TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE SUE ANN AND JOHN L. WEINBERG PROFESSOR IN
THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

TO: Arthur Levine, President, Teachers College, Columbia University
Darlyne Bailey, Dean, Teachers College, Columbia University
FROM: Robbie McClintock
SUBJECT: Possibilities, Problems, and a Proposal:
Reflections at a Life Juncture
DATE: September 24, 2003

Fresh from college in 1961, I started on a doctorate in Columbia's history department, fulltime and gung-ho. As one of my five courses, I got myself into Lawrence Cremin's Colloquium on American educational thought. Another was the year-long seminar for M.A. candidates, run by a distinguished American historian, very senior in both age and status. As one then said, I was really into my topic, how educators spoke in the name of the public, and I worked hard on it through the winter to draft a thesis, resonant with premonitions of the radicalism that was soon to be called the '60s. A naïf, believing my draft foreshadowed a work, both Good and Important, I was shaken, and angered; when it caused me to be told to desist from my academic aspirations until I learned the difference between polemic and proper history. With doctoral prospects fading, with the specter of selective service prompting prudence, I asked Cremin to read the offending document. He did, advising me that my first chapter, "Murder and Education," doomed what followed, which were promising interpretive essays. But even toned down and filled out, he counseled, my thesis would not win favor, for most professional historians were wary of taking ideas as seriously as I did. If I would promise to do a proper thesis on a new topic, enabling me to leave the history department with disciplinary dignity restored, he would welcome my pursuing a Ph.D. in the History of Education through Teachers College. A good end to a bad fix, I grasped the offer. Hence, when people now ask me how long I've been at Teachers College, I find myself responding, "most all my adult life."

Hard work ensued; and somewhat to my astonishment, even employment — on the Johns Hopkins faculty in 1965 and back to Teachers College in 1967. Since then, year after year, among the many little tokens of continuity in experience, the TIAA/CREF illustration of retirement benefits would recurrently arrive, specifying that alien concretion, the starting date: September 1, 2004, age 65. At first, of course, that date and age seemed ridiculously remote, marking some professional change of life, vaguely distant until it would arrive, should I live so long, sharp and swift. Somewhere in the passage of years, laws changed and the date and age stopped indicating something mandatory, but they continued to appear, terminating a slow countdown to the normal case. And then, suddenly no longer distant, the iterated date and age are nearly here, substantial in the immediate, foreseeable future. And so, during my recent sabbatical, I tried to anticipate the texture of an adult life in which I was no longer at the College.

To be sure, I am still vigorous and engaged, so the possibilities of retirement do not mean heading south to totter about the links. The possibilities of retirement are more challenging. Over the years, I have often wondered whether my professional life has been too outwardly stable, for as a student of education in lived experience, I think that periodic changes in circumstance generally prove important to the full development of a person. Having avoided such changes, have my life choices contravened my

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convictions? Is the possibility of retirement a last opportunity to act consistent with them? Retirement would force me to change the circumstances under which I work, not to change my goals, but to alter the conditions under which I would pursue them. Most probably, I would work as an independent scholar and public intellectual. I have been thinking a lot during my sabbatical about the predicaments facing educators. Needs mount while an ever-more selfish public parsimony stints humane initiatives. Educators are complicit in the decay, for they have put too much effort into a mediocre vision of research and allowed two other intellectual capacities, scholarship and criticism, to atrophy. Whether in retirement or in active service, I want to concentrate my energies, and the energies of those eager to join with me, on renewing the power of educational scholarship and cultural criticism. Intellectually, such an effort must be philosophically revisionist, as people study education, especially in the United States, in a historically crippling way, and it must be politically visionary, as people have, over the past two centuries, exhausted the aspirations made feasible by defining the good life through the idea of the nation-state.

There is much to write of great importance, and I am very far from having realized my potential as scholar and critic. Concentrating my energies on educational scholarship and cultural criticism would chart a personal future of public worth, one entirely consistent with my past aspirations. Hence, I see possibilities in retirement as an opportunity to renew an effort to exert influence as a scholar and public intellectual without the distractions that have become so endemic in academic work. Yet simultaneously the prospect of retirement is a bit frightening, for it would set me on an unpredictable course, in which it is not easy to succeed. However bracing and energizing it might be, it carries with it a danger — for an indefinite period I would need to work in obscurity, which could turn into an intellectual isolation from which, having given up an institutional base, I might find it difficult to recover. In this way, I see retirement somewhat like elective surgery: it might possibly improve a troublesome condition, but at the risk of significant complications. Retirement is not necessary and I could well make do without it. Consequently, the prospect carries with it a significant threshold of inhibition.

Faced with that threshold, the great ambivalence takes hold and I turn to the opposite course, the prospect of pursuing future challenges while continuing in active service at the College: it is my prerogative. Is there anything problematic in staying on? And how might I work best for and through the College? I came to Teachers College and have been able to stay here all my adult life because it offered me a place for the disinterested study of education — a place, for me, independent of the imperatives of professional practices, neither those of historian nor educationist, to think, teach, and write about the human experience of education and its historical development. Teachers College has given me the opportunity to work constrained, neither by the specialized imperatives shaping professional historians, nor by the specific needs of educational practitioners, the training of which is the College's primary business. Through most of my time here, the Department of Philosophy and the Social Sciences was home, a wonderful interstice where one could address education with genuine intellectual autonomy. Those who matured intellectually within it — Pat Graham, David Mathews, myself, Doug Sloan, Ellen Lagemann, and more — were aware of the Department as a superb yet vulnerable, anomaly. We experienced its dispersal through the College's reorganization with indelible regret, tempered, perhaps, by thinking the demise was an inevitable eventuality, like the passing of a parent. Yet the intellectual function of the Department remains, both desirable and important, and I feel that to stay in active service at the College, I must ensure the continuity of it — continuity of the function, not the form. Be assured: I have no intention to revert to the *status quo ante*.

My appointment to the Weinberg Chair in the Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education provides significant functional continuity with my prior situation. But by itself, however, it can become something like the proverbial promotion of the pesky gray-beard to a chairmanship, from which he can, with due prestige, fade into oblivion, safely buffered from things operational. There are real problems in securing the a-professional study of education at the College, to which holding the Chair is not a full solution. These stem from problems never solved in the organization of Philosophy and the Social Sciences. Two are key; one that is widespread throughout the College and another that is unique to work in an interstice between well-established professional programs.

Apropos of the one, we all know that Teachers College is unduly tuition dependent. This dependence disadvantages our competing for top students, who will win tuition-independent financial aid packages from better-endowed institutions. At the College, we like to think we are a lower-cost doctoral institution, a bit populist in tone, but despite lower nominal charges than more elite schools, we collect a lot, comparatively, from our doctoral students. Our aid packages are egregiously low; therefore, our students pay much more, in contrast, say, to students in Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. As a result, many of the most able students that we admit enroll elsewhere, and we enroll an inordinate number of marginally qualified students, who are willing to meet our price. This situation creates poor conditions for good graduate education, conditions that can absorb an excessive expenditure of faculty effort with a marginal intellectual return. The opportunity to guide a manageable cohort of excellent doctoral students exerts great intellectual attraction on a serious scholar. But the need to coddle a bevy of struggling students detracts from serious intellectual effort. Conditions at Teachers College hover between these poles. To promote attention to the foundations of education, we need the ability to recruit and support a critical mass of excellent doctoral candidates. Hence, raising substantial support with which to attract and sustain top students for the reflective study of education is essential in making a professorship in the historical and philosophical foundations of education an intellectual success. Yet with resources very scarce and the public prestige of short-term, scientistic claims, outrageously inflated, raising substantial support for reflective doctoral study has become dauntingly difficult.

Nevertheless, raising support for good doctoral students is, alas, the easier of the two problems. The Department of Philosophy and the Social Sciences never really acknowledged the truly tough one: what were students to do with its degrees? For a time, early in the academic boom between Sputnik and Vietnam, there was more than sufficient demand for its graduates, but that demand was fortuitous, not structural, and with the passing of the boom, it permanently abated. Top graduate programs will not thrive by supplying the market for assistant professors in the foundations of education, for the demand is too low to support strong student cohorts. The problem roots deeply in the character of the foundational enterprise, which is to be an a-professional consideration of education situated in an interstice between established centers of professional preparation. Where will educators, who receive a high-level, a-professional preparation, dependably find appropriate employment? That was, and is, the truly difficult question.

Discussions within the Department of Philosophy and the Social Sciences distinguished the *education of the public* from *public education*, with the unstated implication that its graduates would engage in the former, as distinct from the latter. And indeed, in retrospect, one might claim that, here and there, this happened in specific cases, but it would happen as an individual opportunistically exploited the flux of her prospects to advance this purpose. The education of the public was a cultural process in which intellectual leaders would effectively engage, but it was not then a role for which doctoral students could purposefully prepare. Can education of the public become a dynamic career path? We do not now know, and the question still stands — what will the profession of those receiving an a-professional preparation be? And with this unanswered, the *raison d'être* of the historical and philosophical foundations of education cannot fully develop. To secure a sustainable place for the foundations of education, it is imperative to answer this question well. For doing that, my prolonged detour into the realm of digital technologies may prove essential, for I think these technologies are becoming very powerful means in the education of the public, opening new avenues for creative academic work.

With such reflections on my mind, a few days ago I chatted with students before the Philosophy and Education doctoral colloquium. To my surprise, one asked me whether I knew anything about the Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education. She had received support from the Weinberg Fellowship Fund — "for doctoral students in the Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education." She was thankful for the support, but confessed she was entirely unaware of being in that Institute, and on asking about it, she had found no one who could even tell her what it is. She thought that perhaps I would know, as holder of the Weinberg Chair. Strange you should ask, I replied, as I have been thinking about the Institute a lot lately and I probably knew more about it than anyone at the College. I explained that Lawrence Cremin had started the Institute in the mid-60s. I had been part of its original faculty research group, which really got going in 1969, and through the mid 70s we had had an active program that Cremin led. On becoming President of the College, Cremin had neither time to give the Institute strong leadership nor had he passed its leadership on to anyone else. As a result, the Institute came to serve mainly as an administrative vehicle for a few funded projects, most recently those of Ellen Lagemann when she was still here, from which the Weinberg Fellowship Fund derived. I observed that the original agenda of the Institute is still very timely, and ended the conversation saying that I was thinking seriously about proposing to reactivate its program

And such a proposal here follows:

As a way of addressing all the problems and possibilities that I have alluded to above, I propose resuscitating the Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education, mobilizing support for it, drawing together a strong group of faculty and student participants, and renewing its program. The Trustees of the College established the Institute in 1965 "with the purpose of sponsoring research and publication in the fields of history, philosophy, and the social sciences, as these bear on problems of educational theory and policy." The original program of the Institute is still timely: to clarify "the goals and purposes of American education" and to understand "the social circumstances within which these purposes must . . . be formulated and . . . realized." As is evident from the attached prospectus of the Institute, which the research group prepared for the initial meeting of its Advisory Council, December 11th, 1969, many of the specific themes associated with its program will have continuing salience in achieving the educational transformations requisite in the 21st century.

To implement this proposal, I would like to be appointed formally as Director of the Institute, with compensation for that role in the form of an adjustment to my teaching load. As the Institute director, I would concentrate on providing leadership in achieving the following six goals:

- Develop a Research Faculty of six to ten members, who would together rearticulate the purposes and program of the Institute and who would make realization of those purposes and program the controlling priority in their academic efforts.

- Reconstitute the Institute Advisory Council, drawing together up to twelve members, who would provide intellectual counsel and substantial assistance in the Institute's fund-raising.
- Mobilize support for a program of Institute Fellowships that would provide full, five-year funding (tuition plus living costs) to recruit at least one fellow per research faculty member each year.
- Design and implement a digital knowledge system for the Institute that would enable its purposes and program to have historical effects, and secure sufficient financing to sustain ongoing development of this resource.
- Create an emerging academic role, with status and prerogatives similar to traditional faculty members, for highly prepared scholars who want to work through digital knowledge systems, that of the Institute and those of other organizations, as educators of the public.
- Make my own work on emergent education, on the city as educator, on historical pedagogy, and on educational criticism exemplary instantiations of what scholars and critics can and should do to improve education through the Institute and its resources.

Such work on behalf of the Institute would be entirely consistent with my efforts as holder of the Weinberg Chair. It would advance a part of the College's *raison d'être*. It would provide a sustaining context for what I still want to accomplish in my career. As a result, should someone ask further, how long might I stay at the College, I'd be likely to answer, "the rest of my adult life."

But then. . . . Second thoughts arise. When a doctoral student suggests an idea for a dissertation, I reply with four questions. Would the study be worthwhile? Will it be doable? Will you have the skills and resources to do it? Do you care about it with enough depth and passion to sustain the effort to a strong conclusion? I should pose these questions in response to my own proposal.

Let us assume that resuscitating the Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education would be worthwhile. Is it doable? The first two goals, recruiting a Research Faculty and an Advisory Council, would seem feasible. We must entertain significant doubts, however, with respect to the next three. To start, funding a strong program of Institute fellowships for doctoral students at Teachers College may not be doable, and if doable, may not be politically sustainable. There are two problems: raising the substantial funding it would entail and modulating the collegial resentment it could engender. A rough calculation of resources required to fund a doctoral fellowship program commensurate with the norms in major research universities would go as follows. Let us assume that full-time tuition and basic living costs require $40,000 per student per year over five years. At the end of five years, recruiting one student per year per research faculty member, the Institute would need to mobilize $200,000 in graduate student support each year for each research faculty member, or $1,600,000 for a research faculty of eight, the equivalent of an endowment of $32 million. To be sure, each faculty member might generate much or all of $200,000 each year in student support through grants, yet to even out the ebb and flow of grant funding at the level of the individual professor, and to provide the Institute program important independence via-à-vis the agenda of funding agencies, significant endowment funding for fellowships would be essential. If the Institute could generate such support, conditions of work within it would become highly privileged, relative to the prevailing norms within the College. To what degree would that engender a fatal resentment among less favored colleagues? According to a very reasonable hypothesis, one might suggest that the dispersal of Philosophy and the Social Sciences resulted from such resentment that accumulated over the years throughout the College.. .Would a successful Institute be less vulnerable?

In a different way, the next goal, developing a digital knowledge system through the Institute that would give historic effect to its purposes, may also not be doable. Part of the uncertainty is the creative question: we must invent such a system and cannot claim certainty at the outset that we know how. Let us assume that in due course we could get a good solution to this creative problem. Such work does not happen in a vacuum, and here the Institute would need to resist the prevailing assumption that such digital knowledge systems can generate significant cash flow to support their development and maintenance and quickly give a positive return on investment to the parent institution. Expectations of profit through Internet publication are entirely too facile in general and would be wholly inappropriate in the case of the Institute. What the Institute must do is generate scholarship that displaces conventional ways of thinking about education and criticism that destroys prevailing complacencies, among them the *bêtise* that the judgment of markets never errs. Great scholarship and effective criticism need insulation from the whim of market forces, political orthodoxies, and the conventionalities of social elites. Such insulation is fragile and hard to attain; approximations of it have been strongest when powerful universities use their endowments to provide organizational backbone supporting academic freedom for their students and faculty. The full activation of that freedom will be essential to the success of an Institute publication effort online. Will the Institute be able imbue its digital knowledge system with sufficient resiliency to prevail against opposition and greed?

Third, it may not be feasible to develop a new type of academic position, one in which highly prepared scholars, who want to work through digital knowledge systems as educators of the public, will have status and prerogatives similar to traditional faculty members. Many traditional faculty members feel threatened by the current potential for change; in response, they are becoming highly protective of their monopoly on significant prerogatives such as tenure. In many ways, throughout academe, with Teachers College very much included, recruitment and tenure procedures operate powerfully to constrict, further and further, the concentration of faculty members on the particularities of their separate research domains, precisely characteristics the Institute would work to weaken and replace with a broader vision of intellect. Is it possible to define a role within academic institutions for scholars and critics engaged in the education of the public in such a way that this role constitutes a full career path, not simply an accidental status that a few attain via the unexpected popularity of their work? And if the Institute can define such a role, will the institutionalization of it be tolerated by the established faculty, which seems increasingly hostile to all roles but its own?

These concerns pertain to the question of whether the goals indicated for the Institute are doable. There remain additionally the more personal questions: do I have the capacity and the will for such work? Here the last of the goals, making my own work exemplary of what the Institute can and should promote, is the one I most clearly feel I can accomplish through the best of my abilities and in the fullness of my effort. With respect to the substantial fund-raising and organizational leadership needed to accomplish the other goals, I have both significant potentials and great wariness, for these activities generate endless imperatives commandeering attention, subverting the conditions under which one can pursue transformative scholarship and powerful criticism. I am aware that one cannot secure ideal conditions merely by wishing for them; as Rousseau said in a different context, one must lose time, to gain time. At this juncture I am unsure. These reflections are existentially very difficult, for they turn on complex trade-offs where each divergent course of action has highly positive and highly negative potentialities associated with it. One must make difficult choices within an ever-shortening time span, in the face of which one cannot be nonchalant, confident that one can always get it right next time. Hence, . . .

I close, still with important questions open. How much institutional support and administrative will would the College put into a resuscitated Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education? Would a less ambitious set of goals suit the College's purposes while lowering the threat of administrative distractions for me? Are there possibilities I have entirely failed to consider? It would be immensely helpful were we able to explore such matters in the course of conversation.

Attachment:

Briefing packet for the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council, Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education, December 1969

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10027

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
AND POLITICS OF EDUCATION

December 2, 1969

Honorable Roy M. Goodman
1035 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10028

Dear Roy

John Fischer has invited us to hold our first meeting of the Institute and its Advisory Council at the President's House of Teachers College, 503 West 120th Street (just west of Amsterdam Avenue), New York City. We shall gather for cocktails and dinner at 6:30 p.m. on December 11th, and I anticipate that our discussions will not run beyond 9:45 or 10:00 p.m.

I am enclosing the general prospectus of the Institute's work that we prepared last spring, assuming that one item for our agenda will be to familiarize you with the progress of the various studies under way. The only significant change in the program described in the second paragraph is that Douglas Sloan has joined the research group in the history of American education, bringing special interests in the development of the higher learning (including professional and technical education) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Our main business, I judge, will be to open up the dialogue between those of us in the Institute and those of you in public life, and to plan the ways in which that dialogue can be carried forward with maximum social benefit. I can assure you that we on our side are looking forward to the evening with great interest.

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence A. Cremin

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS OF EDUCATION
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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Editor, *Saturday Review*

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Mr. Lawrence A. Cremin, Director

Mr. Martin S. Dworkin

Mr. Max A. Eckstein

Mr. Robert O. McClintock

Mr. Harold J. Noah

Mr. James R. Sheffield

Mr. Douglas Milton Sloan

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS OF EDUCATION
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education was established by the Trustees of Teachers College in the spring of 1965, with the purpose of sponsoring research and publication in the fields of history, philosophy, and the social sciences, as these bear on problems of educational theory and policy. To date, the research group has been especially concerned with studies that consider education in its broadest sense, that call upon the resources of more than one scholarly discipline, and that show promise of ultimately affecting the direction and character of the American education enterprise.

At present, work in the Institute is proceeding along five lines: (1) studies of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century educational thought, under the direction of Robert McClintock; (2) studies of ideology in theories and practices of formal and informal education, under the direction of Martin Dworkin; (3) studies in metropolitanism and education, under the direction of Harold Noah and Max Eckstein; (4) studies in the political-economy of educational planning, under the direction of Harold Noah and James Sheffield; and (5) studies in the development of American educational thought and institutions, under the direction of Lawrence Cremin.

As the faculty of the Institute has formulated its policies over the past two or three years, two principal concerns have emerged: first, studies directed, from a variety of perspectives, to a clarification of the goals and purposes of American education; and second, studies directed, from a variety of perspectives, to an understanding of the social circumstances within which these purposes must on the one hand be formulated, and on the other hand realized. The former studies are essentially humanistic in character, relying primarily but not exclusively on history and philosophy; the latter studies rely on the social sciences, particularly politics and economics.

There is no denying that questions of purpose have been asked neither insistently nor well in recent years. If anything, we seem deliberately to have turned away from them, in the spirit, perhaps, of Conant's barb about the "sense of distasteful weariness" that overtakes him every time someone sets out to define education. One can understand why, for much of the recent literature of educational philosophy has been drearily polemical or narrowly analytical, and seemingly of little relevance to the tasks at hand. But the inevitable result has been that discussions of purpose, both by laymen and by scholars, have tended to proceed in the terms and categories of American progressivism, circa 1916. Of course, this in itself is neither good nor evil; the problem is that whereas the progressives choices deliberately and with a genuine awareness of alternatives, present-day philosophers appear to have cut themselves off from the tradition and hence have too often ended up with narrow or superficial conceptions.

Our hope in the Institute is to combine systematic historical inquiry into the development of educational theory and policy during the modern era with careful philosophical examination of that theory and policy, using the best techniques of both traditional criticism and contemporary analysis. Lawrence Cremin's studies of the history of American education represent an effort at such analysis, as do Martin Dworkin's studies of problems of ideology in contemporary theories of popular education, which build primarily on the work of John Dewey, Walter Lippmann, and Richard Hoggart. So also do Robert McClintock's studies of nineteenth- and twentieth- century humanistic writings, as these bear on education. In McClintock's view, contemporary humanism, particularly in its several European versions, has been too much ignored by American educators, or, worse yet, transformed into an elitist philosophy of letters. McClintock believes that to make it accessible as a "usable tradition" would immeasurably enrich current educational discussion in the United States by substantially increasing the number of options available to educational policy-makers.

The assumption underlying all of this effort is that the character of popular education has been fundamentally transformed in our time by the rapid development of the media of mass communication, by the multiplication of private and quasi-public youth groups of every sort and variety, and by the proliferation of formal educational programs outside the aegis of public school authorities. And our argument is essentially that discussions of educational purpose and policy must be reformulated to take into consideration the entire education of the public and the many agencies that carry it on. It is a view, incidentally, that seems hardly radical in view of the recent Ford and Carnegie reports on public television, and the various educational enactments of the Ninetieth Congress; yet it appears to have had little influence on the recent spate of school-centered policy studies addressed to the educational community.

Ideas do not function in a vacuum, as a succession of philosophers from Plato and Dewey have taught us. Along with revolutionary changes in the architecture of twentieth-century education have come profound changes in the relationships between educational systems and the societies that sustain them. Therefore, we hope also within the Institute to seek new understandings of the processes by which educational policies are worked out and executed in our society. The textbook version of the administration and control of American education is simply no longer descriptive of what happens, if, indeed, it ever was. The current studies of Harold Noah, Max Eckstein, and James Sheffield represent merely two among many attacks that could be made on the whole problem of understanding the new decision-making. We are interested, for example, in the world-wide phenomenon of metropolitanism, and the fundamental changes it was wrought in the educstion of the public. We are interested in a number of social phenomena that have appeared in the educational systems of New York, London, Moscow, Buenos Aires, and Tokyo some of the more important plans formulated and adopted during the late 1940's. We are interested on the domestic scene in the changing role of governors and mayors vis-a-vis state and local school authorities. We are interested in the problem of balance between the flow of public and private funds into the educational enterprise. We are interested in the growing influence of the so-called "education industries," in the points in the decision-making process at which this influence is exerted, and in the effort of particular school systems. We are interested in the political control of educational television, particularly in a study of the FCC as an agency of educational policymaking. We are interested in ways in which governments, federal, state, and municipal, affect university policies, and even more importantly, in the ways in which universities are coming to influence government policies. And we should like to explore what such historic concepts as "public control," or "the public interest," or, indeed, "public education," might mean under these new circumstances. The context for most of these studies would, of course, be the radically new political situation resulting from profound demographic and socio-political shifts in our central cities, from the massive intervention of the federal government in education since World War II, and from the worldwide recognition of education as a prime creative force in modern politics.

In all of this, we should like to pursue the most careful, systematic, and detailed inquiries of which we are cepable, into the conditions that actually prevail. But beyond that--which would be no mean accomplishment in its own right--we should like also to venture into the normative: What should be the central purposes of American education in the last third of the twentieth century? By what political processes can those purposes best be determined? And by what policies can they best be realized? In our view, there are no more important questions for scholars to be raising on behalf of the many publics and professions that daily debate and determine America's educational future.