their classes and so did a lot of other people. I'm not saying that a teacher should dislike groups, or that they should be bigoted, I don't think they should. And I think that we should do whatever we can to see to it that we have teachers that aren't like that. But I really think this is begging the question. You see, the problem, New York City gets about 8,000 new teachers each year, and some of them are conservatives, and some of them are radicals, and some ~~xx~~ are of different religious and racial groups, and so forth and so on, and the interesting thing is that ~~xx~~ within a few weeks practically all the new teachers are doing precisely what the ~~xxxx~~ teachers that they replaced the previous year were doing. What I'm saying is that there are certain institutional imperatives, things that you do because this is the way it's organized. And you know something? It happens in small

communities, and big ones, and you walk into a classroom on Long Island, and California and Michigan, and New York, and Chicago, or down South, and in spite of ~~xxx~~ local control, in spite of the tens of thousands of local school districts, they use textbooks put out by six companies, they use curriculum materials put out by seven universities, that in spite of local control, or central control, you have a tremendous amount of sameness throughout the country. And we're kidding ourselves if we think that the mere size of the district is gonnamake any difference on that.

BU: Mr. Gaynor.

GA: Mr. Shanker, ~~xx~~ earlier in this program you said that I'm in the business of trying to see that children get educated. Well, as we all know, not very many children got educated this fall. What are your plans for the future of New York children? ~~Sx~~ Will they be able to complete a year of education next year? Or are they doomed to recurring episodes of your dictatorial whir

SH: Well, that's fair question. (LAUGHTER) I hope that you'll have the
a chance to put the Mayor on this seat and ask him that question.

BU: Yeah, but would you close the schools again, if another 19 teachers, I think it's an ~~xxxxxxx~~ interesting point. Or is there in effect a limit beyond which you won't go in retaliation, or are you prepared, ~~xx~~ let's say, to close schools forever, if Mr. McCoy does this kind of thing again?

SH: Well, forever sounds rather unreasonable.

BU: I know. (LAUGHTER)

SH: We've agreed to a particular procedure for the future, and it's a procedure which essentially involves outside arbitration. Now, if tomorrow the Mayor of the City of New York should turn around and say well it's true that I signed that document and I agreed to it, but now, I'm once again gonna break my word, then I would say that there would be a very good chance that the schools would be shut down again.

BU: ~~Umhm~~ Umhm. And, so on, right?

SH: Yes. That just means don't blame me, you should just put all possible pressure on the Mayor to make sure that ~~he~~ he doesn't break his word again.

~~BU~~ BU: Thank you very much, Mr. Shanker. Thank you all.

THEME

END OF TAPE