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## H.S. Revolt!

(From the newspaper *Palante*, 16 October 1970, volume 2, number 13)

Bullets and bombs aren't the only ways to kill people. Bad hospitals kill our people. Rotten, forgotten buildings kill our people. Garbage and disease kill our people. And the schools kill our people.

Inefficient administrators + racist uncaring teachers + overcrowded classrooms + irrelevant curriculums + old, lying textbooks + an attitude of "don't ask too many questions" + a prison atmosphere = genocide (the mass killing of people). But students and parents everywhere are rising up against these conditions. We understand that by herding us into these brainwashing centers, our enemy is trying to kill our desire to learn, to destroy our ability to get the skills and knowledges we need to fight a society that needs us only for cheap labor and manpower for its racist wars against other Third World people.

Benjamin Franklin HS is on 116th Street and Pleasant Avenue. It can seat 2400 students but 4400 are enrolled. Three classes are held in the cafeteria during the second period. Classes are also held in the auditorium balcony and the infirmary. One office, Room 138, is being used as a "classroom" for 24 students. Room 138 is only 21 feet long and 15 feet wide. How can people learn under these conditions?

Benjamin Franklin is 99% Puerto Rican and Black. Three years ago it had the second highest dropout rate in the city—60% (Morris HS in the Bronx had the highest—64%). In January, 1969, 47% of the graduating class were refused diplomas (the highest percentage in the city). At the same time, only 4% of the graduating class applied for college (the next to lowest percentage in the city). In predominantly white schools the number of students applying to college is always over 50%.

Concerned parents, students, and community groups at Franklin feel that a first step in dealing with these conditions and problems is appointing a principal that will serve and be accountable to the community. They have chosen Melvin Taylor, a brother who grew up in the area who worked as a teacher, advisor and dean at Franklin; who has demonstrated his ability to relate to Black and Puerto Rican students; who has had extensive experience in high school and college administration; and who possesses a State Certificate for Principalship of Secondary Schools. Although the brother has all the credentials necessary for the job, the Board of Miseducation has said "no good" and has given the people a "choice" of 7 lames (all white) that they can consider for principal.

We know that the Board has no right to tell us who we can pick to run our schools. These are our brothers and sisters, our children, who are being turned off to learning and are being pushed out into the streets and out of frustration into dope and crime. The Board of Miseducation has no right at all. They are public servants, not rulers. Our taxes pay their salaries, and they're supposed to do whatever the people want them to do.

The issue at Franklin is not just a matter of a principal—it's a matter of whether or not we have the right to control our own lives. The existing structure has shown through their practice that they are not going to move against the high dropout rates and overcrowding of schools in our communities; while at the same time, they would not let these conditions exist in their own communities. If they are not going to do their job, we'll have to take it into our hands.

Already we've seen the reaction of the people who control the school system. They're scared. Principals who say they're for freedom of speech will not allow YOUNG LORDS or Black Panthers to talk with our people. Why is it that they are so afraid of words? What are they trying to hide? Sisters and brothers are being hassled and threatened with suspension for organizing, postering, leafletting, and selling literature (Jane Addams H.S. and Alfred K. Smith HS, both in the Bronx, are two places where this is happening). In other words, "Sure, you have freedom of speech—as long as I approve of what you say."

We know what the problems are. But what are we willing to do about them? Are we going to let our sisters and brothers at Franklin, Jane Addams, Smith, and Morris struggle alone? Or are we going to come together from all parts of the city to present a united front and take care of business? At the Puerto Rican Student Conference, students in the high school workshop decided that they would no longer allow our enemy to isolate each school struggle. When one school goes they all go! The time is coming for us to put these words into practice. We are being oppressed as a people, as a nation, as Puerto Ricans and Blacks; and we have to fight as a nation, not as individuals.

The YOUNG LORDS PARTY is fighting to return the educational system to the people. Point 5 of our program says, "We want community control of our institutions and land." We will publicize and support as best as we can all battles for community control of the schools. Write to us at 949 Longwood Avenue, Bronx 10454, or call 887-1225.

To all our brothers and sisters in school—if your school is messed up, if the administration and the teachers don't care and don't teach—don't let them force you to drop out. Throw them out. The schools belong to us, not to them. Take all that anger and put it to work for our people. Make revolution inside the schools. If the schools don't function for us, they shouldn't function at all!

ALL POWER TO OUR PEOPLE!  
UNIDOS VENCEREMOS!

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