NO!

AGAINST ADULT SUPREMACY

Issue 1

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up a zine by yourself or with others, and distribute it at school. High-school general strikes or Reclaim the Streets can also be planned; even if they are over seemingly reformist issues (curfew, uniforms, etc.), they have the possibility of radicalizing more and more students.

There are many creative possibilities; for instance, a group of anarchists close to where I live took a sign from a kennel that said "Obedience Training" and unfurled it over a local high school. To the extent that such things are successful, parents and administrators must feel like they can not get away with stuff that they could get away with before, that they are being closely watched and monitored by the children they formerly oppressed, that they are slowly losing their grip of power and authority over youth, and that youth are no longer an amorphous mass of docile sheep, but class conscious, intelligent, committed, and organized youth, who are prepared to take their lives into their own hands and to abolish all masters once and for all.

Anarchism has a lot to offer youth liberation. Its basic principles of anti-authoritarianism and non-coercion are powerful weapons in the arsenal to free children from their state of slavery and bondage. Anarchism also offers youth liberation the insight that it cannot be content with just abolishing parental coercion, it must also create liberatory alternatives. This is an example of the revolutionary dual power strategy, where the new society is created out of the shell of the old. Contrary to the official view, education does not equal schooling, and kids can create a whole self-organized infrastructure of counter-institutions for learning, growing, and developing themselves – on a basis of full equality and freedom. Genuinely "free skools" can be created, where classes are strictly voluntary, and children can choose to study a particular subject with others, children or adults, who happen to be an authority on the topic. As Colin Ward put it in his book Anarchy in Action, they will be "schools no longer" but popular laboratories of liberation.

Children's Oppression, Rights, and Liberation

Samantha Godwin

Excerpt: academia.edu/2046034/Childrens_Oppression_Rights_and_Liberation (Citations Omitted)

The legal, political, scientific and media discourse prevalent in previous generations promoted the idea that race and gender are biologically determinate categories with biologically determined attributes, characteristics, and social roles. Historically, many anthropologists and psychologists believed they had found physical evidence that non-white people had an inferior capacity for reason and rationality. These supposed differences fit into an imperialist ideology of a 'white man's burden' that justified the systematic oppression of indigenous peoples through-out the world. Black people were said to be intellectually and morally inferior to white people and as a result, unable to take care of themselves without the supervision of their white slave owners. The myth of a biological basis for male domination over women has persisted for even longer. Both those who defended the historical relegation of women to second class citizen status under the law and the contemporary anti-feminist backlash have relied on a belief (often backed by superficially scientific-looking evidence of the inferior female mental capacities) that men are more capable, at least on average, of fulfilling a variety of important social rules than are women. Anti-Suffragette propaganda held that women's minds were not suitable for politics or public life. These supposed mental differences were said to causally explain why women were excluded from politics. This reasoning was also used to normatively justify female exclusion from politics as a necessary consequence of having to protect women in general and from the burdens of public responsibility in particular.

In addition to the paternalistic justifications for white dominance over black people and male dominance over women—arguments that fit the pattern of "group A must have legal power over group

B for the best interests and protection of group B"—the white chauvinist and male chauvinist ideologies also employed a somewhat different normative justification: an appeal to the good of society, where the subordination of black people and women was said to be necessary for society to function. Defenders of slavery for instance claimed that the institution of slavery was necessary for a functioning society and economy. Similarly, the subordination of women to their husbands was widely held to be necessary for the stability and wellbeing of the family, and hence, society at large. In both instances, the biological differences between subordinate and dominant demographic groups was said to both causally explain the social relations of domination and subordination, while also providing a normative justification for why those social relations were good, natural, and desirable.

Today, the subordination of children to adults in general and their parents in particular is similarly seen as being both caused and justified by children's inferior mental faculties. Both the paternalism argument (children must be subordinate for their own good) and the social necessity argument (children must be subordinate for the good of society) are advanced to support the legal disabilities of children. The parallels with "scientific racism" and sexist neurological theories should be obvious: we are frequently told that children and adolescents are mentally inferior due to their underdeveloped brains, and this inferiority renders them incapable of behaving rationally or responsibly; in the past, precisely the same claims were advanced against women and black people.

Many people will instinctively reply that the racists and male chauvinists of nineteenth century were wrong about black people and women, whereas our scientifically superior contemporary society is right about children and adolescents. There are good reasons however not to leap to this conclusion.

A chief way the black civil rights movement and women's rights movement responded to racist and sexist stereotypes was not to

workplace. Student government may call for minor reforms, but in no way calls into question the very existence of schools, or the possibility of abolishing coercion altogether, which the anarchist critique calls for.

It is also quite interesting how much schools and prisons have in common with each other. In both prisons and schools, the following criteria apply: an authoritarian structure, dress code, pass needed for going from one part of the facility to another, emphasis on silence and order, negative reinforcement, emphasis on behavior, extrinsic reward system, loss of individual autonomy, abdridged freedoms, and little participation in decision making.

This begs the question: what can children do to fight back against the particular forms of oppression they face in their daily lives? The most important thing is to create a subversive atmosphere in the home, school, and workplace (high-school students are often forced to work in shitty, low-paying jobs like McDonalds). Let other young people know how you feel about parental coercion or about how you are treated by adults. Class consciousness is essential. Children need to recognize that they are a uniquely oppressed class vis a vis the oppressing class which dictates the conditions of their existence. To paraphrase the Preamble to the IWW Constitution, the oppressed class and the oppressing class have nothing in common.

Disobedience can be expressed small ways (kind of like sabotage in the workplace) by refusing to pledge allegiance, to participate in prayer (in religious schools), or by choosing to write school essays on, for example, Youth Revolt Throughout History, Emma Goldman, or the case of Katie Sierra (a 15-year old anarchist suspended from school for wearing homemade anti-war shirts and for trying to start up an anarchist club) and deliver them in front of class. Educate yourself outside of school by talking with others, reading, and sharing your ideas and experiences. You can make flyers and distribute them or paste them up around the school. You can start

atmosphere of the nuclear family. It is with the nuclear family that gender roles are created and re-inforced, and where authoritarian ideologies are passed down to the next generation. Neurotic and anti-social personality traits are also produced in children as a consequence of the nuclear family's puritanical suppression of sexuality. Oftentimes, parents will force their children to follow their particular religion, i.e. Judaism, Christianity, etc. or political affiliation, i.e. Republican, Democrat, etc. In the Jewish religion, boys at 13 are usually pressured or outright coerced into having Bar Mitzvahs, which is the sign of "becoming a man". Hanukkah and Christmas are religious celebrations which children are forced to partake in, and they are not given any opportunity to make up their own mind about their religious or political beliefs.

Around the age of 5, children are shipped off to schools, or "youth concentration camps" as anarchist writer Bob Black accurately called them. In these institutions children are monitored closely by their teachers, who make sure to report any kind of "suspicious" behavior. The purpose of school is to thwart any signs of free-thought or individuality, by forms of subtle or not-so-subtle coercion. If children "misbehave", they are punished by being sent to the office, detention, suspension, expulsion, or bad grades. In most private middle and high schools, and in a growing number of public schools, there is a dress code that children have to follow. Sometimes they are even forced to tuck in their shirts or wear a belt. Tattoos, dyed hair, piercings and other attempts to create an individual identity are often met with the fierce hostility of principals and administrators.

The relation of the administration to the students is almost exactly like that of a boss to his workers. He owns the institution, he sets the "standards of conduct", and tries to create a "productive work environment". It is not considered a good idea to question those in authority, and the anger of the students are channeled into acceptable forms such as student government or the official student union, which are similar to modern AFL-CIO unions in the

deny that there are discernable differences between races and genders that might (mistakenly) be called upon to justify social hierarchies, but that social hierarchies themselves produced these differences. In *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen J. Gould argues that measurable "intelligence" does not casually explain the inferior social status of racial minority groups, rather the inferior social status of racial minority groups contributes to their relatively worse average performance on "intelligence" tests: the characteristics that racists appealed to in order to causally explain the conditions of white dominance could themselves be causally explained by the fact of living under white dominance. In *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, Jared Diamond argued that Eurasians have been politically dominant over the rest of the world's population not because of some biological, cultural, intellectual or moral superiority, but because of their geographic advantages; resources like horses, metals, and sufficiently large populations to develop disease resistance structurally advantaged them against populations who lacked those resources.

Similar explanations have also been advanced for gender differences and hierarchies. The cultural materialist anthropologist Marvin Harris argued that patriarchal, male dominant family arrangements arose when agricultural societies developed livestock driven iron plows: men were better equipped for this type of more efficient farming that became economically dominant, and so their social dominance followed from their control of the most efficient means of production. In *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Shulamith Firestone offers a different explanation where she argues that while the physical differences between male and female roles in reproduction explain how male dominance developed—the feminine character traits cited as reasons why male dominance should persist are themselves products of female oppression.

The purpose of these arguments is not to show that it is impossible to explain the status of subordinated demographic groups in ref-

erence to their biological differences. Rather, it is to demonstrate that there are social structural or material explanations that can also account for the social hierarchy and the perceived differences between demographic groups. Given two possible explanations—one sociological, the other biological—where the variables are impossible to control for (we cannot take a child and put him or her in some other experimental social arrangement, nor can we put an adult in a social position identical to a child in our society)—there is no way for us to determine how much of children's *childishness* is the result of their innate attributes and how much is the result of their social position.

What does it really mean when we say that a child's brain is "still developing"? This is often construed to suggest that the changes that go on in a child's brain over time are teleological in nature—they begin at a low level of development and lead to the end point of a superior adult level of development, so we only give people adult rights and responsibilities once they have fully reached that superior level. This narrative however has minimal scientific support. The reality is that there is no fixed adult level of brain development where brains plateau—rather brains continue to change over the course of someone's lifetime. Myelin levels in the brain, often cited as 'proof' that the teenage brain is still developing, not only continue to increase through teenage years, but well into middle age, at which point they decline.

Psychologist Robert Epstein surveyed the literature on adolescent neurology studies and concluded that they were misrepresented in the popular press in several ways: the changes observed continue to take place through our lives, and research has thus far only shown correlations between behavior and neurology, but has not demonstrated causality, and it is well known that experience can alter brain anatomy, and studies are often simply misrepresented and overstated. Epstein notes that while all of our behavior, thoughts and feelings are in some way reflected physically in our brains, it does not follow that something particular about our

Anarchism and Youth Liberation

Marc Silverstein

Children in today's society are uniquely oppressed, but for the most part their oppression goes unnoticed even by people who consider themselves progressives or radicals. The fact that the relations between children and adults are based on inequality and compulsion is considered a separate issue from oppressions based on race, gender or sexual orientation, because it is considered somehow natural. Children are seen as incapable of making decisions for themselves and running their own affairs, due to their supposed lack of experience and immaturity, and therefore it is considered legitimate for adults to exercise some kind of authority over them. Anarchism, which is based on the principles of individual sovereignty, non-coercion, free association and mutual aid, can play an important role in helping to formulate an anti-authoritarian theory of parenting, education and child-rearing, and to begin the process of liberating children from an oppressive society.

The first kind of authority that children face while growing up is that of their parents. Parents have legal guardianship over their children from the moment they are born until they turn 18. Most parents hold an authoritarian and hierarchical view of their relation to their children. They see their kids as their property, who are to be nurtured, protected, kept in line, restrained, disciplined, rewarded or punished as the parents see fit. Anarchists would oppose this conception of the child, since children are not seen as autonomous individuals in their own right, but mere appendages of their parents. Mikhail Bakunin, the Russian anarchist, put it succintly: "Children do not constitute anyone's property: they are neither the property of the parents nor even of society. They belong only to their own future freedom."

Some parents use the justification that they are "over-protective" or they "care about their children too much" to excuse the stifling

measures to ensure the subjugation of Black education.4 While these programs have been exported nationwide and lauded as models of public safety and/or crime prevention, it is necessary to understand the social and political context from which they developed. It is only then that we can refine our analysis beyond seductive, rhetorical devices and empty reformist concessions such as the STPP. Moreover, understanding the social and political context enables us to begin the "heavy lifting" of developing concrete strategies that explore the multifaceted nature of education and re-root movements for social change back to Black communities.

brains is the cause of those actions or emotional states. According to Epstein, environments, studying, diet, exercise, stress, and many other activities alter the brain—so if adolescents have problems, pointing to brain differences does not show that their brains caused the problems as the problems could cause the brain differences. There are also numerous differences between child and adult mental capacities where children actually have superior mental abilities. Visual acuity peaks at the onset of puberty, and incidental memory abilities peak near twelve years old before declining, so young people actually have an organic advantage in learning new things. Intelligence researchers J.C. Raven and David Wechsler using different intelligence tests found that "raw intelligence" scores peak between age thirteen and fifteen and decline through life. Needless to say these differences between child and adult mental capacities have not been prominent in political and media discourse about children's capacities and rights.

The focus on the difference between adults and children ignores what is at stake from a social justice perspective in according children equal rights. Even to the extent that there are significant natural differences in capacity between most adults and most children, these differences do not necessarily justify all or most of the social structures that privilege adults against children. Just as biological differences between men and women do not determine the specific socio-economic (and, historically, legal) advantages of men over women (such as coverture), the biological differences between adults and children do not determine the form that children's legal status takes with regard to adults. Even if we were to grant for the sake of argument that, implausibly, all people under the age of eighteen have inferior mental capabilities to all those over eighteen, this is hardly an argument for assigning civil rights only to those with superior mental capabilities over eighteen. Reasonable people rightly recognize that those allegedly (or even demonstrably) more rational and intelligent should not enjoy greater rights than those with lesser capacities for rationality and intelligence—we do not see legal caste hierarchies arranged by IQ points or brain size as legitimate or just ways of organizing a society.

Despite the considerable variability in the roles children have occupied in society, people continue the mistake of thinking children's status is something inherent to children, rather than a condition imposed on them by the state and society. For instance, in *Schall v. Martin*, the Supreme Court permitted pretrial detention of children for longer periods than permitted for adults, under the theory that such detention was not punitive, but merely regulatory, in part because children have fewer liberty interests than adults—they are always in some sort of custody.

Do children really have fewer liberty interests as an inherent result of their childhood, or has the state already deprived them of their liberty under its 'regulations?' It would seem that the Schall Court did not find any pre-trial punishment of children because children are generally treated in a way that would be recognized as punitive if applied to an adult. In this case, the status of a child's liberty is the result of a child's legal status, not a child's biology.

It is dangerous from the viewpoint of someone concerned with wrongly depriving others of liberty to assume that children's apparent capacities necessarily exclude them from possessing rights, when their effective capabilities are constrained by the way they are treated in society. If a child were capable of exercising equal rights competently, how would we be able to recognize it in a society that deprives them of any opportunity to do so? If we cannot tell whether or not children are capable of exercising rights in a society that enables them to do so, because we are only familiar with children in the context of a society, which prevents them from exercising equal rights, then the assumption that children are naturally incapable of having rights is unjustified.

Prevailing Attitudes Towards Children

There are additional reasons to be suspicious of the common impulse to accept research that seems to confirm adult assumptions about children. Dismissing out of hand the possibility that children

Recognizing that historical processes stretching back over two centuries account for the education of Black people in the United States, the basis of support for my argumentation rests on evidence amassed between the 1940s and 1970s in Southern California. This time period was of great significance as it marked a mass influx of Black migrants from the U.S. South to California. Moreover, Los Angeles is important during this moment as the site where intense violence was enacted upon Black communal organizations that advocated for social change (Widener, 2010). It was also during this time period in Los Angeles that education was a hotly contested area in terms of the terrain of ideological governance. That is, while Black communities in Los Angeles conceptualized and used public education as a space to develop alternative models of cultural expression and organizing, city officials, planners, and private capital lobbied for and responded with brute force and policy tactics to undermine liberation movements of Black Angelinos. Looking through two important documents—the Welfare Planning Council's report on "Youth Problems and Needs in the South Central Area" (WPC, 1961) and the "Police in Government" course manual taught by officers within the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) (Los Angeles Police Department, 1974) in predominately Black high schools—we achieve a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship among Black communities, city leaders, and public education.

In addition to the influx of Black migrants and the level of violence enacted upon Black communal organizations in Los Angeles during this time period, Southern California (and Los Angeles in particular) is a critical site to examine because over the last 50 years, it has become the region of choice in regards to the testing and development of models that foster enclosure linkages between education and prisons. Ranging from the highly marketed anti-drug "D.A.R.E" program to truancy tickets that mandate arrests and carry exorbitant fines, policy makers in Southern California have been at the cutting edge of creating policy and perfecting extralegal

of power that follows an arc whereby the supposed beholders of power have complete control of the "other"—Black youth. Similar to Cedric Robinson's (2007) critique of Foucault's analysis of power, the same argument can be made with respect to the STPP. Specifically, Robinson (2007) states:

> It is as if systems of power never encounter the stranger, or that strangers can be seamlessly abducted into a system of oppression. In our own interrogations this amounts to the presumption that the exposing of the invention of race subjects is a sufficient method for recognizing and explaining difference. (p. xii)

The glaring problem with the STPP's framework is that it never accounts for the possibility that the structure of public education is responding to the actions taken by Black students that are perceived to threaten the status quo. In this regard, the criminalization of Black youth is not only intentional, but it is in response to direct agitation on the part of Black people. Thus, strategies to address the STPP that focus on shifting behaviors serve to legitimate the idea that disciplining student behavior is necessary, as long as the mechanisms do not push students out of school or entail arrests.

While the STPP framework may challenge the basic tenant that the meting out of discipline is disproportional, it fails to challenge the ethos of anti-Blackness as foundational to the formation and enactment of school discipline. Through a brief cull of the annals of contemporary history, which the STPP framework completely disregards, I will demonstrate that the modes of current school discipline (e.g., policing and expulsions) have developed in an attempt to suppress assertions of Black culture, Black autonomy, and Black liberation movements within schools. Very simply, the attention to reforming student behavior belies the complicity of state officials, private capital, and philanthropic organizations to undermine efforts by Black communities to dictate the parameters of Black education.

could exercise greater control over their lives is attractive, easy, and convenient. It is convenient because it is easier for adults to deal with children if children have few state-enforceable rights that can be mobilized against adults when adults attempt to control their lives against their wishes. Many adults also tend to just really like the idea that children are child-like and profoundly unadult-like: that they are cute, innocent, irresponsible, and dependent without the possibility of autonomy. Educator and child rights' advocate John Holt writes:

> When one person sees and deals with another not as a unique person but as an example of a type, whether Celebrity, Black, Sex Symbol, Great Genius, Artist, Saint, or whatever, he diminishes that person and makes it hard for any natural relationship to grow between them. This is what we do to children when we see them as Cute, Adorable, Innocent. For the real child before us we substitute some idea of Childhood that we have in our minds and deal with that. Often, when we label someone in this way, we invest him with magical properties, sometimes bad, sometimes good . . Men often do this to women they consider beautiful . . Having turned the child into an ideal abstraction, many parents and teachers tend to look at him much as Rocket Control in Houston looks at a moon shot. They have a trajectory (life) all mapped out for this child, and they are constantly monitoring him to see whether he is on the path or whether he needs a little boost from this rocket (psychologist) here or a sideways push from that rocket (learning specialist) there . . They have their own precise notions of what a child should be. They tend to slip very easily into condescending sentimentality as I have described.

Holt's observation reveals what we in some ways already know, that adults judge children according to what plans and expectations the powerful adults in their lives, their parents and teachers, have for

them. If children are not under parental control, following a parent-defined path rather than their own desires, adults judge them to be out of control. If it is often thought that if children are left to their own devices they will make a mess of their lives, this is in part because parents, teachers and other adults presume to define what is valuable in their children's lives and what would constitute making a mess of them. The widespread liberal belief that the state should remain neutral between differing conceptions of the good is inconsistently dropped when it comes to dealings with children—most adults imagine instead that there is either an objectively appropriate way for children to behave, learn, and grow up, or that each parent's subjective and arbitrary preferences for their children's conduct should be given force despite also thinking that even a democratically elected state should not impose its beliefs of how to live one's life on its citizenry.

When children deviate from adult expectations, from the idealized abstracted version of what a child is, it can cause cognitive dissonance: the problem is felt to be with the child and not with the idea of what a child should be and how children should act. To find an example of this we need look no further than the way adults react with horror to children's use of foul language when the same language used by an adult would leave them unfazed. Just as children's apparent capabilities and behaviors are limited by societal constraints, societal views of children and the impressions they make on adults are similarly informed by the social conventions that affect how adults think about children. This is all the more reason to be skeptical of our own intuitions about what children are capable of. Recent research strongly suggests that older adults actually prefer reading articles that seem to confirm inferior traits in young people. One way this could be explained is that people in a position of privilege find it affirming and convenient when they receive information that seems to confirm that their privilege is natural and not arbitrary.

> protests were led throughout the state of California. The main emphasis of university students was on increasing access to the university for poor, working-class communities of color and promoting more relevant curricula. High school students from those communities voiced concerns over insufficient educational resources, declining economic opportunity, and the growing criminalization of their generation. Often, many of the organizations came together to develop more comprehensive, radical critiques of these issues and strategies for political education. Though it is often believed that SNJ [Schools not Jails] is a variation on "education not incarceration," I would argue that that it is a corruption. (p. 208)

In recent years, the co-optation of the STPP discourse has shifted the conversation away from key historical issues that constituted the generative core of radical community organizing. Over the past ten years, conferences and workshops have convened non- profit organizations, academic scholars, philanthropic foundations, and legislative bodies to analyze causes and solutions to the STPP. To date, the primary answer to the STPP has been to focus on student behavior and policy transformation; that is, the response has been to focus on the way that discipline policies are levied out based upon racialized conceptualizations of student behavior (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). An underlying logic of these solutions is that by altering behaviors and certain policies, students will no longer be pushed out or arrested. Subsequently, these strategies would help to greatly reduce students' chances of being sent to prison.

While there is general agreement that Black students are unfairly disciplined within the realm of public education and that predominately Black schools are mired in a labyrinth of policing procedures, I argue that the STPP framework provides an overdetermined, analytic model and an undertheorized solution set to address issues that are both historical in nature and extremely complex. Specifically, the STPP is a concept that is predicated upon an analysis

> what effect one of the planet's richest and most diverse political economies has organized and executed a prison-building and filling plan that government analysts have called 'the biggest…in the history of the world.' (p. 5)

While community organizations across the country have been fighting to identify and eradicate the multilayered connections between the nation's schools and prisons, this has not been the articulated aims of the STPP discourse. For example, the central document that laid the groundwork for the discursive framing of the STPP, Deconstructing the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Wald & Losen, 2003), details a funneling mechanism that transfers minoritized youth from schools to prisons but neglects to interrogate the coalescence of schools and prisons including the political, economic, racial, gendered, and sexed complexities that undergird both of their foundations. This narrow understanding of the relationship between schools and prisons has become increasingly popularized within the past decade. Philanthropic organizations and national and state government offices have highlighted the pipeline as a reformist attempt to assuage the demands of community and neighborhood organizing.The STPP discourse has not only been used by government officials to describe the relationship between schools and prisons, it has also been repackaged as a non-threatening, ubiquitous, rhetorical device for community organizers.

This disturbing trend follows in an eerily similar path as the development of the "Schools not Jails" campaign during the late 1990s. As argued by Camille Acey (2000), the Schools not Jails movement undercut the radical and valid critique that students and community members had regarding the function of school in the United States. According to Acey (2000):

> The slogan "education not incarceration" grew out of the link between university student anti-Proposition 209 activism and grass-roots high school student activism. In the mid- to late 1990s, a number of student walkouts and

Parenting Is a Conflict of Interest

Kathleen Nicole O'Neal

Since becoming involved with youth liberation, I have encountered an attitude from a number of parents that has consistently left me baffled. They have expressed this attitude in a variety of ways that probably sounded like fine rhetoric to the person making the statements but which has consistently struck me as either disingenuous or betraying a deep lack of understanding of what youth liberation is really about.

Here is a sampling of the sort of statements to which I refer: "As a parent I am on the frontlines of advocating for children while you are dealing with theory." (This might be less disingenuous coming from someone that attempts to put some sort of youth autonomy-centered philosophy at the core of their parenting, but alas this person was not such a parent.) "As a parent, I can speak to my child's need for boundaries and discipline." "You'll feel differently when you are a parent." These statements are not only a prime example of the authoritarian impulses of the people making them, they are also patently absurd upon reflection. This is because parenting is not a qualification for discussing the rights of youth, it is a conflict of interest.

One is often seen as bolstering his case when he takes a stand despite having interests to the contrary. This is why the millionaire that supports higher income tax rates, the poor person that doesn't believe in government assistance for people like himself, the white person speaking out in favor of affirmative action programs for racial minorities, and the person of color who opposes affirmative action programs tend to be seen as either a.) lacking a true appreciation of their own self-interests or b.) acting from a higher and more noble set of values than immediate self-interest but never as c.) deeply corrupted by their own interests.

There are also individuals who come to make a judgment about a situation as a more or less neutral party with nothing that she personally stands to gain or lose depending on the outcome of the situation. We think of the ideal judge and jury in a court case as having interests of this type. Their very neutrality can bolster their claims about a situation.

Parents advocating for their "right" to arbitrarily punish their children and control their lives are not taking either type of stand. They are not taking a stand that goes against their self-interests and they are not coming to a decision about their values from a place of neutrality. Guardianship and minority give parents power at the expense of their children. There is therefore nothing especially noble or wise about parents arguing for the maintenance of these institutions in their current form - it is simply one example among many of powerful people attempting to protect their interests at the expense of those they have power over. Saying "As a parent I know what is best for my child" is no more noble than saying "As a slave owner I know that emancipation doesn't suit the Negro" or "As a logging executive I know that we don't need environmental regulation." Even if the statements were valid, we would be right to be highly suspect about the motives of the person making the claim.

When we hear someone speaking of his or her role as a parent as a justification for beliefs about youth that many youth themselves would likely find oppressive or even abusive we should never accept that as good enough and we should never defer to their judgment on those grounds alone. If anything, that person's status as a parent should make us more suspect about his or her motives for supporting youth oppression. When discussing youth liberation, parenting is not a qualification. It is a conflict of interest. It is important that no one ever trick us into thinking of the position of a parent as necessarily pro-youth or even neutral. We cannot be bullied into silence by those whose class position vis a vis youth betrays their true motives for advocating for their continued oppression.

Excerpt from

Undoing the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Damien Sojoyner

The analytical construction of the STPP provides an easy and accessible narrative pertaining to prisons and public education. In general, the STPP argument states that schools unfairly discipline non-white youth, particularly Black youth, when compared to students of other races. Studies demonstrate that Black students have higher rates of suspensions, detentions, and expulsions than their peers (Wald & Losen, 2003). Further, there is increasing evidence that Black students within the same schools are disproportionally given more severe forms of discipline than their white peers for the exact same offenses (Jackson, 2012). The results of these forms of punishment often lead to Black students either being pushed out of school or arrested on campus. Hence, school discipline policies and legal constructs serve to funnel Black youth through the STPP.

The history of STPP research and its associated campaign is complicated by its development in the midst of anti-prison movements across the United States. While decades-long organizing efforts by the likes of Critical Resistance, A New Way of Life, and the Southern California Library have explicit ties to historic, economic, political, and social projects that aim to radically alter society through the abolishment of prisons, the STPP discourse is not invested in the same goal. Further, the STPP is framed ahistorically, often missing critical racial, class, gendered, and sexed analyses that are needed to understand the root causes, including the development of education malaise and subsequent expansion of prisons within the United States. In this manner, the STPP discourse cannot begin to address a central theme and line of inquiry posed by Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) that is key to any analysis of prisons:

> This book is about the phenomenal growth of California's state prison since 1982, it asks how, why, where, and to

Cheating Is a Moral Imperative

Cevin Soling

You have been kidnapped and dragged off to a remote location where your abductors have tied you to a chair. One of your captors is seated in front of you. He holds up ten flash cards and informs you that he is going to ask you a series of questions and the answers are printed on the backs of the cards. He assures you that once he has finished asking these questions, you will be released. There is a catch, though. For every question you get wrong, he will signal his accomplice to cut off one of your fingers. As he begins to read the first question, you notice there is a mirror on the opposite wall where you can see the reflection of the text on the card. Because you have been taught that cheating is dishonest, you interrupt your kidnapper and let him know that you are able to read the card and that he must conceal them better so that you cannot inadvertently cheat. He adjusts himself accordingly and proceeds to ask you a series of dry and uninspired questions on topics that hold no interest for you, while his accomplice menacingly holds out a set of cutting pliers.

While cheating is technically wrong, everyone should cringe at this conception of morality because it fails to account for context. In this example, cheating is not only justified, it is necessary because it aids a helpless victim who has been involuntarily subjected to unreasonable conditions. Unfortunately, this kind of clarity is absent when it comes to compulsory education.

One of the most salient features of all public schools is the importance of grades. Because grades are the currency and sole commodity of schools, they are used both to motivate and punish. They are a major component of a student's portfolio and have the potential to impact their future. Educators might try to stress the value of "learning" over grades, but that is a complete farce. When learning

is not commensurately represented by grades, students rightly feel cheated by the system and become apathetic. To insist on valuing learning over grades is offensively disingenuous and hypocritical. It is akin to telling workers at McDonald's that they should care more about doing their job than their salary.

Students have no input regarding how or what they learn, and they are alienated from the work they do at school. Except for a few rare assignments, students are not inspired by their work, and any personal attachment they could have is undermined by the fact that they must compromise their efforts to meet the demands and expectations of the person who grades their work.

It's important to bear in mind that students prepare for tests with the intention that they will retain the material just long enough to take the test and then forget most of what they learned soon afterwards. This completely undermines the purpose and value of testing. Advocates of testing who denigrate cheating conveniently fail to acknowledge this. Testing demands that students view knowledge as a disposable commodity that is only relevant when it is tested. This contributes to the process of devaluing education.

The benefits of cheating are obvious – improved grades in an environment where failure is not an opportunity for learning, but rather a badge of shame. When students do poorly on a test, there is no reason for students to review their responses because they will likely never be tested on the same thing ever again. The test itself is largely arbitrary and often not meaningful. Organizations such as FairTest are devoted to sharing research that exposes the problems of bad testing practices.

The main arguments against cheating in school are that it is unethical, promotes bad habits, and impacts self-esteem through the attainment of an unearned reward. None of these concerns are even remotely valid because none consider the environment. Children are routinely rounded up and forcibly placed in an institution where they are subjected to a hierarchy that places them at the bottom. Like the hostage, they are held captive even if they are not physically bound. They are deprived of any power over their own lives, including the ability to pursue their interests, and are subjected to a barrage of tests that have consequences for each wrong answer.

Maintaining ethics is part of an unwritten contract of being a willing participant in a community. Students placed in school against their will and routinely disrespected have no obligation to adhere to the ethical codes of their oppressors. Cheating is an act of resistance, and resistance against oppressive powers should be encouraged and celebrated, rather than deemed a "bad habit" or an unethical act. The concern regarding self-esteem that is highlighted by The Child Study Center as promoting the "worst damage," lacks any scientific support whatsoever.

If students feel bad for cheating, it is because the environment has created a set of conditions where cheating is necessary and justifiable. For this same reason, many students are proud that they cheat. Cheating often requires creativity in terms of execution as well as ingenuity to avoid being caught. It also serves as a statement of disdain against an arbitrary and repressive institution. For these reasons, cheating can be a source for pride that boosts self-esteem. Given this construct, cheating is not simply something many students do; it is something all students in compulsory schools should do. Cheating is a moral imperative.

Punishing students for cheating is completely misguided. People should be most concerned about the student who does not cheat. They are the ones who appear to have internalized their oppression and might lack the necessary skills to rally and lobby against abuses of power that are perpetrated by governing bodies. Cheating should be recognized as the necessary and logical outcome of an arbitrary and oppressive institution. Punishing students who cheat is yet another abuse of autocratic power. In a healthy society, people ridicule and shame those who force children to endure the kind of environment that demands they must cheat.