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**"I PARTICIPATE, YOU PARTICIPATE, WE PARTICIPATE..."**  
*Notes on Building a K-16 Movement for Democracy and Social Justice*

**What Is the Rouge Forum?**

The Rouge River runs throughout the Detroit area. Once a beautiful river bounteous with fish and plant life, it supported wetlands throughout southeast Michigan. Before industrialization, it was one of three rivers running through what is now the metropolitan area. Today the Rouge meanders through some of the most industrially polluted areas in the United States, past some of the poorest and most segregated areas of North America, with tributaries leading to one of the richest cities in the US—Birmingham, Michigan. The Rouge cares nothing for boundaries. The other two Detroit rivers were paved, early in the life of the city, and now serve as enclosed running sewers. Of the three, the Rouge is the survivor.

The Ford Rouge Plant built before and during World War I was the world's largest industrial complex where everything that went into a Ford car was manufactured. Seeking to extend his control to every aspect of production including the worker's life, mind, and body, in the plant and out, Henry Ford instituted a code of silence, systematically divided workers along lines of national origin, sex, race, language groupings and set up segregated housing for the work force. He designed a sociology department, a group of social workers who demanded entry into workers' homes to ensure "appropriate" family relations and to see that they ate Ford-approved food (like soybeans), voted right, and went to church.

The Rouge Plant is the site that defined "Fordism." Fordism centers on conveyor production, single-purpose machines, mass consumption, mass marketing, and seeks to heighten productivity via technique. The processes are designed to strip workers of potentially valuable faculties, like their expertise, to speed production, expand markets, and drive down wages. Fordism conceptualizes workers as replaceable machines themselves, but machines also capable of consumption.

Henry Ford owned Dearborn and its politicians. Ford was and is an international carmaker and a long-time practitioner of globalism. And, Henry Ford was a fascist. He contributed intellectually and materially to fascism and his anti-Semitic works inspired Hitler. Ford accepted the German equivalent of the Medal of Honor from Hitler, and his factories continued to operate in Germany, untouched by allied bombs, throughout WWII.

At its height, more than 100,000 workers held jobs at the Rouge Plant. Nineteen trains ran on 85 miles of track, mostly in huge caverns under the plant. It was the nation's largest computer center, the third largest

producer of glass. It was also its worst polluter. In 1970, the Environmental Protection agency charged the Rouge Plant with nearly 150 violations. When environmentalist volunteers tried to clean the Rouge River in June 1999, they were ordered out of the water. It was too polluted to clean. Today there are 9,000 workers at the Rouge Plant, most of them working in the now Japanese-owned iron foundry.

Ford ruthlessly battled worker organizing at the Rouge Plant. His Dearborn cops and goon squad—recruited from Michigan prisons and led by the infamous Harry Bennet—killed hunger marchers during the depression, leading to massive street demonstrations. In the “Battle of Overpass,” Ford unleashed his armed goons on UAW leaders, a maneuver which led to the battle for collective bargaining at Ford, and was the founding monument to what was once the largest UAW local in the world, Local 600, led for years by radical organizers.

On February 1, 1999, the boilers at the aging Rouge Plant blew up, killing six workers. The plant, according to workers, had repeatedly failed safety inspections. The UAW local president made a statement saying how sorry he was for the families of the deceased—and for William Clay Ford, "who is having one of the worst days of his life." The media presented the workers' deaths as a tough day for the young Ford, who inherited the presidency of the company. The steam went out of Local 600 long ago and the leaders now refer to themselves as "UAW-FORD"—proof that they have inherited the views of the company founder.

“The Rouge” represents both nature and work. The Rouge has never quit; it moves with the resiliency of nature itself. The river and the plant followed the path of industrial life throughout the world. The technological advances created at the Rouge, in some ways, led to better lives. In other ways, technology was used to forge the privilege of the few, at the expense of most—and the ecosystems which brought it to life. The Rouge seemed to be a good place to consider education and social action—to have Rouge Forums.

Generally, the Rouge Forum seeks to bring together educators, students, and parents seeking a democratic society. We ask questions like these: How can we teach against racism, national chauvinism, and sexism in an increasingly authoritarian and undemocratic society? How can we gain enough real power to keep our ideals and still teach—or learn? Whose interests shall school serve in a society that is ever more unequal? We are both research and action oriented. We want to learn about equality, democracy and social justice as we simultaneously struggle to bring into practice our present understanding of what that is. We seek to build a caring inclusive community that understands that an injury to one is an injury to all. At the same time, it is recognized that our caring community is going to need to deal decisively with an opposition that is sometimes ruthless.

We hope to demonstrate that the power necessary to win greater democracy will likely rise out of an organization that unites people in new ways—across union boundaries, across community lines, across the fences of race and sex/gender. We believe that good humor and friendships are a vital part of building this kind of organization, as important as theoretical clarity. Friendships allow us to understand that action always reveals errors—the key way we learn. We chose Brer Rabbit as a symbol to underline the good cheer that rightfully guides the struggle for justice. Every part of the world is our briar patch.

Although the first official meeting of the Rouge Forum was held at Wayne State University in Detroit, June 1998, the impetus for this meeting stretches back to 1994 and anti-racist and free speech activism within the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

## **Origins of the Rouge Forum: National Council for the Social Studies, Phoenix 1994**

At the 1994 annual meeting of NCSS in Phoenix, two events galvanized a small group of activists. First, a staff person from the Central Committee of Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) was arrested for leafleting at the conference; and secondly, the governing body of NCSS rejected a resolution condemning California Proposition 187 and calling for a boycott of California as a site for future meetings of the organization. These events fueled a level of political activism the organization had rarely experienced and identified the need for organized action in support of free speech and anti-racist pedagogy in the field of social studies education in general and within NCSS in particular. Moreover, these events highlighted the unwillingness and inability of the largest professional organization for social studies educators in the United States to respond to serious threats to democracy from within the organization and beyond.

### **The Arrest and Trials of Sam Diener<sup>1</sup>**

Sam Diener was arrested for third-degree trespass on Saturday November 19, 1994 at an NCSS sponsored concert of the US Marine Corps Band. At the time, Diener was a staff person for the CCCO and a registered exhibitor at the NCSS conference. The concert was an advertised free public event at the Phoenix Civic Plaza and Convention Center and part of the NCSS program. Before the concert, the Marine Corps distributed recruitment information to the many high school students and teachers in the audience. Diener—whose work with the CCCO focused on countering the expansion of Jr. ROTC in schools—distributed small flyers titled “Keep Guns Out of Our Schools!” at the auditorium’s entrance (see [Appendix A](#)). The flyer criticized Jr. ROTC for its expense, discriminatory practices, and militarization of the schools. Diener attended the concert and at intermission after, he began leafleting again, security guards seized him from behind and arrested him. When Diener protested a security guard responded that he was acting on orders from the leadership of NCSS. Diener was handcuffed and carried away from the auditorium by police.

After his arrest and release, Diener along with Mike Wong, also a CCCO staff person, began distributing a leaflet titled “Free Speech Censored at NCSS” to NCSS conference-goers (see [Appendix B](#)) and lobbying NCSS leadership for an opportunity to present his case and have NCSS drop the charges. The President of NCSS, Bob Stahl, a professor at Arizona State University, refused to allow Diener to address the organization’s governing body, the House of Delegates, however, he did invite the Director of the Phoenix Civic Plaza, Wendy Thompson, to present a justification for Diener’s arrest to the delegates at their November 20 session. David Hursh (1998) described the debate that followed as “chilling.”

As the one-sided version of the events was given, portraying Diener as disrupting the concert, members of the audience [primarily social studies teachers with leadership positions in state level social studies councils] ridiculed Diener’s leafleting and many portrayed leafleting as a major crime. Some...suggested Diener should go to jail with “the key thrown away.” (p. 3)

Stephen C. Fleury, a member of the House of Delegates presented Diener’s version of events based on the free speech leaflet Diener and Wong had been distributing. Fleury described the scene this way:

As I began to read Diener’s story, I felt momentary relief when the delegates began to laugh at what I perceived to be the absurdity and irony of Diener’s arrest. Relief was quickly replaced with horror, however, when I realized the delegates’ were amused that Diener (and others advocating for him) might believe that social activism was reasonable behavior at a social studies education conference...When the final vote was taken, however, the appeal to exonerate Diener was soundly defeated. (Fleury, 1998, pp. 4-5)

Following the House of Delegates fiasco, Hursh and E. Wayne Ross, worked with Diener to update the free speech leaflet (subtitled "The Saga Continues") and distribute them at the convention center (see [Appendix C](#)). Later that day, the executive director of NCSS, Martharose Laffey, threatened Diener with a lawsuit if the leafleting continued. On Monday November 21, Diener was allowed to present his case to the NCSS Board of Directors, but the Board refused to take action to avert Diener's upcoming arraignment.

On Tuesday, November 22, Diener was arraigned and charged with trespassing. While the judge dismissed his case at a May 1995 pretrial hearing, Phoenix prosecutors later appealed the decision fearing that Diener's case would set a precedent in which events held in the Civic Plaza by non-governmental organizations would be subject to rules of free speech. At his April 1997 trial, the judge ruled that the First Amendment did not apply to this case and Diener was found guilty and fined \$90. Diener appealed on grounds that his free speech rights were violated and that exculpatory evidence was suppressed—e.g., an affidavit by Convention Center director Thompson claiming that while NCSS officials stated they did not want to allow Diener's leafleting at the concert that the Civic Plaza authorities were responsible for the arrest. Thompson's affidavit contradicted her pretrial hearing testimony and in February 1998 an appellate court agreed with Diener and dismissed the case. So after more than three years and four judicial hearings Diener prevailed.

Hursh (1998) points out that the Diener incident raises questions about whether the leading organization of civic educators in the US tolerates the expression of diverse views. As Judge Alice Wright ruled at the pretrial hearing, Diener was ordered to leave the Civic Plaza "solely because of the content of the leaflets." Additionally, actions of NCSS indicated that as an organization it supports the militarization of schools and society. Finally, Hursh argues that "the events surrounding Diener's arrest, the discussion in the NCSS House of Delegates, and the multiple appeals on the part of the prosecution, can only be interpreted as an effort to quash free speech."

### **CUFA, Proposition 187, and the Boycott of California**

In November of 1994—the same month the Diener imbroglio began—California voters passed the "Save Our State" initiative, also known as Proposition 187. Provisions of the measure denied health care, social services, and public education to immigrants without documentation. Under this law all city, county, and state officials in California (including teachers, counselors, and social workers) would be required to report any "suspicious" persons to the US Immigration and Nationalization Service, nullifying the sanctuary ordinances in many localities.

A few weeks after Proposition 187 passed, the College and University Faculty Assembly of NCSS<sup>2</sup> meeting in Phoenix, adopted a resolution condemning Proposition 187 and boycotting California as a future site for CUFA meetings.<sup>3</sup> A similar resolution presented to the NCSS House of Delegates in Phoenix was rejected by an overwhelming majority (see Fleury, 1998 for an account of these proceedings). Ironically, the 1994 annual meeting of NCSS (and CUFA) was being held in Phoenix as a result of a NCSS boycott of Denver (its planned meeting site for 1994) in response to an amendment to the Colorado State Constitution that denied protection against discrimination based sexual orientation.

Following the Phoenix meeting, a small group of CUFA and NCSS members worked together as the Emergency Committee of Social Educators for Social Justice to publicize CUFA's decision to boycott California and encourage other professional education organizations to do the same. Over 500 press releases announcing CUFA's actions were sent to media outlets, professional organizations, elected officials, and convention and tourism bureaus in California. NCSS responded by attempting to suppress the Emergency's Committee's work; while the elected leadership of CUFA took no action to implement the resolution's provisions (Ross, 1997, 1998). The debate within CUFA regarding action (or non-action)

on the boycott issue remained on low heat for several years despite a special symposium on "The Role of Social Studies Educators as Scholars and Advocates" at CUFA's 1995 meeting in Chicago.

In the spring of 1997—three and a half years after the initiative was passed by California voters—the NCSS Board of Directors condemned California Proposition 187 (as well as the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209) and planned to provide a forum at the 1998 NCSS Annual Conference in Anaheim "to educate the social studies community and the public about the significant issues involved" in these measures. In addition, the NCSS Board decided to boycott California as a meeting site while Propositions 187 and 209 were in effect (More on CUFA's Resolution, p. 4). The NCSS Board of Directors barely managed to pass this resolution (the vote was 9 to 8 with 3 abstentions), even though nearly every other leading education organization in the US had taken a similar stand years earlier.

In November 1997, at annual meetings of NCSS and CUFA in Cincinnati, both groups retreated from previous decisions on the California boycott. The NCSS Board of Directors made a sudden about-face rescinding their spring decision, apparently under pressure from leaders of the California Council for the Social Studies.

The Executive Director of NCSS—who had previously threatened a lawsuit against leafleteer Denier—was invited by the elected leaders of CUFA to speak to members at their business meeting in Cincinnati. In her speech, Laffey advocated rescinding the original CUFA resolution, stating that the organization should not be "sidetracked by seductive but not so important issues" of racism and national chauvinism as represented in California Propositions 187 and 209. Following Laffey's comments and further debate, CUFA members voted by a 2 to 1 margin to reverse the 1994 boycott resolution and hold its 1998 meeting in Anaheim. (CUFA members, however, did vote to boycott California as a site for future meetings, as long as Proposition 187 was in effect.)

The CUFA reversal had a dramatic and immediate effect. Several leading members of the organization passionately condemned the move and resigned from the organization, including two African American board members—one of whom described the directions of CUFA and NCSS as in conflict with "deeply held convictions about social justice, equity, and democracy" (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In addition, the NCSS African American Educators of Social Studies special interest group decided it would not convene in Anaheim.

A small group of CUFA members (who became the founding members of the Rouge Forum) argued that it turned reality on its head to suggest that taking action against racism and national chauvinism was a diversion from the work of social studies educators. Instead, they argued that the battle against irrationalism is exactly what should be taken up by the intellectuals of CUFA. Many CUFA members believed that the primary issue was the unity and solidarity of the two organizations (CUFA and NCSS). In a speech from the floor of the CUFA membership meeting in Cincinnati, Rich Gibson argued that unity and solidarity were indeed important, however the questions were: "Solidarity with whom? Around what purposes? Toward what end?"

Despite its reversal on the boycott, prior to the end of the Cincinnati meeting CUFA members voted that the 1998 Anaheim program should focus on analysis of the impact of racism and national chauvinism in educational institutions. And subsequently, a Diversity and Social Justice Committee was formed under the leadership of Susan Noffke, which has continued efforts to push forward these issues within CUFA.

Seven months later, the Rouge Forum was organized and held its first meeting in Detroit. Continued activism within CUFA and NCSS remained a major topic of discussion at this meeting—issues included: continuing the dialogue on overt political action by both CUFA and NCSS; the social and political responsibilities of educators; the role of researchers and research findings in ameliorating social ills; and

the unique position of social studies curriculum and teaching as a force against racism and fascism. The ideas and actions of these social studies educators and their actions at the NCSS conferences during this period illustrate the activist roots of the Rouge Forum. The following section explains a key operative principle for the actions of the Rouge Forum—the idea that schools hold a centripetal position in North American society and educators play a critical role in the creation of a more democratic egalitarian society, or one that increases inequality and authoritarianism.

### **The Centripetal Position of Schools in North American Society**<sup>4</sup>

Schools hold a centripetal position in North American society. One in four people in the US are directly connected to schools: school workers, students, parents. Many others are linked in indirect ways. Schools are the organizing point for most people's lives, in part, because of the deindustrialized nature of North America and, in part, the absence of serious struggle emanating from the industrial working class, despite its historical civilizing influence. School is not merely school, but the point of origin for health care, food, and daytime shelter for many people. Schools are also huge markets (consider the bus purchases, architectural and building costs, salaries, and potential for corruption), as well as bases for technological instruction and skill training. Schools warehouse children, serving as an important tax supported day care system for companies whose increasingly poorly paid workers come from dual income family who see their children an average of 20 hours less a week than they did in 1979. The beginning point in understanding the role teachers play as major actors in a centripetally positioned organization is to understand the value teachers create within capitalist societies. This is what Marx had to say:

The only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus value for the capitalist, or in other words contributes to the self-valorization of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of material production, a schoolmaster is a productive worker when, in addition to belaboring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation. The concept of a productive worker therefore implies, not merely a relation between the activity of work and its useful effect, between the worker and the product of the work, but also a specific social relation of production, a relation with a means of valorization. To be a productive worker is therefore not a piece of luck, but a misfortune. (Marx, 1977, p. 644)

How do teachers create surplus value, adding to the self-valorization of capital? Teachers are both commodities and commodifiers. They train skills, promote ideologies, make possible institutional profiteering (consider milk or cola sales, architects, bus makers, etc.) and above all teachers fashion hope, real or false. It follows that teachers create terrific value, not only in passing along what is known, but how it came to be known. Schools are battlegrounds in the combat for what is true. If the dominant rival on the field conceals the battle-fronts, the other can reveal them, in work, knowledge, love, and by holding the schools to their contradictory claims: schools for democratic citizenry or schools for capitalism. In schools the possible questions are: Can we understand the world? Can we change it?

A paradox of school is that the freedom to struggle for the methods to gain and test truth is often greatest in the richest and poorest schools—where youth have often learned that the construction of rational knowledge is a waste of time. But across the spectrum, school is most free for the working class. We believe teaching against the destruction of reason is possible in US public schools. Given that the crisis of the present age is not a crisis of material scarcity, but a crisis of consciousness—that is, the abundance that is necessary for a democratic and egalitarian society is at hand, what is missing is the decision to gain it—the role of educators in creating critical consciousness is even more vital. A base of solidarity, structured with an understanding of the collective value school workers of all kinds create, and the subsequent struggle to control value in the workplace and community makes defense possible.

The processes of school can, done well, go beyond demonstrating the wellsprings of social change and justice, but the processes may or may not involve people in its construction in daily life. The counter-current to the democratic abolition of thought is not solely to be found in the contradictory interests of production, but in the inexorable struggle for what is true. Intellectual and practical work, the social praxis of school, are bases for the necessary envisioning of a better world and how to live in it. Clearly, it is not material conditions alone that challenge capital as the mother of inequality and injustice. But rather, a profound understanding of how things are, how they change, and how we might live in better ways—in solidarity and creativity—that makes social change possible, and lasting. In this context, in de-industrialized North America, where there is little reason to believe the industrial working class will be a lever for democratic change for some time to come, teachers are centripetally positioned to fashion ideas which can take on an international import, and to assist in practices to challenge injustice.

The Rouge Forum seeks answers to "what is up?" "what is to be done?" and "why do it?" and takes these questions of social justice as a life and death issue—in schools and out. Being both research and action oriented, the Rouge Forum seeks to critique and engage in a reasoned struggle against standards-based education and high-stakes tests—lynchpins in the continued corporate hegemony of school.

### **Why Standards-Based Educational Reforms & High-Stakes Testing are Key Rouge Forum Issues<sup>5</sup>**

There is no place in the world that is growing more equitable and more democratic. To the contrary, commonly color-coded gaps of wealth and income expand across continents and within national populations. Carrot and stick, divide and conquer politics prevail behind a mask of globalism and prosperity. Total quality management, worker-to-worker campaigns, cooperative learning in schools, provide a Potemkin Village for the realities of exploitation and alienation. Talk of community is silenced by institutionalized pure selfishness, the hubris of power and privilege: arrogant warfare for markets, cheap labor, and raw materials. Freedom of choice becomes a pretense for a declining number of meaningful options. Elites do not want citizens to understand how to unravel the roots of power. Moreover, elites do not want power, a corollary of fear, noticed. Instead, privilege wants to rule under flags of democracy, tradition, patriotism, respectability, reasonableness, and perhaps above all, habit. This sums up to a numbing assault on human creativity on one hand, and a razor-sharp hierarchical ordering, made possible by largesse and a ferocious willingness to use terror and violence, on another. The capital system, grown by the war of all on all, requires profits, but is as deeply concerned with ideas, the consciousness necessary to make people instruments of their own oppression. No society reliant solely on technological might and the enticements of covetousness—a society that cannot trust its citizens—can last very long. The injustice requisite within the birthrights of the capital system is permanent, however, standardized curriculum and high-stakes tests are not and the reasoned struggle against them offers ways to come to better understand routes to challenge injustice.

### **Regulating Education and the Economy<sup>6</sup>**

The primary justification for the imposition of standardized curricula and/or the seizure of local schools by the state/corporate alliances (such as occurred in Detroit and numerous other cities) has been poor test scores and high drop out rates, even though both of these measures are less a reflection of student ability or achievement than a measure of parental income.

The research over the past two decades indicates test-based educational reforms do not lead to better educational policies and practices. Indeed, such testing often leads to educationally unjust consequences and unsound practices. These include increased drop-out rates, teacher and administrator de-professionalization, loss of curricular integrity, increased cultural insensitivity, and disproportionate allocation of educational resources into testing programs, and not into hiring qualified teachers and providing enriching sound educational programs (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Haney, 2000).

It is clear that scores on high-stakes standardized tests as well as drop-out rates are directly related to poverty, and none of the powers demanding school standardization or seizure appears seriously prepared to address this condition. The Rouge Forum has consistently maintained that the origin of the standards-based education reform is a direct result of increased inequality and authoritarianism. In fact, high-stakes tests are used to rationalize inequality and authoritarianism. Paradoxically, though perhaps unsurprisingly, states have increasingly sought to punish low-scoring (read less wealthy) schools and districts by cutting funding that might help them raise their all-important test scores and become more "like" (via smaller classes, greater resources, increased staffing, modernized facilities) wealthier (read high-scoring) schools. Although the established pro-standardization position has been hit with at least some degree of criticism—notably both from the Right, which sees standards-based reform as imposing on local school district autonomy, and from the Left, which sees it as racist, sexist, and classist—one fascinating feature of the consensus view remains its willingness to take such criticism seriously yet still maintain that it can satisfactorily be accommodated by and/or assimilated within the prevailing framework. Thus while particular positions may differ marginally on the specifics (the devil is in the details), the demand for standards-based reform itself—the standardization imperative—goes unchallenged, at least among the alliance of conservative and liberal politicians, corporate elites, chief school officers, and teacher union leaders.

Ensnared within this alliance is an insidious move on the part of elite stakeholders toward the corporate/state regulation and administration of knowledge, a move that enables what Noam Chomsky calls "systems of unaccountable power" to make self-interested decisions ostensibly on behalf of the public when, in fact, most members of the public have no meaningful say in what or how decisions are made or in what can count as legitimate knowledge. This, of course, is purposeful and involves the coordinated control of such pedagogical processes as goal-setting, curriculum development, testing, and teacher education/ evaluation, the management of which works to restrict not only what and who can claim the status of "real" knowledge, but also who ultimately has access to it (see Mathison & Ross, 2002).

Moreover, these consensus elites are among the same powerful few who make decisions about and promote such neoliberal policies and institutions as GATT, NAFTA, and the WTO as good for the American public. What exists here is an unambiguous, power-laden connection between the regulation of knowledge on the one hand and the regulation of the economy on the other, a joint effort by the politically, culturally, and economically powerful (nominally on behalf of the public) designed to stifle democracy while simultaneously enhancing the profits of multinational corporations and the ultra-rich. It is a reproductive and circular system, a power-knowledge-economics regime in which the financial gains of a few are reinforced by what can count as school (thus social) knowledge, and in which what can count as knowledge is determined so as to support the financial greed of corporations.

A conspicuous example is the social studies curriculum where, as John Marciano (1997) in *Civic Illiteracy and Education* argues, "students are ethically quarantined from the truth about what the U.S. has done in their name." This is particularly true with regard to US perpetrated and sponsored aggression abroad, which is most often represented to students as unfortunate or accidental by-products of essentially humane policies that serve the "national interests," while what constitutes the latter remains unexamined. Those who administer the economy in their own self-interests are those who regulate the production and dissemination of knowledge and vice versa, all the while working superficially in the public interest but intentionally excluding any authentic public involvement.

From a progressive perspective standards-based reforms fail on a number of related levels. Inherently anti-democratic, such efforts oppose, for example, John Dewey's two "democratic criteria," exemplified in *Democracy and Education*, of "more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest" and "freer interaction between social groups," both of which weigh heavily on the origins and evolution of US

public schooling. Further, standards-based education reforms are oppressive, illustrating in practice not only the late radical educator Paulo Freire's widely read and influential concepts of "banking education" and "prescription," but also contemporary political theorist Iris Marion's (1992) notion of the "five faces of oppression" (namely exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence). In sum, standards-based reform privileges certain images of education (for instance, those media critiques of schooling based upon test scores, which David Berliner and Bruce Biddle so effectively debunk in *The Manufactured Crisis*) over the authentic experiences of everyday classroom life. Too frequently such images themselves end up promoting the "corporate good" at the expense of any reasonable understanding of the "collective good," particularly problematic since the extension of the collective good is why we have public schools in the first place (see Vinson & Ross, in press).

The first Rouge Forum in Detroit, was guided by the assumption that educators are centripetally positioned in our society; that they need to take clear and decisive stands on the side of the vast majority of citizens who are objectively hurt by racism and national chauvinism. From this initial assumption the Rouge Forum began its work within social studies professional organizations, but also built alliances with educators in the fields of special education and literacy as well as parents and students; and worked within the two major teacher unions.

### **Reaching Out: Building Connections and Grassroots Organizing<sup>7</sup>**

These are times that test the core of every educator. In the context of an international war of the rich on the poor intensified and thrown into hyper-speed by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, economic collapse, harsh political repression, and in schools the necessarily related rise of standardized high-stakes exams, school takeovers, vouchers, discrete phonics instruction, merit pay, and the corporatization of schools under the guise of national unity—all combine to call into question what we are and what we stand for. The unfortunate collaboration of teachers' unions and many professional organizations in these international trends has raised many concerns. The underlying complex processes of intensifying nationalism, racism, sexism, authoritarianism, irrationalism and forms of oppression, self-imposed or not, often seem overpowering, a series of small bullets coming in fast unison, so fast that it feels as if ducking one creates dozens of wounds from others. How shall we keep our ideals and still teach and learn?

In recent years, the impact of being a common target has caused several members of distinct educational movements to come together for joint projects. Many groups are more seriously considering the power of interdependence in seeking reason and social justice. As a result, advocates of the whole language approach to literacy education, inclusion, and critical pedagogy are engaging in more dialogue and have begun to work together, to re-discover their natural unity—and seeing serious differences at the same time. The crux of those differences seems to revolve around the question: Can capitalism be reformed, tamed, made gentler, or not and, if not, then what?

### **A Natural Unity: Whole Language, Inclusion and Critical Pedagogy**

For a time, many people within the whole language movement saw their outlook as simply a teaching philosophy, one that stood outside politics. The inclusive education movement likewise was viewed less politically. The idea of special education inclusion, however, has challenged ideologies and career paths at all levels. At the same time, the critical pedagogy movement became so divorced from daily life in the socio-political world that it lost sight of ways in which social change can be activated. Perhaps born in the same well-springs, the three movements diverged so completely that they lost sight of one another. A few well-known individuals from each camp stay in touch and reach out to school-workers, parents, and students to demonstrate the inseparability of political work, whole language, and critical teaching. Among this group, Ken and Yetta Goodman, Gerald Coles, Patrick Shannon, Susan Ohanian, Carol Edelsky, Gerry Oglan, Michael Peterson, and Valerie Ooka Pang stand out. (Appendix D describes some tenets of

whole language, critical pedagogy, and inclusive education that provide a springboard for speculating about their intersections and illustrates their inter-relationships.)

The Rouge Forum takes careful note of a social shift in North America, deindustrialization, which has made schools, rather than industrial work places, the central organizing point of life. This means, among many other things, that the industrial working class in the US cannot, for the time being, be the driving force for social justice. People in schools (which could not be outsourced) were now placed in that position. The Rouge Forum argues that, the key question facing the world now—What is it that people need to know and how do they need to come to know it in order to arrange society in ways so they can be free, democratic, and creative?—is no longer just a question of industrial production, but rather it is a pedagogical one.

Critical pedagogy advocates have sometimes failed to acknowledge the elitist roots of their theory. In some instances, critical pedagogy has served the interests of new elites rather than the interests of social democracy and economic equality. In this sense, critical pedagogy has failed the test of material equality. Too often, critical pedagogy has located the source of oppression in the minds of people, rather than in a relationship of mind, matter, and motion: ideas linked to the understanding of alienated labor and class struggle, internalized oppression and authoritarian sexual relationships, and the fear of freedom and change (see Hill, McLaren, Cole & Ritkowski, 2002; McLaren, 2000). A truly exploratory, investigative pedagogy holds everything open to critique—but when it abandons reason, and social practice as the test of knowledge, it becomes a system of oppression.

The message of Whole Language is centered on the totality, the wholeness, inter-relatedness of knowledge. The focus of the inclusion movement has been the unity of people, all people. The heart of critical pedagogy is that we can understand and transform the world—in the interest of masses of people.

### **Whole Schooling**

In 1997, colleagues from Michigan and Wisconsin collaboratively developed a framework for improving schools that draws from and builds on the experiences of progressive school reform organizations nationally, particularly Accelerated Schools, Comer's School Development Program, Howard Gardner's Project Zero, andSizer's Coalition for Essential Schools. Like the developers of these programs we are concerned with several continuing facts of schooling: (1) Lack of connections among schools, families, and communities; (2) Dominant instructional strategies that are disjointed, purposeless, boring and disconnected from the real lives as well as family and community experience of students; and (3) The need for democratic processes of decision-making in schools that empower students, families, teachers, and other school staff. Moreover, we have also been concerned about the lack of explicit attention to two major additional dimensions of schooling: (4) The ongoing segregation of students with different learning styles and abilities into special programs for students with disabilities, at risk, gifted, limited English proficiency; and (5) The lack of attention to the social and political context of schooling—the increasing inequality in schools and communities, pressures for standardized testing that separate students, families, and whole communities and educational workers—by race, socio-economic status, and ability. (See<http://golem.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/WSC.html>)

On the whole, we agree that the following factors comprise what we called an honest education:

A teacher/student/community search for what is true, gaining and testing ideas in a reasonably free atmosphere where passion and joy are privileged;

Exploratory curricula linked to the world and a specific community (e.g., let's map a Detroit playground, now let's map a playground in Grosse Pointe—and then a playground in Grenada);

Critical and anti-racist curricula—as in analyzing the history and practice of racism;

Pedagogy and content rooted in democracy (e.g., how come Detroiters' votes count so little when it comes to casinos or their school board—or at work or school?);

Meaningful and creative pedagogy fashions a meeting of the teachers and the students where they are at (e.g., let's design our plan for the year together; understanding that we all start at different places, but that we want to head in the same direction),

Inclusive and hence rational schools (e.g., crossing boundaries of race, sex, and ability not only in the studies but in who is present in the classroom).

By 1997 our discussions had produced what came to be called the Whole Schooling model for school reform, which is based on five principles. These are summarized below.

Empower citizens in a democracy: The goal of education is to help students learn to function as effective citizens in a democracy.

Include all: All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender and age.

Authentic teaching and adapting for diverse learners: Teachers design instruction for diverse learners that engages them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities; develop accommodations and adaptations for learners with diverse needs, interests, and abilities.

Build community and support learning: The school uses specialized school and community resources (special education, Title I, gifted education) to build support for students, parents, and teachers. All work together to build community and mutual support within the classroom and school; provide proactive supports for students with behavioral challenges.

Partner with families and the community: Educators build genuine collaboration within the school and with families and the community; engage the school in strengthening the community; and provide guidance to engage students, parents, teachers, and others in decision-making and direction of learning and school activities.

Taken separately, nothing distinguishes these principles from the infinite number of reform projects that have blown through the schools in the last century. Taken as a whole, however, especially considering the political and social implications of teaching for democracy, equality, and inclusion, there has been nothing of the sort in school reform that we are aware of.

### **Expanding the Rouge Forum Issues**

The Rouge Forum has been able to move to a leading role in school-based resistance. "The Rouge Forum No Blood For Oil" web page became a focus of activity, both for researchers interested in a chronology of material related to the current and future oil wars, and for activists. Using a network developed over five years of organizing in colleges of education and in K12 schools, the Rouge Forum, for example, initiated calls for school strikes, teach-ins, and freedom schools, which were adopted and carried out by school workers, students, and parents all over the US. The calls for action swept well beyond the Rouge Forum's limited online base, cyberspace serving as a new outlet for organizing action.

Clearly because the Rouge Forum leadership shifted focus from opposing standardized tests to opposing a war, and because the organization sharpened its open criticism of capitalism, 374 people asked to leave the member-subscriber base by November 2001. They were replaced, though, by more than 1,000.

Even so, there are serious limitations to the Rouge Forum work. Internally, the egalitarian and democratic outlook of its key personnel has not been matched by a structure reflecting their mind set. With a significant subscriber-activist base, the organization still has not found a way for many people to fully participate beyond the local level. Still, some structural issues have been at least temporarily resolved. For example, leadership in editing the flagship of the Rouge Forum, its newspaper [<http://www.rougeforum.org>], has shifted from founding professors to K12 teachers, Greg Queen and Amber Goslee, a significant step forward.

It remains to be seen whether or not the Rouge Forum, Whole Schooling Consortium, and Whole Language Movement will be able to continue what has been a friendly and productive association based on their clear commonalities. Indeed, it is uncertain whether or not any of the organizations could withstand what could be very severe political repression in the not too distant future.

### **Grassroots Organizing**

The Rouge Forum has focused much of its work on grassroots organizing. Working within as well as on the margins of various organizations we have had a number of successes. What follows is a brief description of many of the organizing strategies and tactics we have found useful.

Meetings, interactive conferences and teach-ins—The Rouge Forum along with members of Whole Schooling have made presentations at a variety of professional organizations including the American Educational Research Association, National Council for the Social Studies, The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH), the International Social Studies Conference, Michigan Council for the Social Studies, and the Socialist Scholars Conference and have held a number of meetings and interactive conferences in Detroit, Albany, Binghamton, Rochester, Orlando, Calgary and this summer in Louisville, Kentucky. The united groups have also sponsored exhibitor booths at many of these conferences. Articles about the Whole Schooling Consortium and Rouge Forum have appeared in *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *Wisconsin School Board Journal*, *Substance*, and *Z Magazine*.

In cooperation with the Whole Schooling Consortium and the Whole Language Umbrella, we co-sponsored the 2000 International Education Summit for a Democratic Society. It convened progressive educators, teachers, parents, and community members locally and throughout the country. The Summit was an event designed to promote learning and skill development, dialogue, connecting urban, rural, and suburban schools, and organizing to strengthen progressive education for an inclusive and democratic society. It linked art, music, drama, celebrations with ideas, organizing, relationship building. It was an interactive, action-oriented conference propelled by the belief that learning is both personal and social and that classrooms and other educational settings must be learning communities.

At times our sessions in professional conferences are disrupted by standardistos (e.g., test-pushers and advocates of the standardization and state regulation of knowledge). For example, at the 2000 NCSS convention in San Antonio, the audience shouted down a state education bureaucrat who repeatedly disrupted a workshop on resisting high-stakes tests. On the other hand...We identify education bureaucrats as fair targets and distributed "MEAP SCHMEAP BINGO" to incoming participants at Michigan Council for the Social Studies convention, sessions led by bureaucrats of the Education or Treasury Department—Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) is Michigan's high-stakes test, which is administered by the state Treasury Department.

Media—We use the complete range of media opportunities, from traditional, “low-tech/high-touch” approaches such as leafleting to use of cyberspace. Many opportunities are available to distribute leaflets and broadsides. (Past broadsides and other flyers are available on the Rouge Forum web site.) At conferences, we place flyers throughout the conference center, and we distribute flyers at social justice events, grocery stores, universities and schools. Flyers used to develop connections with potential allies and provide an entrée for face-to-face discussion. In the planning of the many public activities like the demonstrations and teach-ins, we make contacts to local media and subsequently see our events reported through them, usually with a positive write-up. Many members also write op-ed articles or letters to the editor in local papers. We participate in radio and television interviews, usually focusing on the social context of educational reform, standards-based education and high-stakes testing, which often result from press coverage of our meetings or opinion pieces in newspapers and magazines.

We have a website—<http://www.RougeForum.org>—that not only informs folks of future Rouge Forum events but provides thousands of connections to information that facilitates a theoretical and practical understanding to achieve a more equal and democratic world. Beyond the baseline subscribers, nearly 200,000 people visited the Rouge Forum web page in 2002, and, in early 2003, 4,000 people visited the web page each week.

In 1999, the Rouge Forum News was launched. Its goal is to include voices from educators, students and parents. We produce at least three forty-page issues annually, each issue is archived on the Rouge Forum web site.

Demonstrations and other “events”—The Rouge Forum has sponsored or co-sponsored numerous demonstrations in New York, Michigan, and California. With the Whole Schooling Consortium in Michigan, we sponsored a rally to “SUPPORT GOOD TEACHING, GET RID OF THE MEAP.” Our goals were to provide a place where people could comfortably take a public stand and to gain additional people with whom we could work. We sent press releases and three major TV stations covered the demonstration and aired footage of interviews of participants. We had an “open mike” session and more than a dozen people spoke for 2 to 3 minutes each about their reasons for opposing high stakes testing, specifically the MEAP. We marched with signs and chants about their opposition to high stakes tests; most were wearing buttons protesting the MEAP and high stakes tests. During the march many onlookers honked and cheered their support. Following the march we met for refreshments and talk and made plans for continuing our work to educate others about high-stakes testing and what they can do about it.

In a collaborative effort, the Rouge Forum and Whole Schooling participate in community debates. In one such debate, the leader of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and the executive director of merit awards (the department responsible for distributing the bribes that the State of Michigan pays out to primarily suburbanites for “passing” the state tests) presented opposing viewpoints, supporting standards-based education and high-stakes testing.

We work collaboratively with some state legislators to challenge other policy makers to take the tests that they expect students to take. While most of the legislators were no-shows and we encouraged parents, teachers and students to follow the example set by policy makers by boycotting the tests. Some Rouge Forum members feared that by bringing attention to the tests, it would legitimize them. However, we found two solutions to the problem. First, a participant was immediately handed a form to sign that would opt him/herself out of the tests. Secondly, when policy-makers were finished taking the tests, their scores were determined by the average income level of the district they represent. The best predictor of a school district's test scores is the average income of the parents.

Working inside other organizations—During professional conferences in organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies and their state affiliates, the Rouge Forum has sponsored booths

that provide literature and space for conversation around important education and social justice issues. These spaces are useful places to meet people and have lengthy one-to-one chats with rank-and-file teachers as well as students. Our coffee maker lends a living room atmosphere to the conversations. In the evenings, we frequently dine with new friends and Rouge Forum members.

Members of the Rouge Forum brought two key resolutions to the National Council for the Social Studies conference in San Antonio on November 18, 2000. The two resolutions, reproduced in the Appendices E and F, address open access and free tuition to universities, and opposition to high-stakes tests. The motions were first presented to the members of the College and University Faculty Association (CUFA), composed of professors, the evening before the House of Delegates meeting of NCSS.

The motion on Open Access was defeated, about two-to-one, due at least in part to the opposition of multi-culturalists like James Banks, who spoke fervently, worrying that free tuition might cut professors' salaries. The resolution opposing High-Stakes Tests, however, passed unanimously, a surprise for even the most optimistic of Rouge Forum members. The language of the CUFA resolution in opposition to high-stakes exams is the sharpest to come out of any of the professional organizations or the two education-worker unions. The NCSS House of Delegates voted down CUFA's high-Stakes resolution, after very brief debate during which the members were warned that if the high-stakes were abolished, social studies teachers might lose their jobs. Meanwhile, related groups that oppose high-stakes exams began to circulate the resolution around the US on email listservs, urging contact people to bring the proposal to union locals, PTA groups, and administrator organizations. The resolutions influenced other professional groups that have developed statements on the deleterious effects of high-stakes testing (e.g., American Evaluation Association).

## **Summary**

Prevailing educational practices are guided by educational policies, such as No Child Left Behind Act, that reflect the same obstacles to achieving education for democracy and social justice as identified by John Dewey early in 20th century—namely the powerful alliance of class privilege with philosophies of education that sharply divide mind and body, theory and practice, culture and utility. There is no “one best system” for organizing people to act for positive change, such as creating schools and universities where pedagogy is democratic, anti-racist, anti-sexist, and empowering. The Rouge Forum is one among many groups of committed activists who are contributing to the construction of a K-16 movement for progressive change in education and society and it is our hope that by sharing our experiences in building a grassroots organization that our comrades in this struggle might learn something that advances the movement as a whole and that we might, in turn, learn from them.

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## NOTES

1 The basis of this section is David Hursh's detailed account of Sam Diener's arrest in "The First Amendment and free speech at the National Council for the Social Studies: The arrest and trials of leafleteer Sam Diener," and Stephen C. Fleury's "A Sunday Afternoon in the House of Delegates." Both

papers were presented to the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies as part of the symposium "The journey from Phoenix to Anaheim: Institutional identities and political engagements of CUFA and NCSS, 1994-1998," Anaheim, California, November 19, 1998.

2 The College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) is an "associated group" of National Council for the Social Studies and operates as an autonomous organization within the larger structure of NCSS.

3 The CUFA Resolution on Proposition 187 was written and sponsored by Perry Marker, Stephen C. Fleury, and E. Wayne Ross. The text of the resolution can be found in Ross (1997).

4 This section draws on Rich Gibson's "Outfoxing the Destruction of Reason and the Introduction," which appeared in *Theory and Research in Social Education*, Spring 2001 from a special issue of *Cultural Logic*, 4(1), <http://www.eserver.org/clogic>

5 This section draws from Rich Gibson's "Outfoxing the Destruction of Reason."

6 This section is draws from E. Wayne Ross and Kevin Vinson's *What We Can Know and When We Can Know It: Education Reform, Testing and the Standardization Craze*, *Z Magazine*, March 2001.

7 This section is draws on "Whole Schooling: Implementing progressive school reform" in *The Social Studies Curriculum*, E. W. Ross (Ed.), Albany: NY: State University of New York Press, 2001.

## **Affiliations**

Greg Queen teaches social studies to high school students in Warren, Michigan. He is an active member in the production of the Rouge Forum newspaper. He has made presentations at local, state and national conferences on high-stakes testing and the role of schools in a capitalist society.

E. Wayne Ross is Distinguished University Scholar and Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Louisville. He is a co-founder of the Rouge Forum and a general editor of *Workplace and Cultural Logic*.

Rich Gibson is Associate Professor in the College of Education at San Diego State University and a co-founder of the Rouge Forum.

Kevin D. Vinson is Assistant Professor in the College of Education at the University of Arizona and co-author, with E. Wayne Ross, of *Image and Education: Teaching in the Face of the New Disciplinary*, forthcoming from Peter Lang.

## Appendix A

### ***Keep Guns Out of Our Schools!***

▼ The military runs Jr. ROTC programs in 2000 high schools nationwide. It wants 3500 by 1997. Your school may be next. Students are taught to march straight, salute bigotry, obey orders, wear uniforms, shoot guns, and glorify war.

▼ From the mass murder of 9 Buddhists to ritual military hazings to military gang executions, ROTC cadets nationwide have practiced what they've been taught: obedience, brutality, & war.

▼ Jr. ROTC costs districts over \$50,000 per school to brainwash about 120 students. This could pay for peaceful education for 200 pupils.

▼ School Boards flagrantly violate non-discrimination principles by hiring military instructors who can not be disabled or openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

▼ The Pentagon concentrates Jr. ROTC units in low-income areas to recruit students of color as cannon-fodder for the next U.S. war.

To Stop The Military From Invading Your School  
call CCCO at 415-474-3002, 415-474-2311 fax

## Appendix B

# Free Speech Censored at NCSS!

### NCSS Arrests Peaceful Leafleter at Friday Night's Program

On Friday night, NCSS sponsored a concert by the Marine Corps Band. At the concert, I, Sam Diener, a certified social studies teacher and convention exhibitor, attempted to distribute leaflets, in an entirely nonviolent and non-disruptive manner, before the concert and during intermission. Instead of welcoming the dialogue, NCSS had me arrested.

I learned of this promotion of the military through the concert at the last minute, and quickly decided to pass out leaflets I had previously created opposing the militarization of our schools in general, and high school ROTC in particular.

I merely wanted to create a civil dialogue within the audience, and did not disrupt the performance in any way. I believe that our honorable profession should work to promote free speech and civic dialogue on controversial issues. How can we teach the values of free speech in the abstract, while squashing it when we are the ones that leaflets are directed at?

I was asked to cease passing out the leaflets before the performance, and escorted out of the hall by security personnel threatening to arrest me. I told them that I was peacefully distributing leaflets, that I was an exhibitor at the conference, had a ticket, and believed I had the right to continue. They told me that they were merely following the orders of NCSS. I was also threatened by a Marine Corps recruiter who was outside the hall.

I decided that, in addition to being outraged by the militarization of the conference, this had become a matter of free speech principles. Free speech only exists if we exercise it, not if we retire from the scene when it is being censored. I returned to the concert, waited for intermission, and started peacefully distributing the leaflets again.

After a very few minutes, I was grabbed and yelled at by several security personnel. They told me I was under arrest. I immediately relaxed all my muscles to demonstrate my nonviolent posture. As I was carried out of the hall, I yelled, "Don't teachers believe in Free Speech? Don't teachers believe in Free Speech?" I was told by the security personnel that they had no choice, that NCSS had ordered them to arrest me.

I was handcuffed, booked, and then released by the Phoenix police. I've been charged with 3rd degree trespass and ordered to appear in court on Monday the 28th. I live in San Francisco, and needless to say, it was not on my schedule to come back to Phoenix on this date.

I have asked Bob Stahl, the President of NCSS, who generously did make the time to talk with me, to send a letter to the judge requesting that the charges be dropped. He said he had been told that at the concert that I was representing myself as an NCSS official. I never did any such thing. I merely said, to each person I handed the leaflet to, "We're working for nonviolent schools. We're working for nonviolent schools." Bob Stahl said that he would consider it, but would not be able to make a decision until Wednesday. I appreciate this step towards resolving this conflict, but Wednesday may be too late, as Thursday is Thanksgiving and I currently have a court summons for the next Monday at 10:00 am. Also, I believe it is important that this issue be addressed by members at this conference, before we all return home.

I request that all NCSS members take a stand for free speech at this conference, and ask the leadership of NCSS to let it be known to the court on Monday or Tuesday that they want the state to drop the charges. If you have questions, you can contact me at booth #613. Finally, although I hope that all believers in free speech support me, whether you agree with the theme of my protest or not, I hope you also join the struggle to create nonviolent, demilitarized schools.

Sam Diener, Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors,  
415-474-3002, 415-474-2311 fax, cccowr@igc.apc.org

# *Free Speech Censored at NCSS!*

(The Saga Continues)

## Peaceful Leafleter Arrested at NCSS' Friday Night's Program Organization Blocks Free & Fair Discussion of Issue Threatens Legal Action If Free Speech Leaflets are Distributed

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I merely wanted to create a civil dialogue within the audience, and did not disrupt the performance in any way. I believe that our honorable profession should work to promote free speech and civic dialogue on controversial issues. How can we teach the values of free speech in the abstract, while squashing it when we are the ones that leaflets are directed at?

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After a very few minutes, I was grabbed and yelled at by several security personnel. They told me I was under arrest. I immediately relaxed all my muscles to demonstrate my nonviolent posture. As I was carried out of the hall, I yelled, "Don't teachers believe in Free Speech? Don't teachers believe in Free Speech?" I was told by the security personnel that they had no choice, that NCSS had ordered them to arrest me.

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I asked Bob Stahl, the President of NCSS, who generously did make the time to talk with me Saturday morning, to send a letter to the judge requesting that the charges be dropped. He said he had been told that at the concert that I was representing myself as an NCSS official. I never did any such thing. I merely said, to each person I handed the leaflet to, "We're working for nonviolent schools. We're working for nonviolent schools." Bob Stahl said that he would consider it, but would not be able to make a decision until Wednesday. I appreciated this step towards resolving this conflict, but Wednesday may be too late, as Thursday is Thanksgiving and I currently have a court summons for the next Monday at 10:00 am. I told this to Bob Stahl at the time. Because the issue was not fully resolved, and because I believe it is important that this issue be addressed by members at this conference, I wrote up the previous version of this leaflet.

To the same end, on Saturday afternoon, I approached the House of Delegates meeting asking for an opportunity to address the issue, if there was a way to work it into what I understand is a tight agenda. I discussed the issue with NCSS officers Mike Hartoonian and Pat Nickell, and members of the staff including Martharose Laffey. They told me there was probably not time on the agenda, but we were discussing various options.

Bob Stahl came out of the room, and told me that he felt his trust in me was violated because I publicly circulated the previous version of this leaflet. In our discussion Saturday morning, Mr. Stahl never suggested any gag rule. On Saturday afternoon, he said that he would look into the issue and tell me on Sunday morning at 10:45 am if he would write the letter to the judge, *as long as I would stop passing out the leaflets until then*. When I hesitated, and my co-worker suggested to me that maybe it was reasonable to delay passing them out, he yelled at me, jabbing his finger in my and my co-worker's direction, "You **better** not." I felt reluctant to acquiesce to attempts to suppress discussion of the issue. However, I was told by an NCSS official that if it was not resolved on Sunday morning, it would be placed on the Board of Directors agenda on Monday. So, in a good faith effort to resolve the issue, I did not pass the leaflet out to the members of the House of Delegates, nor to anyone else, until after I talked with Executive Dir. Laffey Sunday at 11:00 am.

On Sunday, at 11:00 am, I was told by Executive Director Laffey that Mr. Stahl might or might not have time to talk with me, but she was there to convey NCSS' message. She told me that the Board of Delegates had suspended the rules and discussed the issue (for what I later learned was about a half an hour) *without notifying me or any of my representatives*. The previous day, of course, I was told there was no time for this discussion. The discussion in the House of Delegates effectively suppressed any fair and open debate, as we were effectively excluded.

Ms. Laffey told me that no further action was possible until she consulted her attorney. She also said that on Friday night, NCSS did not ask that I be arrested, but the Civic Center personnel did. She also told me that Wendy Thompson, apparently an employee of the Civic Center, was given the opportunity to address the House of Delegates on Sunday. I am pretty sure that Wendy Thompson was one of the Civic Center employees who told me on Friday that they were acting on NCSS orders. If indeed the Civic Center is the complainant, despite what I was told by the security personnel and the police, then, since I believe the Civic Center is owned by the city, this is a First Amendment issue in addition to a free speech issue.

Whether the Civic Center or NCSS, or the two acting in concert, gave the order to arrest me and suppress my free speech, my free speech rights were violated at an NCSS sponsored event. Whatever the case, I am now asking that the Board of Directors of NCSS issue a letter to the judge on Monday or Tuesday asking that the charge against me be dropped.

When we talked at about 11:00 am on Sunday, Ms. Laffey also said that, "I will also caution you, if you continue to pass out those leaflets [meaning the previous version of this leaflet], I will consult my attorney tomorrow to consider legal action against you."

I request that all NCSS convention-goers take a stand for free speech at this conference, and ask the Board of NCSS to write this letter immediately. If you have questions, you can contact me at booth #613, or at the number below. Finally, although I hope that all believers in free speech support me, whether you agree with the theme of my protest or not, I hope you also work with us as we struggle to create nonviolent, demilitarized schools.