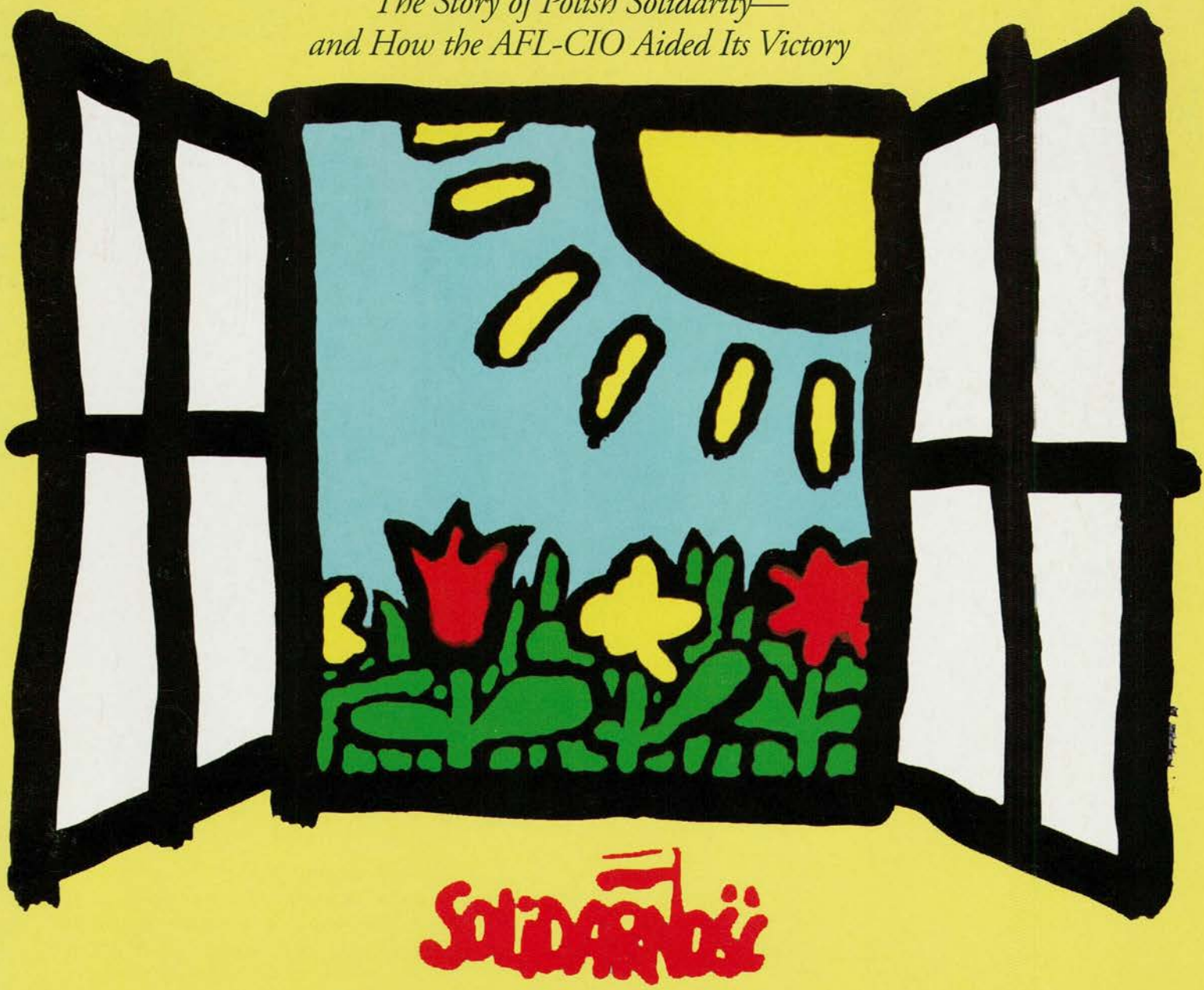
AMERICAN EDUCATOR

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
SUMMER 2005

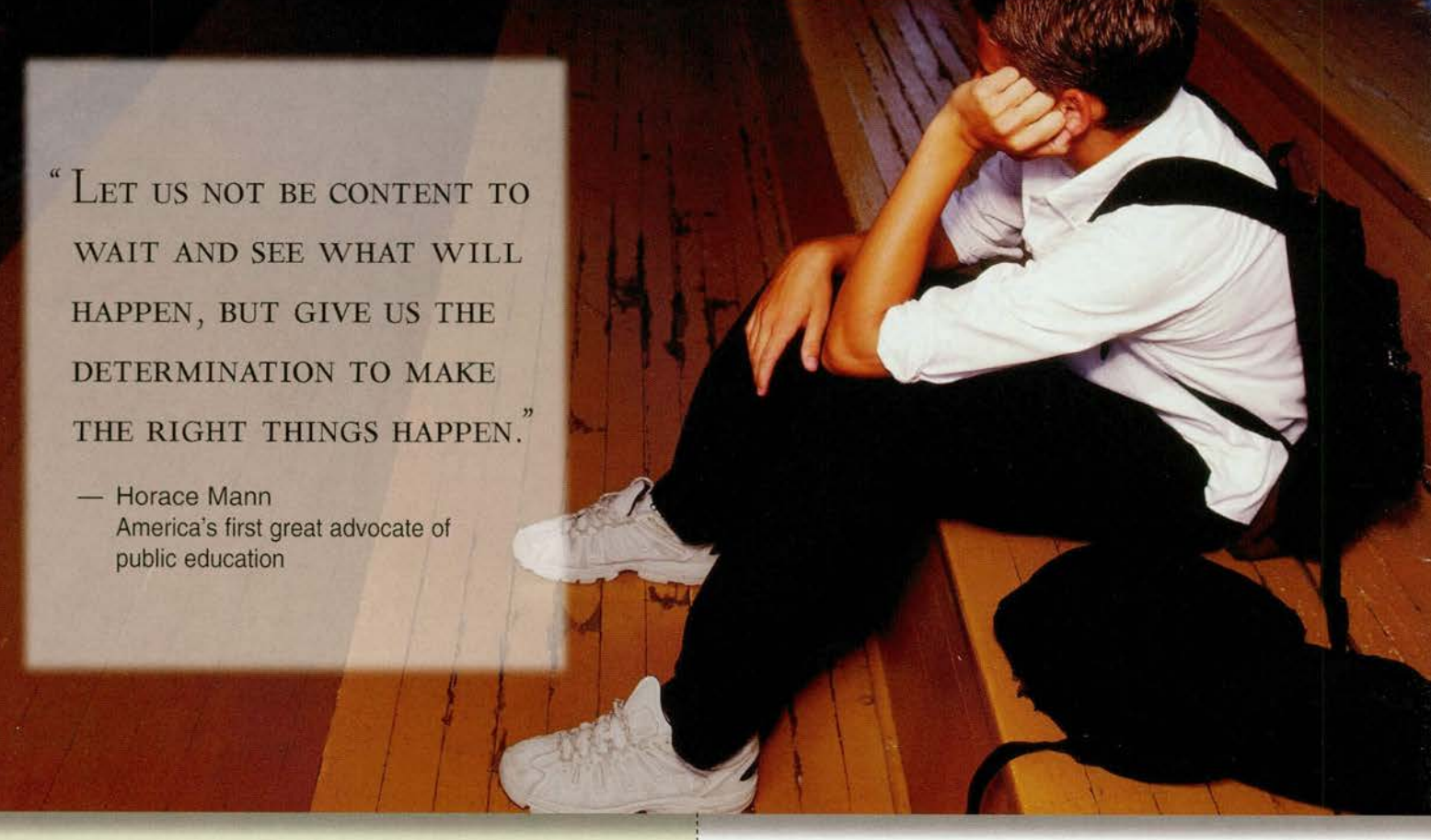
Building a Union, Toppling Communism

The Story of Polish Solidarity—and How the AFL-CIO Aided Its Victory



The Strike at Gdańsk: 25th Anniversary

Cognitive Scientist: Should We Teach to Students' Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Strengths?



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AMERICAN Educator
Summer 2005

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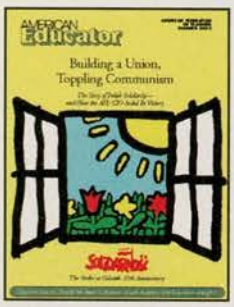
Remembering Solidarity



Twenty-five years ago, Polish shipyard workers launched a strike and established Solidarity, an independent union. After nine years of struggle, substantially aided by the AFL-CIO, the union movement toppled Poland's Communist government—and soon, Communist governments across Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed as well. We celebrate this silver anniversary with three pieces.

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NOTEBOOK

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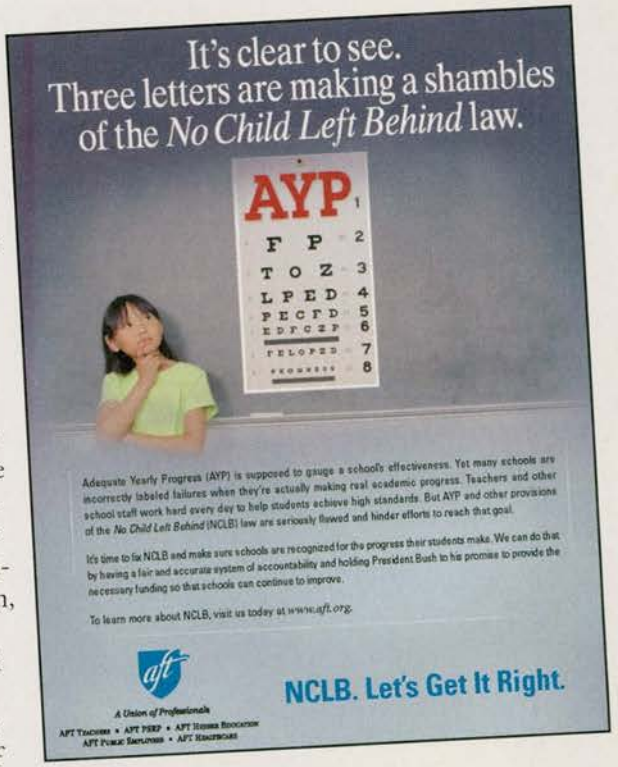
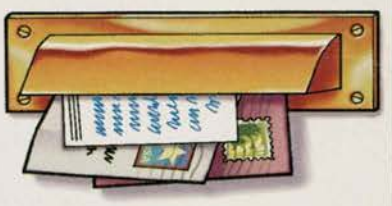
NCLB—Let's Get It Right



The majority of AFT's teachers say they want the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) fixed—not eliminated. That's why the AFT recently launched a nationwide campaign to educate the public and elected officials about details of the law that hinder school improvement. The campaign, "NCLB—Let's Get It Right," features print and radio ads in English and Spanish. As the ad shown here demonstrates, one of AFT's top priorities is fixing the law's definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP), the flawed accountability provision that focuses on students' current test scores instead of the gains that students are making. Other top priorities of the campaign include: 1) improving the provisions that require all teachers to be highly qualified, including by establishing induction and professional development programs; 2) revising NCLB's sanctions to emphasize research-based interventions that increase student achievement; and, 3) securing the funding that was promised for implementing NCLB.

To get involved, visit **www.aft.org/topics/nclb/index.htm** where you can learn more about NCLB, sign up for e-mail updates on things you can do to help fix it, and share your views with your representatives in Congress.



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Dying Workers in China

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EUGENIA KEMBLE, ALBERT SHANKER INSTITUTE

AFT Secretary-Treasurer Nat LaCour (top) listens to Deng Wenping, one of the workers dying of silicosis. The kitchen (above) in the friend's house where Mr. Deng has been staying since selling his house to pay medical bills. One of the factories (inset) that did not protect its workers from silicosis.

The AFT maintains close ties to union activists in Hong Kong and mainland China like Szeto Wah, the first president of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers Union, and Han Dongfang, the founder of the *China Labour Bulletin* who was imprisoned for trying to start an independent union in China. The AFT recently sent a delegation, led by Secretary-Treasurer Nat LaCour, to find out how workers are faring in Hong Kong and China. While workers' rights to representation seem relatively secure in Hong Kong at the moment (for details, see box below), the situation in mainland China is, in a word, deadly.

Dying of Silicosis

Together, the *China Labour Bulletin*, the Hong Kong teachers' union, and the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (a watchdog group) arranged for AFT's delegation to meet six migrant workers in Huizhou, China, who are dying of silicosis. This terrible respiratory disease results from inhaling silica dust, which then inflames and scars lung tissue. In acute cases, the lungs may also fill with fluid. These workers contracted the disease by grinding gemstones in unventilated factories run by Lucky Gems and Jewelry, Ko Ngar Gems, Perfect Gem and Pearl Manufacturing, and Art's King Gems. By Chinese law, factories must protect their workers from this type of occupational hazard and provide compensation when injuries occur. But government officials, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (the government-controlled "union"), and the courts ignore the law—and so do the major brands, like Liz Claiborne, that buy the products. Because the factories operate with impunity, these workers have been fired and are struggling to pay their medical expenses with little or no compensation from their former employers. The most grievously ill worker, Deng Wenping, had to sell his home to pay his doctor's bills. (See p. 5 to learn more.)

These workers are not unique. Roughly 200 million migrant workers have flooded China's free enterprise zones, but no one in the government or "union" seems concerned with their safety. They live chaotic, unstable lives in over-crowded dormitories, sharing small beds and tiny rooms—often right above the factory floor. With luck, they may save a portion of their wages to send home and may get to visit their families a few days each year. According to the Solidarity Center's report, *Justice for All: The Struggle for Worker Rights in China*, "In 2002, workplace accidents reportedly caused 140,000 deaths in China, 250,000 workers lost body parts and suffered other injuries, and nearly 400,000 workers died from the cumulative effects of workplace illness."

Hong Kong Teachers Union Fights to Maintain Basic Freedoms

The delegation's findings in Hong Kong were heartening; the Hong Kong Professional Teachers Union (HKPTU) is strong. Even though it has not won collective bargaining rights, it has 81,000 members and offers benefits ranging from medical clinics to professional development. As importantly, its members understand that the union is crucial to making the People's Republic of China live up to the "one country, two systems" promise that it made when the governance of Hong Kong was transferred from British colonial rule in 1997. (Hong Kong is now a "Special Administrative Region" of China that is supposed to maintain its autonomy until 2047.) Many teachers have joined HKPTU mainly because they support the democracy movement that is at the heart of the union's activities. In fact, the union's pro-democracy activities are so central to its work that Cheung Man Kwong, HKPTU's president, has also been elected to Hong Kong's Legislative Council.

But all is not well. The union, along with other pro-democracy organizations, must continuously fight proposals from the Communist party to limit people's rights. For example, in July 2003 the Communist party tried to force an "anti-subversion" law on Hong Kong that would have greatly diminished freedom of association. This law would have allowed the mainland leaders to take legal actions against their critics in Hong Kong, especially pro-democracy groups like HKPTU. With two massive rallies in the past couple of years, the pro-democracy forces have prevented the anti-subversion law from being passed, but HKPTU's leaders expect that it will be put forth again. Ultimately, the mainland's goal is to reduce Hong Kong's unions to an arm of government—just like the mainland's All China Federation of Trade Unions, which "represents" workers by following orders from the Communist party.

The Family Left Behind: A Personal Account

My name is Tang Manzhen and my husband is Deng Wenping. We are both 34 years old. I came to Huizhou to work in January 1998, a few months after my husband started work in the stone-cutting section of the Perfect Gem and Pearl Manufacturing Company. Back home we were farmers, working day and night to make ends meet. We thought that factory work in Guangdong sounded promising, so we left our 8-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son with their grandparents in a village in Sichuan to come here.

I started working in the perforation (gem drilling) section of the same factory. My husband earned 1,000 Yuan a month[1] and my wages were on a piece-rate basis. I worked from 7:30 A.M. to 9:30 P.M. or even later, with one day off a month, for 900 Yuan a month. Chinese New Year was the time we looked forward to most, when we could go home for a few days and see our children and parents. Our wages meant we could send our daughter to school and have a house built in our hometown, where we hoped to return one day. But in late 2000, everything went wrong.

After the factory's annual medical test, my husband was notified that he had contracted tuberculosis. We were suspicious because tuberculosis is infectious and if he had it, why hadn't I caught it? So, together with five other colleagues, my husband went for an examination at another hospital.

It turned out that all of them were suffering from silicosis, and my husband's condition was diagnosed as being at Stage II of the illness. On learning of this, the factory fired them all on January 5, 2001, just three days after they came out of hospital.

On the morning of January 8, 2001, I received notification from the factory that it was "inappropriate for me to work in this factory anymore," and the security guards forced me to pack and leave immediately.

I wanted to look for another job so that I could support my children and pay for my husband's medical treatment, but he was so sick that I could not leave him alone at home. I needed to cook for him, bathe him, and take him to the clinic. Now, he can't even dress himself, so I have to do everything for him.

My husband received 90,000 Yuan compensation from the factory, but our lives have been ruined.[2] We have spent all the compensation money and our own savings and even sold our house to pay for his medical treatment. Four years on, we are now heavily in debt, so we are currently trying to sue the company in court to get higher compensation.

His condition is now at Stage III, the last stage of this incurable illness. He now needs oxygen therapy once every two days to combat his breathing difficulties. We cannot afford to go to better hospitals, so we go to small clinics. But still, it costs 140 Yuan each time.

Since he contracted silicosis, I haven't had a good night's sleep. I am worried all the time. How long does he have left? How can his suffering be reduced? How are my children? What shall I do when he is gone? What if we lose the court case? How can we repay our debts? These thoughts keep me awake during the endless nights, accompanied by his coughing and murmuring.

My children are now 14 and 8. The younger one has never been to school and the elder one had to quit because we couldn't afford her tuition fees. I don't want to cry in front of my husband because he suffers enough, but when I call my children, I cannot hold back my tears anymore. They always ask when they can return to school. Kids in the village laugh at them, saying that they have parents working in Guangdong but cannot send them to school. It breaks my heart when I hear those stories.

You know, I have not seen my children for more than three years. A return ticket to Sichuan costs 600 Yuan and I can't afford it. "How tall are my children? Have they put on weight? Are they naughty?" I always ask my friends when they return after Chinese New Year.

We are now living on the charity of good-hearted people. A fellow villager, who works in Huizhou, lets us have a spare room, and I have borrowed money from friends and relatives to treat my husband.[3] But it is getting more difficult because they know he will not recover, so they probably will not be repaid. I feel extremely bad about this.

My husband is dying, but still I don't want to give up. All I wish now is that the factory will pay for his medical expenses and give us some compensation so that he can live longer and my children can return to school.

This account is from the China Labour Bulletin, *which interviewed Tang Manzhen in March of 2005. The original, slightly longer article, is online at* ***www.china-labour.org.hk/iso/article.adp?article_id=6304.***

[1] There are about 8.3 Yuan to the U.S. dollar.

[2] The initial offer of compensation was 100,000 Yuan, but Mr. Deng said he had been required by the factory management to pay them a 10 percent commission for handling the case. The handling fee was off the record.

[3] The place Mr. and Mrs. Deng live looks like an abandoned house from the outside. On the day of this interview, it was drizzling, and their room was dark and damp. She has to gather wood for cooking and has no access to clean water in their home.

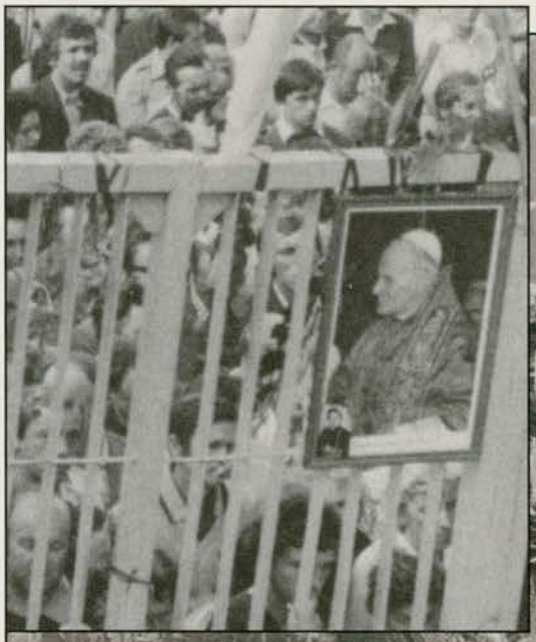
Surviving the Underground

How American Unions Helped Solidarity Win

By Arch Puddington

Twenty-five years ago, a group of shipyard workers launched a strike that united Poland and, eventually, toppled the Communist government. The Polish people had lived under Soviet rule since the end of World War II; by 1980, they had endured decades of corrupt officials and economic decline—they were ready for drastic action. Solidarity, the independent trade union that was born during the strike, grew into an irrepressible national movement. During the years of harsh government repression following the imposition of martial law in December 1981, the Solidarity movement survived—thanks, in part, to support from the American labor movement. The AFL-CIO, under then-President Lane Kirkland, was one of the few institutions in America (or anywhere) that believed Solidarity could win and that communism could be defeated. After seven years of underground activity that included bold protests and strikes by Solidarity members, the Polish government finally agreed to partially-free elections. Solidarity won in a landslide, inspiring people across Eastern Europe to bring down their own Communist regimes. We celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Gdańsk strike with a photo essay documenting Solidarity's birth, survival, and victory and with this excerpt from the biography of Lane Kirkland, who was president of the AFL-CIO throughout this extraordinary period and oversaw American labor's extraordinary contribution to this cause.

—EDITORS



It all began on August 14, 1980, when workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, Poland, a Baltic port city, launched a strike against the management of the state-owned enterprise. On one level, the strike was a response to the Communist regime's announcement of major increases in the price of

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Arch Puddington is director of research at Freedom House. He is author of Failed Utopias, *a study of the techniques of Communist control, and* Freedom's Voice: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. *This article is adapted with permission of the publisher, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., from* Lane Kirkland: Champion of American Labor *by Arch Puddington. Copyright © 2005 by Arch Puddington. This book is available at bookstores, online booksellers, and from the Wiley Web site at* ***www.wiley.com****, or call 1-800-225-5945.*

Lech Walesa (left and above), an electrician fired for trying to form a union, led the Gdańsk Shipyard workers and the Inter-Factory Strike Coordinating Committee, which represented thousands of striking workplaces, in negotiations with the government. The workers occupied the shipyard for two weeks; family and friends brought food and flowers as a sign of support (bottom). "21 x Tak," meaning "21 x Yes" (bottom left), refers to the workers' 21 demands, the most important of which was the guarantee of freedom of association. Photos of Pope John Paul II, a strong supporter of Solidarity, were often displayed at strikes (far left inset).

basic foods and the dismissal of several popular workers. But in a broader sense, the strike's target was Communism itself: Communism's elaborate system of control; its endemic corruption and favoritism; its identification with Poland's historic enemy, Russia; its atheism; the lies of its press; and, ultimately, its denial of basic worker rights, a denial that the authorities justified in the name of the working class.

Lane Kirkland, president of America's labor federation, the AFL-CIO, was among the first to grasp the significance of the burgeoning strike movement in August 1980. As the strike spread from Gdańsk to other Baltic port cities and then to steel mills, tractor factories, and textile enterprises, he noted the high degree of organization, the shrewd tactical instincts, and the self-discipline of the workers. Where in the past Polish workers had given vent to their anger through indiscriminate protests and riots, they now acted like veteran trade unionists in a developed capitalist society, occupying factories, mobilizing the support of the broader community, selecting leaders and negotiating committees through democratic processes, and putting forward demands that ranged from issues of workplace safety to broader questions of civil rights for the entire Polish population. This was the beginning of Solidarity, the independent Polish trade union that would—after a nine-year struggle—topple Poland's Communist regime, and put into motion the dynamic that toppled communism virtually everywhere.

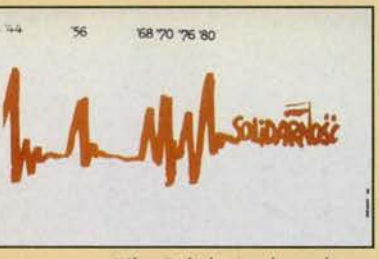
Kirkland was intrigued with descriptions of Lech Walesa. An electrician who had been fired for his labor activism at the Lenin yard, Walesa seemed the epitome of the charismatic working-class hero, a man with little formal education and lacking in strong ideological passions, outside of a devotion to the Catholic Church and an instinctive love of freedom. Under his leadership, Solidarity advanced a series of 21 demands in talks with the regime, ranging from such fundamental workplace issues as the right to join independent unions and an increase in the minimum wage to broader issues like an end to censorship, the broadcasts of Sunday masses on state television, and union representation on the self-governing committees of state-owned enterprises. A number of the demands were related to the rights of religious belief. From the outset, the Solidarity leadership regarded the Polish-born pope, John Paul II, as a kind of spiritual father to their cause. The pope's pilgrimage to Poland in June of 1979 is widely recognized as the spark that led to Solidarity as a massive, but nonviolent, movement to speak the truth in the face of the Communist government's lies. The pope's steadfast support, even in the darkest moments, remained an inspiration throughout the periods of conflict and crisis during the 1980s.

Finally, Kirkland took especially careful note during the Gdańsk strike of the Communist regime's seeming impotence in the face of what was fast becoming a movement for worker rights, free expression, and civil liberties that embraced practically the entire Polish nation. The authorities carefully refrained from violence, there were few arrests, and when it became clear that the strike leadership intended to ignore the regime's pleadings and bluster, the government did the unthinkable: Eight days after the strike began, the Polish government sat down and bargained with its workers and, in the end, agreed to most of the strikers' demands.

I. Kirkland and the AFL-CIO vs. The Establishment

One week into the strike, Kirkland made clear the American labor federation's intention to provide assistance to the Polish workers—a position that put him at odds with the U.S.

1980-1981: SOLIDARITY IS BORN



The Solidarity heartbeat poster, created in 1980, was one of the best known images conceived by Poland's pro-Solidarity establishment; it shows the years of Polish uprisings against totalitarianism—1944, 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, and 1980.

In September 1981, Solidarity held its first Congress (above left), the first free representative assembly since the Communist takeover of Poland. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland could not attend because the Polish government denied his visa application. Stanislaw Walesa, Lech's father, gave Kirkland a Solidarity T-shirt (above right) at the Illinois State AFL-CIO Convention later that month.

foreign policy establishment, including high officials in then-President Carter's administration. In U.S. diplomatic circles, a consensus view prevailed that the Soviets were determined to thwart all challenges to their domination of Eastern Europe and that anti-Communist movements like Solidarity were doomed to fail. In Europe, diplomats seemed to resent the Polish workers for complicating relations with the Kremlin.

The U.S. foreign policy establishment also believed that the West should refrain from giving assistance to forces that posed a threat to the East European status quo, on the grounds that Western "intervention" would provide Moscow with a pretext for military response. Kirkland, however, flatly rejected the proposition that aid from Western trade unions would provoke official repression or a Soviet invasion. His credo in such matters was summarized in his answer to the press:

> I believe that the Soviet Union and its vassal Polish government will take such actions as it deems in its interests. I believe that the main deterrent to such action would be (a) the hope they might have that the strike would simply collapse and the workers revert to a condition of servitude and exploitation; (b) that such action would not be cost-free.
>
> Every spokesman for freedom in Iron Curtain countries with whom we have had contact … has strongly asserted the proposition that their survival and inspiration depend very heavily on support and attention and publicity from the Free World. I have never heard one of them … suggest that the strongest possible expressions of support, publicity, and attention did them harm.… I'm unable to convince myself that better deeds are going to be done in the dark than will be done in the broad daylight of attention and vocal and public support.[1]

Earlier, Teddy Gleason, president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), announced that his union, which represented 110,000 dockworkers at ports on the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico, would launch a boycott of Polish shipments. Kirkland, meanwhile, dispatched letters to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Transport Workers' Federation, requesting support for the ILA action.[2]

On August 31, 1980, Kirkland told *Meet the Press* that the international labor movement would impose a massive transportation blockade on Polish goods if matters were not soon resolved. He also announced that the AFL-CIO would be providing Solidarity with cash and other assistance. But Kirkland already saw the Polish developments as having the potential to set off a long and arduous struggle to liberate East Europeans from the Soviet maw. "For the first time a pluralistic institution has been accepted within a Communist regime," he noted, "with consequences that could be quite far-reaching."[3] Few others could claim to share Kirkland's prescience.

From the very outset, then, Kirkland regarded the Polish workers' movement—soon to be formally constituted as a union and given the name *Solidarność*, or Solidarity—as a phenomenon altogether different in character and potential from the samizdat (underground) manifestoes and dissident protests that had emerged throughout the Soviet bloc during the 1970s. Intellectual dissidents wrote brilliant polemics and displayed remarkable personal courage in the face of Communist brutality. But until Solidarity, the authorities had shown themselves fully capable of smothering what had always been small, atomized, and factionalized attempts at opposition. When Soviet dissidents, like Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Bukovsky were deemed dangerous to the regime, they could be packed off to prison camp or forced into exile. Poland's Communists, however, did not have the option of exiling or jailing an entire working class.

1980-81 was a period of constant confrontation between Solidarity and the government. In July 1981, demonstrations (left) were held throughout Poland against food shortages. Workers (above), like these strikers in Warsaw, read the union's national newspaper, Tygodnik Solidarność, *in August 1981.*

Kirkland's embrace of Solidarity brought him into immediate conflict with the Carter administration. Despite the administration's avowed commitment to human rights, Edmund Muskie, secretary of state, decided that quiet diplomacy was the most prudent course to follow in the Polish crisis. He summoned Kirkland to his office for lunch on September 3, 1980, during which he gave a "negative assessment" of the Polish aid fund that the AFL-CIO had just launched and declared that the federation's open support for Solidarity could be "deliberately misinterpreted" by the Kremlin in order to justify military intervention. Muskie was not alone in deploring labor's Polish initiative. In a *New York Times* column, Flora Lewis called the Workers Aid Fund "most unfortunate."[4]

Solidarity did not share the State Department's apprehensions about American labor's involvement in Polish developments. On September 12, Walesa said that outside assistance was welcomed, given the union's lack of resources inside Poland. He pointedly added, "Help can never be politically embarrassing. That of the AFL-CIO, for example. We are grateful to them. It was a very good thing that they helped us. Whenever we can, we will help them, too."[5]

Although Kirkland and Walesa were not to meet until 1989, there was, from the beginning, a strong bond between the two leaders that transcended their inability to speak to one another directly. Both were committed trade unionists; both believed that international labor solidarity was a powerful force against dictatorship and that Communism, despite its brutal and totalitarian character, was vulnerable to opposition movements that enjoyed mass popular support. Kirkland admired Walesa's audacity—his willingness to ignore the threats of Polish Communists, the rantings of Soviet leaders, and for that matter, the polite advice that emerged from the American embassy in Warsaw. Although Kirkland was unaware at the time, Communist officials had gone to Walesa and urged that Solidarity avoid ties to the AFL-CIO on the grounds that the federation was an instrument of the CIA. "I simply ignored them," Walesa said years later.[6] Kirkland's resolve was reinforced by Walesa's expressions of gratitude. Kirkland told *U.S. News and World Report* that labor would help the Poles "in any way we can, including financially." He again dismissed the proposition that the delivery of aid to the Poles would trigger a Soviet invasion. "I don't believe that the cause of trade unionism was ever advanced on little cat feet. We are a movement of free trade unions, and freedom of expression is the only way we know to conduct our affairs." Besides, he added, the Soviet Union "will act on the basis of its own appraisal of its own interests, not on the basis of anything we might say."[7]

Kirkland was also aware that in taking on the role of Solidarity's chief Western backer, the AFL-CIO was assuming a unique set of responsibilities. While Kirkland was rock-like in his support for the Polish union, he was never reckless in his comments or actions. He and his aides scrupulously refrained from issuing commentaries on the evolving political situation in Poland. Kirkland also made it a foundation of AFL-CIO policy that in relations with Solidarity, the Americans would adhere to the wishes of Walesa and his advisers and avoid efforts to impose anything that could be construed as an American agenda. "Our policies will be guided by Solidarity's needs," he declared.[8]

Among Carter's top officials, the most sympathetic to

1981-1988: MARTIAL LAW—SOLIDARITY BANNED

In the early morning of December 13, 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, declared a "state of war," deploying military and police forces throughout the country to suppress Solidarity (above and right).

Lane Kirkland and the AFL-CIO organized a continuous series of actions in the U.S. to support Solidarity's underground existence. Over a period of eight years, the federation sent $4 million in aid. In 1982, Kirkland (left) announced activities for a nationwide day declared to support Solidarity. The AFL-CIO asked the famous Polish poster artist Jan Sawka to design a fundraising poster for the AFL-CIO Polish Workers Aid Fund. The rising Solidarity sun over a multicolored landscape (above) was a striking theme showing the artist's belief in Solidarity's rebirth at a most grim time.

Kirkland's stance on Poland was National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. In December, Brzezinski told Kirkland that American intelligence believed that a Soviet invasion of Poland was imminent; to forestall a catastrophe, Brzezinski was putting together a list of retaliatory measures the United States would take, with the intention of sending it along to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev as a reminder that intervention would not be without consequences. Kirkland told Brzezinski that should the Soviets intervene, a worldwide boycott of the shipment of Polish and Soviet goods—by air, sea, or rail—could be organized, given Solidarity's popularity with unions around the globe. Brzezinski subsequently added the boycott threat to his list.[9]

By mid-January 1981, the AFL-CIO had raised $160,000 for Solidarity, the money coming from contributions from individual unions, collections at plant gates, and the sale of T-shirts and other Solidarity paraphernalia organized by a youth organization established specifically to raise money for Solidarity and to mobilize pro-Solidarity events on colleges campuses. The AFL-CIO was not alone in supporting Solidarity; unions from West Germany, France, Japan, and other countries were helping the Polish union with material contributions; the bulk of the money was used to purchase printing equipment and other instruments of communication.[10]

By the summer of 1981, Kirkland was recognized as Solidarity's most resolute supporter in the Free World. Poland's Communist authorities gave recognition to Kirkland's role by making him one of the few foreigners barred from attending Solidarity's first convention in September 1981, a fact that did not escape the Solidarity delegates. "We figured that if the Communists prohibited Lane Kirkland from attending our congress, he must be our best friend," noted former biology teacher Wiktor Kulerski, a union leader from Warsaw.[11] Kirkland's speech was smuggled in and read by a Solidarity leader. The delegates gave the speech a stormy ovation.

Martial Law Declared

It had always been clear that Polish authorities had tolerated the existence of Solidarity because of their own weakened condition, and not from genuine commitment to change. The new Polish leader, General Jaruzelski (who had put down a worker rebellion in 1970), was under intense pressure from the Soviets, who, although unwilling to launch an invasion of Poland, were privately demanding that the Polish party take measures to restore order and eliminate Solidarity. 1981 was marked by clashes between Solidarity and the regime; as the year drew to a close, American intelligence officials received urgent warnings that a major act of repression was imminent.

On December 13, 1981, the regime gave its answer. That night, members of the ZOMO, a special security unit formed to put down manifestations of political opposition, arrested the bulk of the union leadership, including Walesa, as they left a conference in Gdańsk. Jaruzelski imposed a series of martial law measures and banned Solidarity. The ZOMO and other security units

During martial law, more than 10,000 Solidarity activists were interned in "camps" like Bialoleka (below), including Warsaw Regional Solidarity leaders (below, from left) Henry Wujec, Lech Dymarski, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Jacek Kuron, and Jan Rulewski. From prison, Kuron wrote his seminal essay, "The Way Out of the Impasse," which called on all aspects of society to organize independent of the state and thereby challenge its authority and legitimacy.

One of the most important aspects of Solidarity's resistance was underground publishing, which included reports on human rights violations, books on totalitarianism and the Yalta agreements, and the magazines Independent Culture *and* Humanistic Almanac *(left). More than a hundred publishing houses put out thousands of books and magazines from 1981 to 1988.*

On May 1, 1982, five months into martial law, a massive rally (above) in Warsaw, one of several throughout Poland, demonstrated that Solidarity was still alive.

scoured the country, breaking into apartments and stopping travelers in a nationwide dragnet for union leaders who had eluded arrest in Gdańsk.

When martial law was declared, Kirkland pronounced that "[Solidarity's] battle is ours, and we shall not let them down." He also called on Western governments and the ICFTU to immediately plan measures to punish the regime.[12]

On December 15, Kirkland was summoned to the White House to discuss the Polish crisis with then-President Reagan. Kirkland told Reagan that the administration's response to martial law was inadequate. Asked how he would have the government respond, Kirkland went directly to what he saw as the heart of the matter: the billions in outstanding loans from Western governments and banks that had been extended to Poland over the years in support of unsound development schemes. Kirkland urged, "You should declare them formally in default." Such action, Kirkland added, should be taken with the goal of destroying Poland's credit and making it impossible for the regime to receive further loans. Kirkland also told Reagan that the AFL-CIO intended to get material into the hands of Solidarity's surviving structures through the networks it had developed over the previous year. "We have the contacts ... to do it, and we'll use whatever resources we can, but whatever resources could be provided would be [helpful]." Reagan said he would take Kirkland's views into consideration, and the meeting ended.[13]

For the duration of the Polish crisis, Kirkland remained critical of the Reagan administration for what he regarded as a consistently inadequate policy toward the Jaruzelski regime. Kirkland believed that the administration's Poland policy was dictated in large means by the Republican party's ties to the world of finance, which vigorously opposed calling in the debt and forcing the Polish government into default.

To be sure, the Reagan administration did adopt sanctions against the Polish regime. But these measures were largely symbolic: the cancellation of landing rights for Lot, the Polish national airline; the denial of commercial fishing permits in American waters; the cancellation of Export-Import Bank insurance for deals with Poland. Reagan took no steps against the Soviets and refused to call in the debt and declare Poland in bankruptcy.

Nonetheless, despite the lack of consistency in its Polish policies, Reagan was not committed to a status quo that forever ceded domination over Eastern Europe to the Soviets. Reagan, in fact, actually believed that Communism was destined to collapse, and his policies were designed to move that process along. Within the State Department, however, expectations of change were decidedly less ambitious. Kirkland believed that neither the administration nor the State Department cared whether Solidarity reemerged as a legal trade union. He claimed that the undersecretary of state asked him to recognize the government-created and government-controlled trade union that had been set up to supplant Solidarity. Kirkland replied: "No democracy without Solidarity."[14]

About one year into martial law, General Jaruzelski announced that all restrictions on Polish society

Symbolic and morale-boosting activities, like printing fake stamps and money (top), were a part of the underground activity. The "Postal Service of Solidarity" put out stamps commemorating Pope John Paul II, the Warsaw Uprising, and Soviet dissidents like Andrei Sakharov—and occasionally pro-Solidarity postal workers would deliver mail with these stamps. The 200 Zloty note featured the police's most wanted man, Zbigniew Bujak, the leader of Solidarity underground (who was arrested on June 5, 1986). Demonstrators in Warsaw in 1986 (above left) honor the memories of those killed during martial law.

would be lifted—except for the ban on Solidarity, which would remain. Further, when martial law was lifted, about 2,000 political prisoners remained behind bars and the authorities were about to place 11 activists on trial for treason. Within four months, the Reagan administration, despite the continued Solidarity ban, the imprisonments, and the trials, formally eased some of its sanctions.[15] Then, in early 1987, the Reagan administration lifted the remaining sanctions. Solidarity was left to struggle forward on its own underground.

II. How the AFL-CIO Smuggled Aid to Solidarity

Immediately upon the declaration of martial law in December 1981, Kirkland began putting in place the structure of a secret distribution network linking American unions to the Solidarity underground. The most important channel ran through a Solidarity office in Brussels, Belgium, that had been established, at Walesa's direction, to represent the union's interest during martial law. Jerzy Milewski, a Solidarity activist who had left Poland for a visit to the West two days before martial law was imposed, was selected to direct the office. Another veteran of the democratic opposition, Miroslaw Chojecki, took on the responsibility of developing routes into Poland by which money, printing presses, computers, and other materials could be shipped to underground sources.

To administer the federation's Poland project, Kirkland relied on a small cadre of dedicated assistants who shared his passion for the Solidarity cause. Tom Kahn, an assistant to Kirkland and former aide to civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, coordinated the undertaking. Joining Kahn in the mid-1980s was Adrian Karatnycky, an American of Ukrainian descent who was fluent in Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian and who had been involved in various anti-Soviet protest campaigns. For reliable information from inside martial-law Poland, Kirkland relied heavily on the Committee in Support of Solidarity, whose principal figures—Irena Lasota, a Polish émigré who came to the United States after meeting with persecution for anti-regime involvement as a university student, and Eric Chenoweth, a young political activist formerly on the staff of the AFL-CIO—had developed a wide range of contacts within the Solidarity structure.

Solidarity's principal needs were threefold: money to support the families of imprisoned activists and sustain the underground structure, printing presses and other equipment for an underground press, and financial aid to enable the union to conduct strikes and other nonviolent actions meant to weaken the regime's grip.

Getting money through the border control to Solidarity presented few problems since it was relatively simple to conceal cash in clothing or luggage or to squirrel it away in automobiles. But getting shipments of printing equipment into the country posed a number of tricky problems. To begin with, there was always the risk that ultra-diligent officials in Western Europe might complicate matters, since the methods of shipment often violated the laws of the country of origin, as well as those of Poland. A more serious challenge was getting the shipments past Polish border control. To outwit the authorities, Chojecki developed transport networks originating from a number of European countries—principally, Sweden and France.[16] But while most shipments reached their intended destination, there were some notable failures as well. The Brussels office was sometimes criticized for sending large shipments into Poland on big, over-the-road trucks with false

Thousands of newspapers, news sheets, and bulletins were published regularly using silkscreen (left) and smuggled mimeographs, and in government printing houses by sympathetic or bribed workers. These examples are from the Warsaw and Krakow regions and from two related groups, Fighting Solidarity (SW) and Committee for Social Resistance (KOS).

In March 1988, then-AFT President Albert Shanker (left) represented Lane Kirkland at the unveiling of a memorial in Warsaw's Jewish Cemetery. The event was organized by one of Solidarity's most honored members, Marek Edelman, the last surviving member of the Jewish Fighting Organization that led the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943. On December 13, 1988, in Warsaw, protesters—marking the 7th anniversary of the imposition of martial law—were met with police and truncheons (above).

cargo documents. On one occasion, three trucks were stopped in Gdańsk; authorities confiscated 14 duplicating machines, 5 copying machines, 9,500 duplicating machine matrices, 17 sets of light-sensitive matrices, a radiotelephone, and printed material. The equipment was unloaded, laid out in a sports stadium, and then shown on television news as evidence of the subversive maneuverings of the enemies of Polish socialism. While these failures were dismaying at the time, the seizure of some of the material was inevitable.[17]

Irving Brown, the AFL-CIO's director of international affairs based in Paris, came to believe that additional lines in and out of Poland were needed. He reasoned that given the decentralized nature of the underground, the more channels of distribution, the better. To run a second distribution route, Brown chose Miroslaw Dominczyk, a Solidarity activist from Kielce who had been forced into exile after a year of martial law internment. After his arrival in the United States, Dominczyk was asked to take responsibility for a smuggling operation and was given the code name "Coleslaw."[18]

Dominczyk's principal mission was to get into the hands of the underground printing equipment similar to that which had been seized during the first weeks of martial law. He soon moved his operation to London, England, because of the availability of used and therefore inexpensive printing equipment that was compatible with the technology available to Poles. His initial success came when he persuaded a Polish bus driver to smuggle in printing equipment during his monthly trips to Warsaw (the passengers were elderly Poles returning to the homeland for a visit). The driver did not deliver the equipment to its destination; instead, he left his keys at a prearranged spot. The shipment would then be off-loaded by members of the underground, and the keys returned to the driver's room. Dominczyk arranged alternative routes as well, using trucks and automobiles. He even concealed printing equipment in a shipment of refrigerators.

Dominczyk then hit on an idea that greatly simplified his work. He arranged for members of the underground who were responsible for printing operations to visit London as tourists. There, he taught them how to take apart and reassemble a printing press. Afterward, he began shipping the equipment part by part, a much less risky smuggling method than trying to get an entire press past the border. He also persuaded yachtsmen from Denmark and Sweden to take equipment on trips around the Baltic coast; the equipment would be transferred to boats manned by Solidarity members, who would then bring it to shore.

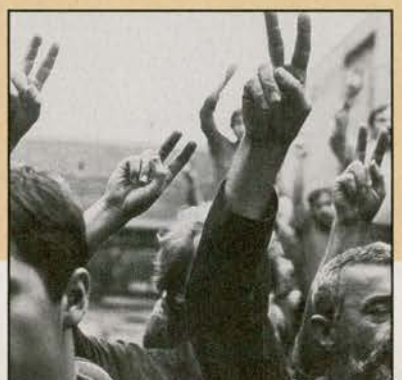
There were failures as well. Dominczyk once cried in frustration after a shipment of offset machines was returned; apparently, underground activists feared that the authorities were watching the shipment and decided against claiming it. His worst calamity occurred in 1987, when a large shipment, encompassing seven offset machines, plates, ink, and spare parts, was confiscated in East Germany.

Although the AFL-CIO was by far Solidarity's largest supplier of material aid, it was not the only source of assistance. Trade union federations from all over Europe were sending equipment to the underground. The most generous of the European unions according to Solidarity veterans were the French, including the Communist-led Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT, or General Confederation of Labor). Likewise, both Communist and non-Communist unions from Italy made contributions.

The Indispensable Underground Press

For Solidarity, contributions from abroad meant, above all else, the ability to maintain an underground press. In the

1988: NEW STRIKES—SOLIDARITY RENEWED



In July and August 1988, Polish workers showed their determination once again, organizing strikes at most of the country's major workplaces, including the Manifest Lipowy Mine in Silesia (far left and lower left), the Nowa Huta Steelworks (left), and the Gdańsk Shipyards (right, upper right, and far right), to protest government policies and to demand lifting the ban on Solidarity.

vivid description of Wiktor Kulerski, a Solidarity union activist, "The printing presses we got from the West during martial law might be compared to machine guns or tanks during a war."[19] The publications ranged from mimeographed factory newsletters to intellectual journals to newspapers with a wide popular audience. Western assistance financed the entire publications structure, from the printing presses to the people who operated the presses, to the journalists who wrote articles, and on down to those who distributed the publications.

The importance of the press cannot be overemphasized. With Solidarity declared illegal, its activists could not perform their functions as union officials or as members of the democratic opposition, except through periodic strikes and protests, the impact of which diminished considerably as Polish society sank into a state of exhaustion. The press thus was the sole means of communication with Polish society, really the only way Solidarity could keep hope for the future alive and remind the authorities that no peace was possible as long as Solidarity was illegal.

To a certain extent, the press functioned as a surrogate trade union, taking on the responsibilities that Solidarity would have shouldered had it been legal. The press reported instances of workplace injuries and management corruption and told of families who had suffered through tragedy or official repression and were thus in need of help. The impact of its reports was magnified when selections were read over international broadcast services sponsored by Western governments, particularly Radio Free Europe.

Among the publications issued by the underground press were books long banned by the Communists, such as George Orwell's antitotalitarian classic *Animal Farm* and treatises by philosophers such as Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers. There were also journals that targeted those involved in the apparatus of repression. Czeslaw Bielecki, director of an underground publishing consortium, published a journal entitled *Dignity,* which criticized the police and included militia members among its writers. Another of Bielecki's publications, *Redoubt,* was meant for members of the military; most of the writing was done by three lieutenant colonels.[20]

As is often the case with opposition movements that challenge the authorities in totalitarian settings, Solidarity was awash in rumors of spies, double agents, and infiltrations by internal security. But years later when Bogdan Borusewicz, one of the early Solidarity leaders from Gdańsk, served on a parliamentary commission that investigated the tactics employed by the state security against Solidarity, he concluded that while the regime had recorded some success in infiltrating the underground structures, the authorities had not succeeded in preventing the delivery of money and equipment from Western sources. Borusewicz believes that virtually all of the money sent to the underground got through the border control.[21]

By 1988, the struggle between Solidarity and the regime had reached a stalemate. On one level, the regime had clearly gained the upper hand in the political realm. Jaruzelski felt sufficiently confident of his power to lift martial law, release political prisoners, and ease restrictions on foreign travel. These measures had burnished his international stature; increasingly, he was regarded as a patriotic Pole who had reluctantly adopted a course of repression in order to prevent a Soviet invasion. (This charitable view of Jaruzelski has proved unwarranted; documents

The strikes forced the authorities to agree to negotiations that led to the re-legalization of Solidarity and partially free elections in June 1989.

uncovered during the 1990s showed that Jaruzelski was actively seeking Soviet intervention and not, as was widely believed, arguing against invasion with Moscow.) But though Jaruzelski could claim to have gained dominance over Solidarity, he continued to preside over a critically ill economy, a condition that was not likely to improve until the government enjoyed the support of the people.

Solidarity then called a series of strikes in a determined effort to revive its fortunes and convince the regime that social peace required a settlement that included Solidarity. Foreign assistance, particularly from the AFL-CIO and the National Endowment for Democracy, was critical; without a strike fund, miners and other workers would not have agreed to make the financial sacrifices demanded by a work stoppage. Although the strikes did not succeed in crippling the government, they served an important purpose by convincing the regime to open talks with the opposition toward some sort of national accord. The result was an agreement to hold national elections in which the opposition, though unable to run as a Solidarity party, could put forward candidates for Parliament and the regime would accept the election results.

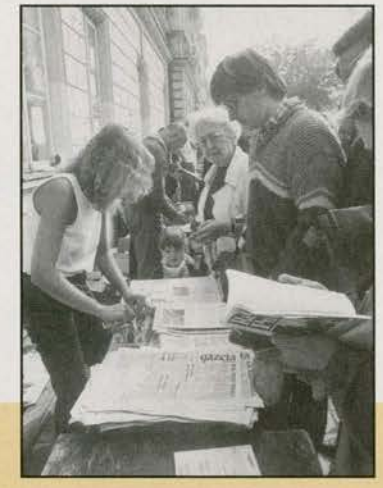
This was a settlement of historic proportions. Nonetheless, many observers reckoned that it was the regime and not Solidarity that had gotten the better part of the bargain. Some doubted that Communists would ever permit a fair election, while others predicted that Poles would opt for the strong leadership of Jaruzelski rather than gamble on the undisciplined forces of Solidarity. Kirkland, however, was confident that unless the regime falsified the returns, Solidarity would easily triumph. He reasoned that given the option of voting for oppression or freedom, Poles—indeed, any people—would choose freedom.

Years later, he explained his faith in Solidarity's eventual victory:

> I still believe and I believed then that history moves when civil society reaches a critical point. It is not decided in the foreign ministries or the palaces of power but in the streets and the work places. And when critical mass is reached, there is nothing you can do unless you are willing to kill and slaughter and put the whole country in chains.[22]

Whatever his crimes, Jaruzelski was not inclined to kill thousands of his own countrymen to retain power. But like any autocrat, he enjoyed immense advantages over his adversaries, which he exploited to the hilt. The official press trumpeted the achievements of Communist candidates and studiously ignored the opposition. The party made liberal use of its patronage power. The police hovered over Solidarity rallies, checking identification papers and recording the names of those on hand. American government officials expressed pessimism about Solidarity's prospects, while Communists were certain they would win.

To help ensure a more level playing field, the AFL-CIO and the Polish-American community gave Bronislaw Geremek (an adviser to Walesa who later became Poland's foreign minister), who was traveling in the United States, $100,000 for Solidarity's election campaign. The money was in cash, and when Poland's future foreign minister went through customs in Warsaw, he was searched, and the money was taken, laid out, and photographed. The result that the media were full of accounts of the attempts by foreign interests to influence the Polish elections. But Geremek was allowed to keep the money, a sign, Geremek believes, that the authorities were confident of victory.[23]



Election Victory

The regime's confidence could not have been more misplaced. When

1989: SOLIDARITY FORCES GOVERNMENT TO HOLD ELECTIONS

Posters for Solidarity, the Independent Student Union (NZS), and other groups were a common sight in Polish cities in the period leading up to the elections (left). The free press was reborn (top) with the Elections Gazette. *Because the government only allowed 35 percent of the seats in Parliament to be contested, some protested (above) with signs stating that "1/3 Democracy Is Not Enough." A free election for president was held in 1990 and was won by Lech Walesa (right), the dismissed electrician who led Solidarity.*

the elections were held in June, Solidarity's candidates scored an overwhelming victory, winning all of the contested seats in the lower house of Parliament and 99 out of 100 in the upper house. While the accord with Jaruzelski had called for a power-sharing arrangement with the Communists, even in the event of a Solidarity electoral triumph, the results meant the effective end of Communist rule in Poland. By the end of the year, Communist dictatorships had been routed in every Soviet bloc country of Eastern Europe.

In the end, the AFL-CIO was responsible for channeling over $4 million to Solidarity. Prior to martial law and during martial law's initial period, some $500,000 was raised for the AFL-CIO Polish Workers Aid Fund. But with the establishment of the National Endowment for Democracy in 1984, the amount of money available to the AFL-CIO for Poland purposes rose dramatically. In all, $1.7 million was given to Solidarity by the Free Trade Union Institute (which was created by the AFL-CIO in 1977) using NED grants. Money for Poland rose yet again when Congress approved special $1 million allocations to the AFL-CIO for use on behalf of Solidarity in 1988 and 1989.

The Solidarity leadership respected Kirkland as their most loyal friend and as a man of power in Washington, D.C. As Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Solidarity's principal spokesman, put it: "We understood Kirkland's position in American politics. We knew that presidents come and go, but Kirkland would still be there."[24]

For Andrzej Celinski, a key Solidarity official, Kirkland's significance derived from his grasp of European politics, his belief in the possibility of radical change in Communist Europe, and the power he wielded as leader of American labor. Celinski actually met Kirkland prior to martial law, during a visit in which he sought to convince influential Americans "that there was a chance to achieve democratic change in Central Europe." Celinski added:

> We believed that this would require the active participation of the United States, since political leaders in Europe were comfortable with the division of Europe that had been reached in the agreements at Yalta and Potsdam [at the end of World War II]. But I also had to convince Americans that policy towards Central Europe need not be viewed through the prism of relations with Moscow.
>
> Kirkland was one of the very few who understood what we were saying. He also understood that America was the only country that could make its policy on the basis of fundamental values and was not inhibited by the complacency that prevented serious initiatives by Europe.
>
> With Kirkland, there was no need to explain the context of things. He understood European history, he knew the complexities, he recognized the difference between dreams and realities. He knew why certain things are best left unsaid. A 20-minute meeting with Kirkland could be more productive than two hours with someone else. He was the only American whose language and way of thinking were on the same wavelength as ours.[25]

In April 1990, Kirkland, his wife, and a delegation from the AFL-CIO traveled to Warsaw and Gdańsk to attend the second Solidarity congress—a triumphal gathering of those who had forged the democratic revolution from inside Poland and those who had sustained the revolution from abroad. During the visit, the Kirklands stopped at the grave of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a priest murdered by the secret police for his uncompromising support for Solidarity. They placed flowers at the gravestone; as they turned to leave, a church caretaker approached. "You should know something," he said. "At each mass during martial law, Father Popieluszko included the name of Lane Kirkland in his prayers."

"I could not reply," Kirkland wrote later. "On Judgment Day, I would be willing to settle for that account in my book of life."[26] □

(References on page 42)

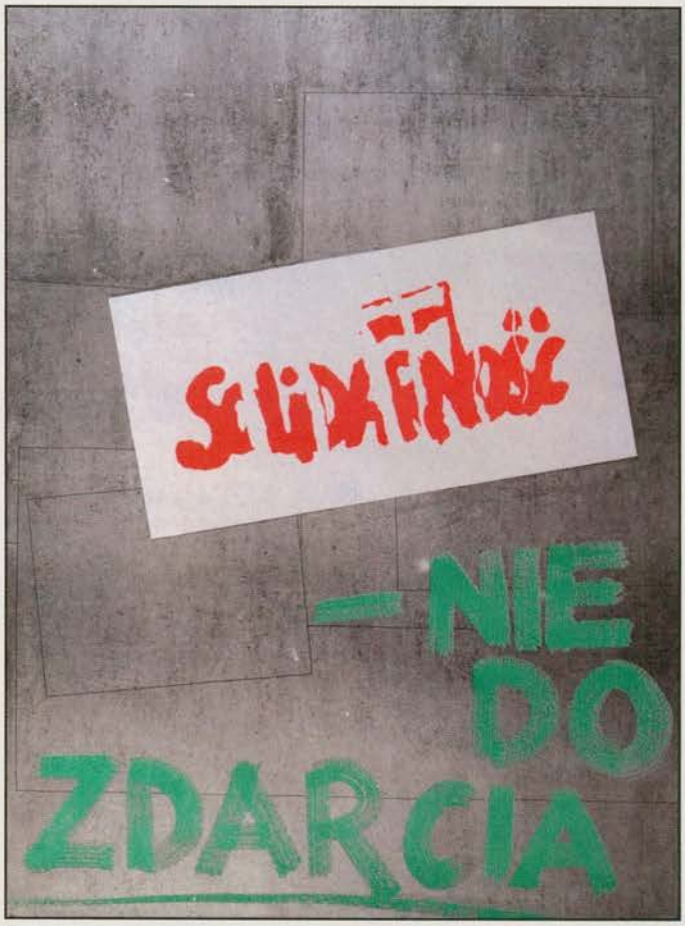
In November 1989, Lech Walesa attended the AFL-CIO's Convention and (above) joined hands in celebration with Lane Kirkland and leaders of other worker movements from South Africa, Hungary, Lithuania, Chile, and Hong Kong. A shrine (right) was created for Father Jerzy Popieluszko, "Solidarity's priest," who was brutally murdered in 1984 by secret police. Father Popieluszko included Lane Kirkland in his prayers at each mass during martial law.

Vote Solidarity

The Election Art of 1989

Polish poster art was renowned during the Communist period for its subtle (and not so subtle) political messages. As Frank Fox, a professor of Eastern European history wrote, "Polish poster artists have always been adept at the use of symbols. Indeed, this has been one of the most important weapons of an artist in a society where words have been suspect...." When Solidarity became a mass movement in 1980, these artists enthusiastically produced moving images that openly defied the government, such as the Solidarity heartbeat shown throughout these articles (and shown in full on page 8). Following the roundtable negotiations after which the government lifted the ban on Solidarity and permitted partially-free elections to be held on June 4, 1989, Polish poster artists covered the cities in pro-Solidarity colors, themes, and messages as part of a coordinated campaign aimed at voter turnout and demanding greater political gains. When the elections were held, the landslide victory for Solidarity—its candidates won all but one contested seat by mostly huge margins—stunned the Communist authorities. Ultimately, Solidarity's election victory led to the government's collapse and the formation of the first non-Communist government in post-war Polish history. These events in Poland led to the end of Communist government throughout Europe and the Soviet Union.

—*EDITORS*



Children supporting elections were frequent themes, as in the poster (top left) that reads, "So That Tomorrow the Future Will Be Proud of Us. Vote June 4!" and the one below it in which children hang a poster that reads, "Vote for Solidarity." The poster (above right) with the darker imagery reads, "Solidarity Cannot Be Erased." The most famous and widely used election poster, though, had an American theme. Featuring the image of Gary Cooper as the sheriff in High Noon *carrying a ballot instead of a gun (right), the poster reads: "It's high noon, June 4, 1989."*

Solidarność®

W SAMO POŁUDNIE
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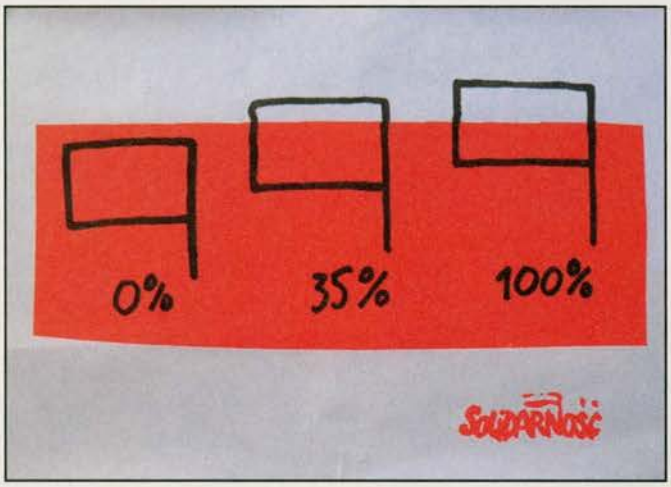
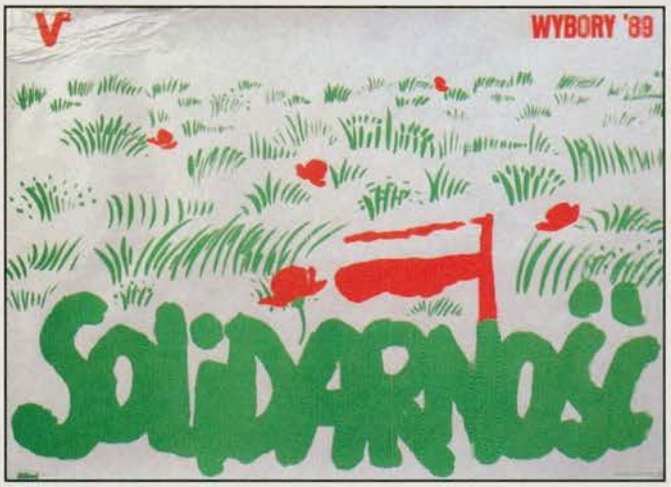
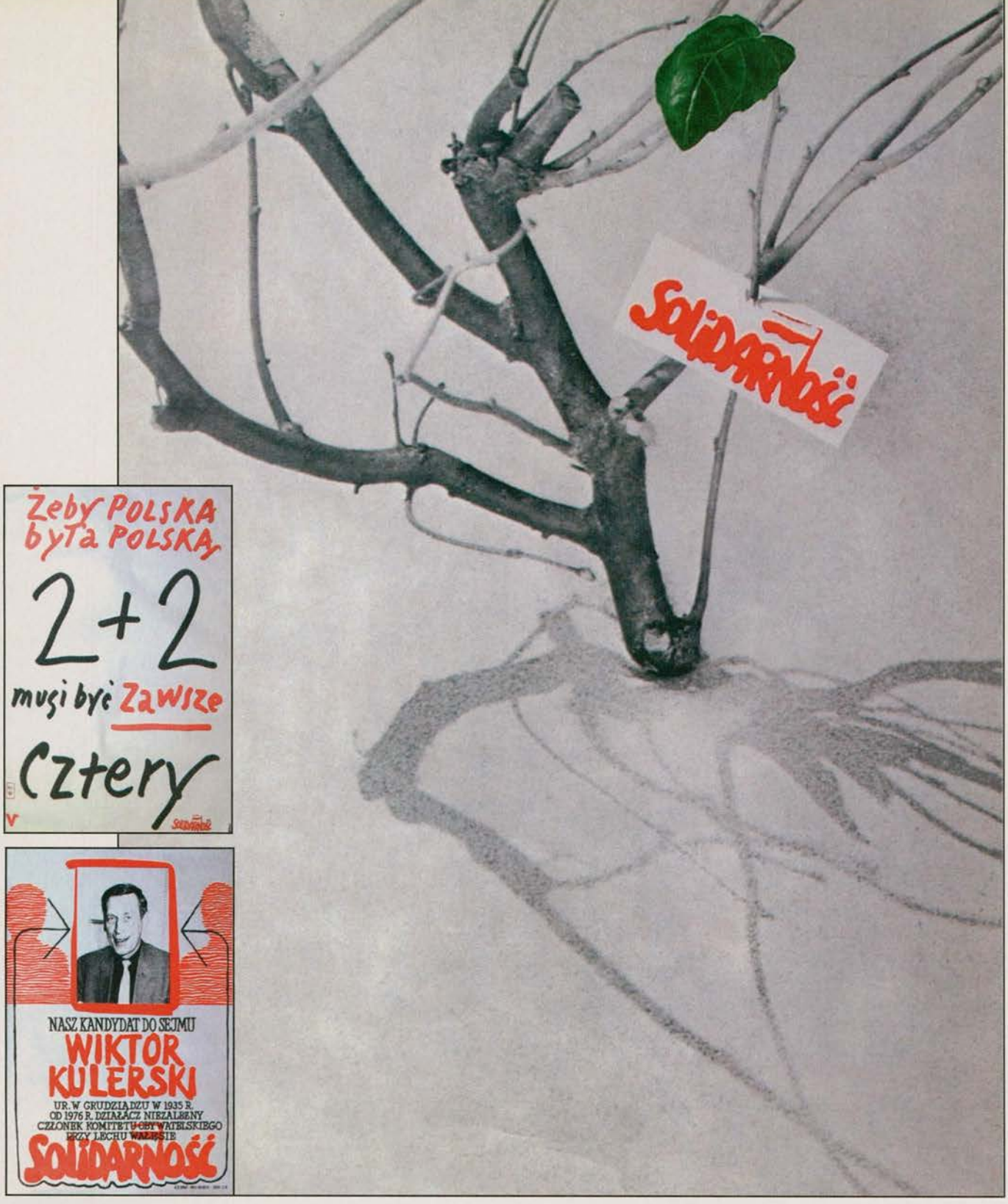




Once the ban on Solidarity was lifted, the most immediate task for the union was to organize for the partially-free elections to be held on June 4. The agreement in 1989 allowed for 35 percent of the seats in Parliament and all 100 seats of a newly created Senate to be contested. The poster of three flags with percentages (top left) shows the agreed upon progression from zero representation in the current Parliament, to 35 percent representation in the post-election Parliament, and to 100 percent representation in the new Senate. Only the 100 percent flag accurately portrays the white and red Polish flag. Posters using flowers as symbols of rebirth were common. One (above center) simply shows a field of flowers with the V for Victory symbol and "Elections '89." Above it, the window with an emerging sun and flower bed poster reads "Elect a Free Poland: Vote for Jan Jozef Lipski"; Lipski was one of the principal founders of the Workers Defense Committee in 1976. The poster shown on the opposite page (inset top) reads, "Let Poland Be Poland" and then "2 + 2 must always equal four." This became a common election theme because of the famous joke in which a teacher asks,



"What is 2+2?" and the children's correct answer is, "Whatever the Communist party says it is." The poster with the mass of people (far left, bottom) says "Vote with Us." In the spring and summer of 1989, many international artists visited Poland to support the democratic changes, among them Joan Baez, who sang at the Ursus Tractor Factory on June 7, 1989 (opposite, lower right). The most common poster was a standard individual candidate poster (above, bottom inset), which always included basic autobiographical information. Wiktor Kulerski, a former teacher, was an underground Solidarity leader who escaped arrest during the entire period of martial law and headed the underground's education, culture, and science committee. One of the most dramatic (above) shows the re-emergence of Solidarity from the permafrost of martial law's winter.

American Educator thanks Eric Chenoweth, co-director of the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe, for his research, editorial, and curatorial contributions to the photographic timeline and this poster display.

Season of Inequality

Exploring the Summer Activity Gap

By Tiffani Chin and Meredith Phillips

We had sleep-away camp for two weeks—that was so great [to have the boys away]. Then Vacation Bible School for a week. Then I think we had a free week. This week, they had Boy Scout Camp and swimming lessons—next week, just swimming lessons. Then, after their grandparents come, they have Science Camp for a week. Then we all go to Hawaii for two weeks.

—Janice, a middle-class mother, explaining her children's summer

Janelle spends the day at her dad's house while her mom is at work. I ask her what she does there and she tells me in a timeline manner. She says she goes there in the morning and eats breakfast, like cereal. She takes off the "pillow" from the parakeet cage to wake up the parakeet and also feeds the dog sometimes. She plays mostly with her 14-year-old cousin. They go outside, do cartwheels or play on the scooter, then come back inside and watch music videos on the The Box channel. Because her cable's been cut off for the last two weeks, she watches shows like Boy Meets World, The Simpsons, Blind Date, Baby Blues, Drew Carey Show, Family Guy, *and* Sabrina the Teenage Witch.

—Fieldnotes from a visit with Janelle, a working-class fourth-grader

For kids, summer means freedom—freedom from teachers, homework, and report cards. But for many parents, that freedom—freedom from reliable daycare and a set curriculum—is a mixed blessing. As the anecdotes above suggest, children's summers vary dramatically. While some parents manage to provide their children with art and music lessons, athletic camps, and academic enrichment—all in three short months—others struggle just to pull their children away from the television. Five years ago, we designed a research project in response to literature on "summer loss." This research shows that while most children learn at about the same pace during the school year, poor children tend to fall behind academically during the summer months. In terms of grade-level equivalents, the reading gap between low- and middle-income children widens by more than three months.[1] (For more information, see "Keep the Faucet Flowing" in the Fall 2001 issue of *American Educator*, online at **www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/fall2001/faucet.html**.) Although this research shows that disadvantaged children are less likely than their middle-class peers to read over the summer, go on vacations, go to summer camp, or get music and art lessons, researchers have not been able to determine exactly why poor children fall behind their middle-class peers.

We studied the summer activities of 32 Southern Californian children who had just completed fourth grade to investigate how and why students from different social class backgrounds had disparate summer experiences.[2] We found that differences in children's summer experiences resulted largely from differences in their families' financial resources, knowledge, and time—but not from a lesser desire to expose their children to enriching educational experiences. We also found that some of the most egregious summer inequalities were not explicitly academic. Rather, poor children were most disadvantaged in terms of their opportunities to develop their artistic, musical, and athletic talents and to experience new environments. (Of course, these types of disadvantages probably lead to academic disadvantages later in life because enriching experiences give children a broader base of knowledge to draw from as they confront new challenges in school.) For more information, see "Reading Com-

Tiffani Chin is executive director of EdBoost Education Corporation, a nonprofit organization in Los Angeles that offers tutoring, test-preparation, homework help, and enrichment classes. Meredith Phillips is assistant professor of public policy and sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. *This article is based on a longer version that appeared in* Sociology of Education, *Vol. 77 (July 2004) entitled "Social Reproduction and Child-Rearing Practices: Social Class, Children's Agency, and the Summer Activity Gap."*

ILLUSTRATED BY SONJA LAMUT

prehension Requires Knowledge—of Words and the World," in the Spring 2003 issue of *American Educator,* online at **www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/spring2003/index.html**.

We interviewed and observed students[3] who attended a diverse urban school that enrolls children from two adjacent neighborhoods: an upper-middle-class neighborhood (with expensive homes and well-groomed yards) and a lower- to working-class neighborhood (with apartments and commercial buildings). Twenty-eight percent of the children in our study are white, 13 percent are Asian American, 25 percent are African American, and 34 percent are Latino. Half of our sample is eligible for free/reduced-priced lunch. Of these, about 20 percent are poor, with incomes below the poverty line, and the rest come from working-class families. The other half of our students come from middle-class families (in which at least one parent has a four-year college degree or a professional job). This group contains nearly equal numbers of lower-middle-, middle-, and upper-middle-class families. Many local camps and instructors cater to the upper-middle-class families, often pricing their services out of reach for even the typical middle-class family.

The fieldworkers on our research team observed all of the children at least twice over the summer (between two and 12 hours each time) and observed a third of them more than five times. Fieldworkers observed each child at least once at home and once during an "activity," (including day camp, summer school, athletic competitions, play dates, and family outings). When fieldworkers attended schools and camps, they stayed for an entire day's session. When they observed the children, they asked the kids to "do what you normally do" and, whenever they could, the fieldworkers participated in the children's activities. Fieldworkers even kept Razor Scooters in their cars so that they could ride with the kids. After their observations, fieldworkers recorded information about the children's environments, activities, and behaviors in detailed notes. Near the end of the summer, they interviewed each child and conducted informal interviews with the children's caregivers concerning their summer arrangements for their children.

Constructing a Summer

Like Matthew, whose mother, Janice, described his summer in the quote that opens this article, the upper-middle-class and middle-class children we studied tended to have varied, organized summer experiences. None of the working-class or poor children in our study had summers this full of camps, lessons, vacations, and scheduled "free time." These activities required money, time, and knowledge—and working-class and poor parents tended to have less of all of these resources.

Camp

By necessity, parents with different incomes had different priorities when choosing camps. Most parents sought camps that provided daycare while catering to their children's interests. While wealthier families could pick and choose among camps, less advantaged families often had to compromise to fit their budgets. Many of the boys in our sample attended sports camps. Two middle-class boys spent several weeks at SUPERSports camp, a sports-themed day camp, in which the kids did some coached drills, but mostly played assorted "pick-up" style games. Although the boys enjoyed SUPERSports, other parents sought out even more specialized camps. Tim's middle-class single mother sent him to a general day camp for most of the summer, but also managed four days at the local professional basketball team's camp. Brothers Sean and Kevin, whose mother was a successful artist, attended skill-focused tennis and basketball camps at a local university (C.U.). At almost $600 for each camp (which ran from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.), their mother felt the money was well spent:

> "The C.U. thing was a brand new thing—it was like a tryout to see if they like it or not." I asked about what she liked or disliked about the C.U. camps and she said she liked it because the boys actually *learned* basketball or tennis, and it wasn't just the fooling around like at SUPERSport Camp, like shooting water guns.

Lower-income families often chose free programs for the majority of the summer in order to afford a week or two at a specialized, skill-focused camp. For example, Carlos's working-class parents scrimped to send him to a pricey football camp for two weeks, but he spent the rest of the summer at a free program. However, many poor families needed help in order to attend even relatively low-cost specialized camps. For example, Terah's mother, a single mom who worked as a part-time receptionist, wanted Terah to attend music camp and found one that cost $175. She sought help from her church and ended up paying only $25 for the skill-intensive camp:

> Terah tells me that twice a day she would have guitar lessons, for about an hour each lesson. They worked on songs that they would be playing in the "final concert." She also worked on reading guitar music. They were taught in a group, with individual help if one of the students wasn't following well or someone's guitar needed tuning.

Even when lower-income parents found affordable day camps, they often struggled with the camps' hours (usually 9-3). While many advantaged parents bought "extended care" or took off work early, most poor families could not afford either option. Janelle's mother, a working-class single parent, found it impossible to find an affordable camp that accommodated her work schedule:

> When I ask Janelle's mom what she likes about summer vacation, she says, "I don't." I ask why and she says, "What I don't like is they have a lot of different programs, but the times don't work around the times that you work. So you have to pick 'em up at 3:00. If you're a single parent, and you work from 8 to 5, 9 to 6, it's not—it doesn't work like that.... The times are not convenient for when you actually need the kids there, especially when you don't have anybody to pick your kid up. Coastal [Community College], they had summer school, which was from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. That was the only good program that I could find. And it was academics; it wasn't all [trips to amusement parks]. They had academics. But it was something like $135 a week—and you still had to pay for lunch...."

Janelle's mother tried to find an affordable program with extended hours, but she couldn't. So, Janelle spent most of her summer watching TV, as the opening quote shows.

Janelle's mother tried to find an affordable program with extended hours, but she couldn't. So, Janelle spent most of her summer watching TV.

Lessons and Activities

In addition to camps, many wealthier families filled their children's summers with lessons and enrichment activities. For example, Sean and Kevin's mother (the successful artist) said that sending her kids to GOALS (an enrichment center with computer-based lessons) was "all I can do" to get her kids to do school-related activities over the summer:

> Sean said, "We go to this place called GOALS, right. And we went with Terah once.... There's a reading adventure where there's this little robot guy, and he tells you the story you're gonna do. And then you will get to a story, then after you read it, it would ask questions about it, what happened in the story. So, we kinda read a lot." I ask how often they go to GOALS, and Kevin says they went probably twice a week. Sean disagrees and says that they probably went four to six times this summer. Sean says that if they go to GOALS eight times, then they'll get a prize from their mom—something under $30. They both said they enjoy it and that it's fun.

While Sean and Kevin's mother had the resources to make even academic practice fun, lower-income parents struggled to provide the types of enriching activities that middle-income families took for granted. Just as many poor families used their social networks to obtain discounts at camps, they also used social networks to obtain lessons. Terah got guitar lessons from her pastor (and a ride to the lessons from a family friend). Likewise, Manuel, one of the poorest students in our sample, got electric guitar lessons (and a guitar to borrow) from friends at church. Some families even used fieldworkers to gain access to activities. Kiran's mother, a recent immigrant whose family survived on her husband's busboy salary, asked us to come for an observation on a specific day at a specific time. When the fieldworker arrived, Kiran's mother (who didn't drive) asked the fieldworker to take the family to a free art lesson at the library.

Vacation

Parents' budgets and schedules largely determined the extent of their family vacations. The typical vacation involved visiting family around the U.S. On the way, most parents tried to visit a cultural, historical, or scientific site (students visited places ranging from Niagara Falls to the Grand Canyon). The most elite vacation we heard about was Rachel's trip to Italy. Rachel wrote about Rome in her scrapbook:

> Rome-Roma. Today I went to the coliseum. That's where people and lions fought against each other. There were fake gladiators hanging around the ruins.... Then we saw the brand new Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel. The paintings and carvings were so unbelievable. We went to dinner with a really nice lady from Sydney named Daniella. I bought a necklace. I stayed at the Summit. I gave it a 4 (1-5). I had a great first day.

Jaycee and her parents, who worked as school custodians, also spend several weeks traveling over the summer. They drove cross-country to a family reunion, stopping at historical sites along the way. Judging from Jaycee's description, her trip rivaled Rachel's, at least in terms of its significance to a 10-year-old:

> When I was in Tennessee, I saw the place where Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated—and it's EXACTLY the same! They haven't changed anything, the pillow—even the TV is on and they don't turn it off! And I said, 'What if the battery goes out?' and they were like, 'That does not happen.' And we went to Elvis [sic] house... and our tour guide was this guy who was 82 years old and he knew Elvis, they rode his horses together....

Although most families tried to include an "educational" component in their vacations, not all families made this a priority. For example, when Tammy, one of our poorest children, went to Las Vegas with her mother, she spent the whole time in the hotel room watching TV with her cousins. Similarly, when Kendra's lower-middle-class mother took her to Vegas, she enrolled Kendra in a program for kids that "keeps them safe while their parents are gambling." And even when Justin's upper-middle-class family took a trip to Utah, his two weeks of swimming and riding dirt bikes with his cousins were not paired with an educational activity.

Home Environment

All children spent some of their summer at home, where almost all of the middle-class children had easy access to books, educational games, and computers. Poorer children had substantially fewer educational materials. However, poor kids who really enjoyed reading (and were good readers) found ways to read even if they did not have a lot of books at home. For example, Brian sent his mother, who worked full-time waiting tables, all over town to find a copy of the newest, sold-out, *Harry Potter*. Brian also enjoyed a windfall when he came across a box of library discards on the street, lugged them home, and worked his way through them all summer. But some of the lower-income children were neither so lucky nor so motivated. For example, Jaycee's working-class family had almost no books in its apartment and she spent most of the summer flipping through a book of aromatherapy recipes that she called "spells."

(Continued on page 28)

The Opportunity Gap—A National Problem

Tiffani Chin and Meredith Phillips followed a small group of children all summer and, based on that, present a vivid picture of the disparities in summer opportunities between lower- and higher-income children. Are their findings relevant to communities across the country? Two nationally representative surveys of children and parents regarding out-of-school time by Public Agenda indicate that they are: While the majority of higher-income parents are happy with their children's opportunities, lower-income parents are struggling to patch together activities. Here are some of Public Agenda's key findings.

—EDITORS

There is compelling evidence that organized, structured activities during the out-of-school hours play a valuable and a highly valued role in the lives of our nation's young people, but low-income and minority families are far more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality, affordability, and availability of options in their communities.

These are just two among many important findings in *All Work and No Play? Listening to What Kids and Parents Really Want from Out-of-School Time*, a joint project of The Wallace Foundation and Public Agenda that explores how young people spend time when they're not in school and what youngsters and their parents want from out-of-school-time activities. The study is based primarily on two national random sample surveys conducted in June 2004, one with 609 middle and high school students and another with 1,003 parents of school-age children.

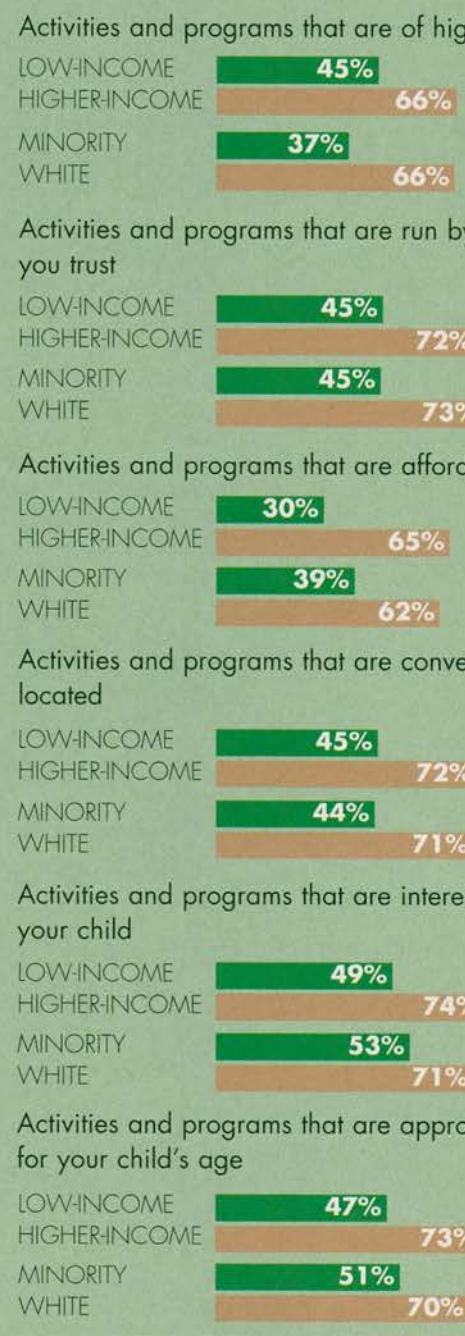
The study provides a wealth of information about the very real challenges faced by low-income and minority families when it comes to finding productive things for their children to do when they aren't in school. Viewing the data through the lenses of income and race reveals a story of the haves versus the have-nots—a story of too many families under real pressure and not getting the kinds of out-of-school opportunities that could genuinely help their children thrive. Whether or not parents or students are generally happy with their options is strongly influenced by these demographic characteristics. Here are some of the key findings on the challenges that low-income and minority families face.

Whether it's quality, affordability, or availability, it's harder to find if you are a low-income or minority parent.[1] Figure 1 shows both groups are considerably less likely to say:

- It's easy to find things that are affordable.
- It's easy to find things that are run by trustworthy adults.
- It's easy to find things that are conveniently located.
- It's easy to find things that are of high quality.

Figure 1
Quality Programs Hard to Come By

Percentage of parents who say it is "very easy" or "somewhat easy" to find:



■ It's easy to find things that are age appropriate.

■ It's easy to find things that are interesting to their child.

Concerns about negative societal influences preying on children are magnified among low-income and minority parents.

■ 39 percent of low-income parents say the best reason for children to be involved in organized activities and programs in their non-school hours is to keep them busy and out of trouble versus 23 percent of higher-income parents (minority versus white: 35 percent versus 25 percent).

The majority of parents—regardless of income or race—say the summer stands out as the most difficult time to find productive things for kids to do, but keeping youngsters busy during the summer is especially tough for low-income and minority parents. As Figure 2 shows, they are more likely to say:

■ Their kids "really don't have enough good options" for things to do during the summer months.

■ They are concerned that they won't be able to afford things their child would want to do during the summer.

■ They are concerned that their child will be bored during the summer.

■ They are concerned that there will not be enough options to capture their child's interest during the summer.

■ They are concerned that they will have trouble finding childcare during the summer.

By extremely wide margins, low-income and minority parents are considerably more likely to want activities and programs that emphasize academic learning. Both groups are more likely to say:

■ Their child needs extra help in school (low versus higher income: 67 percent versus 44 percent; minority versus white: 61 percent versus 45 percent).

■ They are concerned their child will fall behind on academics during the summer months (low versus higher income: 60 percent versus 32 percent; minority versus white: 56 percent versus 33 percent).

■ The best match for their own child would be an activity or program that focused on "providing extra academic preparation and skills" rather than sports or the arts (low versus higher income: 39 percent versus 35 percent[2]; minority versus white: 56 percent versus 32 percent).

Activities and programs that focus on learning appeal to low-income and minority students disproportionately. These students are more likely to say:

■ They would be interested in a summer program that helped kids keep up with schoolwork or prepare for the next grade (low versus higher income: 69 percent versus 51 percent; minority versus white: 79 percent versus 49 percent).

■ They would "very much" like an after-school program that focuses mainly on academic preparation (low versus higher income: 39 percent versus 24 percent; minority versus white: 45 percent versus 23 percent).

Endnotes

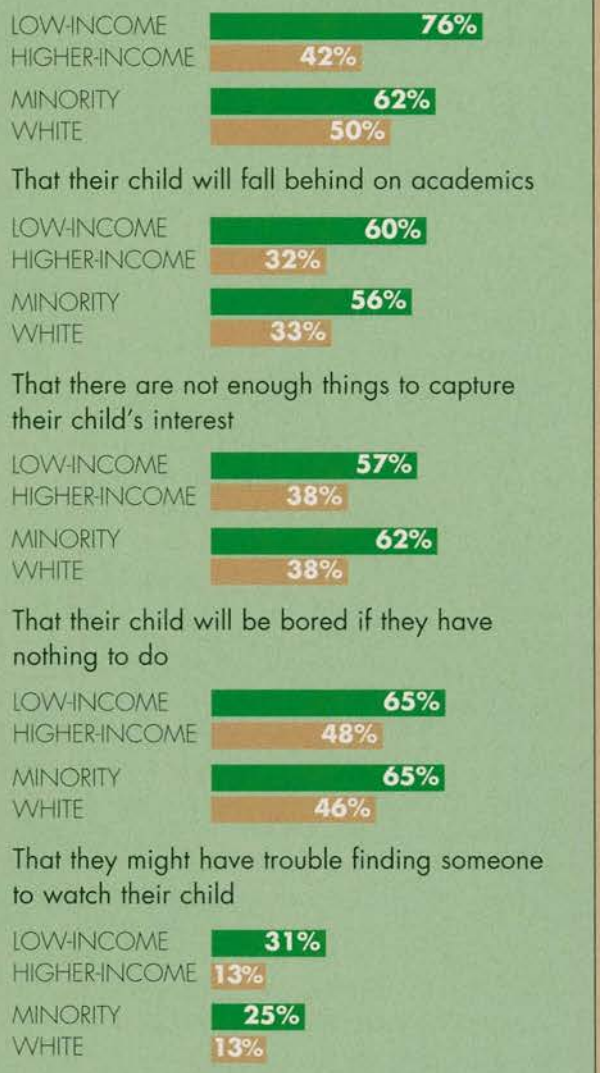
[1] Low-income parents reported annual household income of less than $25,000 per year; higher-income parents reported $50,000 or more. Minority parents include those who identify as either African American or Hispanic.

[2] This difference is not statistically significant.

Excerpted with permission of Public Agenda.

Figure 2
Summer Months Especially Worrisome

Percentage of parents who are concerned about each of the following when they think about their child's summer:



(Continued from page 25)

Most of the parents in our sample encouraged their children to do some academic activities over the summer. However, middle-class parents seemed to have more success at coaxing their children into doing academics, partly because they had the resources to arrange fun "academic" activities like book clubs and partly because they knew more about their children's academic capabilities. For example, Matthew's mother, who worked part-time as a consultant, said that she and Matthew read the fourth *Harry Potter* together because it helped Matthew understand the plot. Poorer parents, like Theresa's mother, a high school dropout who had just finished her GED, were less well informed:

> Theresa's mother complained that Theresa did not read enough. Theresa bent her head down shyly [and said], "I do read!" and her mom said, "You do not! We spent $45 on those *Harry Potter* books because you promised to read them, and you haven't read them at all!"

Theresa's mother did not realize that the *Harry Potter* books were too difficult for Theresa, so she ended up resenting her investment in the books. She was not alone. While many lower-income parents invested in books and workbooks, and pushed their kids to practice academics, many did not have the time to follow-up or the knowledge to know exactly what help their kids needed. For example, Abel's lower-middle-class mother borrowed a fifth-grade math textbook, but let Abel choose which problems he would work on (and he always chose the easy ones). Jaycee "practiced" her division, but her mother, who did hair at home for extra income, did not notice that she was doing her practice incorrectly. And James's parents, who both cleaned houses for a living and struggled to make ends meet, nagged him to practice his times tables, but did not notice that he was missing two-thirds of the flashcards he needed to practice.

Children's Resources

Although parents tended to organize their children's summers, many of the 10-year-olds in our study had some freedom to create their own stimulation and fun (or to languish in front of the TV, if they so chose). Terah, a lower-income child, provided a quintessential example of a child who helped to construct a good summer for herself:

> It was fun. It was funner than I expected 'cuz all the summers before this, like, they were boring because I didn't know, like, that Mid-City Park has a pool that you can go in for free during the summer. I thought it costed money or something. And I know more, like, friends' phone numbers and addresses or something, so I connected with them this summer.

Terah "connected" a lot. She hung out with Sean and Kevin, upper-middle-income brothers, who taught her the songs they learned in piano lessons and (as Sean mentioned) took

High-Quality Programs Help Bring Greater Equity to the Summer Season

The season of inequality—and the achievement gaps that result—won't be eliminated by summer programs alone. But, academically rigorous and enriching full-day programs that span most of the summer break would make an enormous difference. Low-income children clearly need more opportunities to practice reading, take music and art lessons, visit museums and historical sites, and play sports during the summer.

Unfortunately, summer programs to meet these needs do not exist across the country. Ideally, summer programs should have high-quality academic and enrichment components, be free (or have fees on a sliding scale according to family income), offer transportation, cover the full day so that parents can work full time, and last throughout most of the summer. The ideal program probably doesn't exist, but BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) comes pretty close—read on.

—EDITORS

BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) was founded in 1992 by a group of Black and Latino students at Harvard Law School in response to appeals from parents in surrounding low-income communities. Although it began as an afterschool program, the founders soon saw a need for year-round academic enrichment. The BELL Accelerated Learning Summer Program (BELL Summer) was started in 1996, and both the afterschool and summer programs were expanded to serve nearly 12,000 children throughout Boston, New York City, and the Washington, D.C., area.

BELL Summer is an ambitious and rigorous program for children in grades K-6 who are living in low-income, urban communities and performing below grade level. It is designed to mitigate summer learning loss. All of BELL's scholars, as the children are called, are given the individualized instruction they need in reading and math to experience academic success and realize that they can *become* smart by working hard.

Typically, BELL programs are for children who are performing between six months and two years below grade level. On average, participants have an annual household income of $16,047 (based on a family of three). More than 87 percent of BELL scholars qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. BELL works with elementary schools in low-income neighborhoods to find disadvantaged students who will benefit from its intensive program. Students are recommended by teachers, principals, and parents for academic and/or social support, or are invited to re-enroll because of previous participation. If there are too many applicants, BELL gives priority admission to the most disadvantaged children. The only children that BELL cannot serve are those with extremely severe disabilities. The program is free for low-income families, but it actually costs about $1,000 per

Middle-class parents seemed to have more success at coaxing their children into doing academics, partly because they had the resources to arrange fun "academic" activities.

conjured up challenging activities. Abel and his brother, who stayed with their non-English speaking grandmother over the summer, spent afternoons trying different paper airplane designs and building Lego structures. Abel also spent hours practicing drawing by copying detailed pictures out of a "cross-section" Star Wars book. Likewise, Katie, a creative child from a large, working-class family, spent many of her summer days with a friend, pretending that their scooters were horses and making the scant 100 feet of sidewalk they were allowed to ride on into an imaginary kingdom.

Children's Resistance

Other children resisted their parents' efforts to enrich their summers, especially when the enrichment was academic. For instance, Simon's father, who waited tables full-time while trying to start his own gardening business, proudly told us that he made Simon read every day. Out of his father's earshot, Simon elaborated:

> Simon shows me the book *Earth Explored*, which his dad got him at the mall. He says that his dad makes him read for 10 minutes each day. He smiles, "My dad is always trying to make me study—and I fake it. I just go in here and look at the pictures and listen to the radio."

her to GOALS, their computer-based enrichment center. She also went to concerts and made pottery with college-student neighbors she had befriended.

Even without advantaged friends, many children

student. Costs are covered mainly through grants, donations, and partnerships with corporations.

BELL Summer operates eight hours per day (8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.), five days per week for six weeks. Monday through Thursday mornings are reserved for academics, with classes of no more than 15 scholars per certified teacher. Teachers are purposeful and explicit in instructing scholars according to their needs, using school-year teachers' assessments, diagnostic tests, and weekly curriculum-based assessments. During the afternoons, scholars participate in structured enrichment activities led by specialty instructors. Fridays are devoted to fun, enriching activities that serve to attract and retain students and provide opportunities for social development. Teachers' assistants (trained college and graduate students) support both the academic and enrichment activities and remain with the same group of scholars throughout the program. This continuity allows BELL to maintain a staff-to-student ratio of 1:8. Two healthy meals are served each day, transportation to and from the program site is offered in regions where it is needed, and aftercare is provided (when necessary) until 6:00 P.M. for families that need additional time for pickup. In addition, BELL Summer teachers and teachers' assistants participate in four full days of training in which they work together as a team while they learn the program's curriculum and philosophy.

BELL provides a series of opportunities for parental involvement throughout the summer, beginning with a mandatory parent orientation that emphasizes the value of summer programming and offers ways to support learning at home. During the program, parents receive an introductory phone call from their child's teacher, two progress reports, and a formal opportunity to conference with teachers and program administrators. BELL parents are encouraged to read nightly with their children and review and sign Reading Logs. Parents also volunteer to chaperone field trips, facilitate special events, and be lunch monitors.

Stanford Diagnostic Reading and Math tests are administered to scholars during the first and last week of the program to measure scholars' academic gains. In 2004, BELL's internal evaluation found that scholars made statistically and educationally significant gains in reading and math. In terms of grade-level equivalents, on average, scholars began the program 1.2 years behind in reading and eight months behind in math. In just six weeks, they gained five months' worth of reading skills and seven months' worth of math skills.

An independent evaluation of the 2004 and 2005 summer programs is being conducted by the Urban Institute. This study is the first to use an experimental design to evaluate a multi-site summer program. In addition to assessing academic achievement during the program, it will also measure student achievement in the spring of the following year to determine if there are benefits that emerge during the school year, as well as attempt to follow children to adulthood to assess the lasting impact on children's life opportunities. Initial results will be released early in 2006.

—*Tiffany Cooper*

Tiffany Cooper is director of education and evaluation for BELL. To learn more about BELL, visit ***www.bellboston.org****.*

Likewise, when Justin's upper-middle-class mother did not lean on him, Justin neglected his workbooks:

> [Justin's mother] bought him workbooks, one for fifth grade and one for sixth grade. She says he started in the middle of one and went as far as he could into grade 6. When she's really on top of things, he'll do it every day. If she doesn't remind him to do it, he won't do it.

Without nagging, few kids chose academic activities. Mikaili, a poor student who lived in a housing project outside of the school's attendance area, was not allowed to leave the house while her mom was at work. She spent hours playing a Barbie computer game, but her brand new African-American history CD-ROM sat, still wrapped in plastic, on the floor.

We found that motivated and unmotivated children came from all social classes, but the wealthier parents we observed seemed best able to notice and overcome their children's resistance. Both David's upper-middle-class father and Simon's working-class father wanted their sons to read—and both found that their efforts failed. But, while Simon got away with pretending (his father confessed, "I can't control what they do when I'm not here"), David's parents enrolled him in a private reading program. Not only was David's summer school expensive, but David's father had to pick him up at 3:00 P.M., something he could do because he worked at home. David's father also took him on outings to push him to expand his horizons:

> The only thing that he [David] does, that he voluntarily does, is play [video games] or play with his army men. And those are the only kinds of things that come from within him—and the Pokémon stuff. But, like, he would never wake up in the morning and say, "Let's go to the science museum." I mean he's glad that he went, but....

Many children were content with video games and TV. For advantaged parents, the cure to this "TV problem" was day camp. For instance, Kelly, a middle-class student whose grandmother subsidized her summer activities, would have loved to stay home and watch TV. But her father enrolled her at pricey Hillside camp. The camp was not particularly challenging, but all campers stayed active, moving through a potpourri of activities: singing and dancing, making lanyard crafts, cooking, playing red rover, and swimming. In contrast, less-advantaged children with similar dispositions, like Janelle, the girl whose mother couldn't find a full-day summer school that had extended hours and was affordable, spent much of their time in front of the TV.

Recommendations

Overall, we found that children's summers varied widely. Free from state-mandated standards and teachers' assignments, families designed their own activities, and their family resources (especially time and money, but also academic and cultural knowledge) played a critical role. Despite their good intentions, many parents, like Janelle's and Simon's, found that they either couldn't afford, or couldn't maintain, the enrichment they wanted to give their kids. And yet, some children and parents built fun and interesting summers out of very little. Parents sometimes found funding and transportation for activities through their extended family and social networks. And children sometimes found their own fun and stimulation—by creating projects, inventing games, and calling friends.

As a society, we currently do very little to build on children's efforts to enrich their own summers. But it wouldn't take much to help children make the most of their own initiative—and perhaps even jump-start those who are a little less motivated. Schools could, for example, send home lists of books that correspond with children's reading levels,[4] worksheets that correspond with children's math skills, and science and history projects that would help kids prepare for the next year's curriculum. (All of these materials would also give parents a springboard to use to help their kids practice schoolwork over the summer.) Schools might also be able to facilitate carpools and daycare exchanges by asking children to exchange phone numbers and summer plans in the spring. Similarly, libraries and schools could collaborate to help set up summer book clubs (i.e., select appropriate books, find a parent or volunteer to host the meetings, encourage children to sign up, and make sure that enough copies of the books are available).

Of course, dramatically reducing summer inequalities will also require giving lower-income families the resources and infrastructure they need to create stimulating summers for their children. Children like Terah shouldn't have to rely on the luck of having well-educated neighbors and generous friends to access music and art lessons, concerts, and academic enrichment. And children like Simon and Janelle should have the opportunity to be pulled from the TV, even if that isn't their first inclination. In our research sample, the typical low-income family understood the value of enriching, educational summer experiences, but lacked the resources to provide those experiences for their children. Although the vast majority of the low-income parents in our study were trying to do what they could to further their children's academic and social development over the summer, they frequently came up short.

Several simple policy ideas emerge from our research. First, we should establish summer programs that are free (or inexpensive), provide transportation, accommodate parents' work schedules, and last for most of the summer. Second, we should ensure that these programs offer the kinds of enriching experiences that middle-income children enjoy, including music, art, and sports lessons; remedial tutoring that addresses children's academic weaknesses as well as enrichment tutoring that builds on their strengths and interests; and trips to museums, the zoo, historical sites, parks, and other fun, educational places. But we worry that creating programs specifically for low-income students will not result in high-quality programs because free camps often pale in comparison to their expensive counterparts. Thus, we highly recommend investing in programs that seek to serve both advantaged and disadvantaged students. Specialized, high-quality programs that provide scholarships to low-income students or use sliding scales to determine fees give poor students access to the exact same programs that their middle-class counterparts enjoy. Helping programs such as these to provide scholarships, transportation, and extended-care

(Continued on page 43)

HOW WE LEARN

ASK THE COGNITIVE SCIENTIST

Do Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Learners Need Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Instruction?

How does the mind work—and especially how does it learn? Teachers' instructional decisions are based on a mix of theories learned in teacher education, trial and error, craft knowledge, and gut instinct. Such gut knowledge often serves us well, but is there anything sturdier to rely on?

Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary field of researchers from psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, philosophy, computer science, and anthropology who seek to understand the mind. In this regular American Educator *column, we consider findings from this field that are strong and clear enough to merit classroom application.*

By Daniel T. Willingham

Question: What does cognitive science tell us about the existence of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners and the best way to teach them?

The idea that people may differ in their ability to learn new material depending on its modality—that is, whether the child hears it, sees it, or touches it—has been tested for over 100 years. And the idea that these differences might prove useful in the classroom has been around for at least 40 years.

What cognitive science has taught us is that *children do differ in their abilities with different modalities, but teaching the child in his best modality doesn't affect his educational achievement.* What does matter is whether the child is taught in the *content's* best modality. All students learn more when content drives the choice of modality. In this column, I will describe some of the research on matching modality strength to the modality of instruction. I will also address why the idea of tailoring instruction to a *student's* best modality is so enduring—despite substantial evidence that it is wrong.

* * *

Discussions of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners[1] are common in educational literature, teacher-preparation programs, and professional development workshops. The theory that students learn more when content is presented in their best modality seems to make sense, seems to be supported by classroom experiences, and offers the hope of maximizing each child's learning by planning different lessons for each type of learner. For example, within one kindergarten class, the auditory learner could listen to stories about different holidays around the world, while the visual learner examined pictures of holiday celebrants, and the kinesthetic learner handled costumes and artifacts associated with the holidays. But is the theory correct? And, whether or not the theory is correct, might it not also be true that *all* of the kindergartners would learn the most about holidays by listening to stories, looking at pictures, *and* handling costumes?

Daniel T. Willingham is professor of cognitive psychology at the University of Virginia and author of Cognition: The Thinking Animal. *His research focuses on the role of consciousness in learning. Readers can pose specific questions to "Ask the Cognitive Scientist,"* American Educator, *555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 or to* **amered@aft.org**. *Future columns will try to address readers' questions.*

ILLUSTRATED BY GUY SCHUM

Before we tackle the research on using modalities to enhance student learning, let's review a few things that cognitive scientists know about modalities.

1. Some memories are stored as visual and auditory representations—but most memories are stored in terms of meaning.

Cognitive psychologists have used formal laboratory tasks to investigate the role of modality in memory. An important finding from that research is that memory is usually stored independent of *any* modality. You typically store memories in terms of meaning—not in terms of whether you saw, heard, or physically interacted with the information. For example, your knowledge that a fire requires oxygen to burn is unlikely to be stored as a visual or an auditory memory. The initial experience by which you learned this fact may have been visual (watching a flame go out under a glass) or auditory (hearing an explanation), but the resulting representation of that knowledge in your mind is neither visual nor auditory.

How did cognitive scientists figure this out? An important clue that memories are stored by their meaning is the types of errors people make on memory tests. People who listen to a story will later confidently "recognize" sentences that never appeared in the story—so long as these new sentences are consistent with the story's meaning (Bransford and Franks, 1971). The same phenomenon is observed with purely visual stimuli. People rapidly lose the memory of the precise images that make up a picture story (e.g., whether a character faced left or right), but they retain the meaning or gist of the story (Gernsbacher, 1985).

These findings do not mean that you *can't* store auditory or visual information. You can, and you do. For example, if I ask you "Which is a darker green: a Christmas tree or a frozen pea?" you'll likely report that you would answer this question by visually imagining the two objects side by side and evaluating which is a darker green. If I ask you whether Bill Clinton or George W. Bush has a deeper voice, you will likely report that you would answer by generating an auditory memory of each.

The mind is capable of storing memories in a number of different formats, and laboratory research indicates that a single experience usually leads to more than one type of representation. When subjects view a picture story, they *do* have a visual representation of what the pictures look like, in addition to the meaning-based representation. They usually don't remember the visual representation for long, however, largely because when they see the pictures, they are thinking about what they mean in order to understand the story. If, in contrast, they were asked to remember visual details of the pictures and to ignore the story they tell, they would have a better memory for the visual details and the meaning-based representation would be worse. (This principle is another example of a generalization made in a previous column: What's stored in memory is what you think about. To read that column, see **www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/summer2003/cogsci.html**.)

2. The different visual, auditory, and meaning-based representations in our minds cannot serve as substitutes for one another.

Our minds have these different types of representations for a reason: Different representations are more or less effective for storing different types of information. Visual representations, for example, are poor for storing meaning because they are often consistent with more than one interpretation: A static image of a car driving on a snowy hill could just as well depict a car struggling up the hill or slipping backwards down the hill. And some concepts do not lend themselves well to pictures: How would one depict "genius" or "democracy" in a picture? On the other hand, the particular shade of green of a frozen pea would be stored visually because the information is inherently visual.

Because these different memory representations store different types of information, you usually cannot use one representation to substitute for another. This point is illustrated in an experiment by Chad Dodson and Arthur Shimamura (2000). They asked subjects to listen to two word lists and to judge whether or not each word on the second list (new words) had appeared on the first list (studied words), as shown below. The interesting twist was that each word on both lists was spoken by either a man (depicted by **boldface**) or a woman (depicted by *italics*). If a word had appeared on both lists, it might be spoken in the same voice ("Window") or in different voices ("Doctor"). The question is whether changing the gender of the voice (and, therefore, the auditory experience) influenced memory for the studied words.

LIST 1	LIST 2
Shell	**Doctor**
Radio	*Fleet*
Doctor	*Midnight*
Table	*Thread*
Window	**Reason**
	Window

Dodson and Shimamura found that whether the gender of the voice repeated or switched made no difference at all in remembering the word (75 percent versus 73 percent accu-

[1] The notion of kinesthetic learners is a big part of modality theory. However, this article will focus on the other two modalities because what's commonly considered a "kinesthetic learning experience" is almost always a misnomer. Kinesthetic information comes from the joints and muscles and tells the brain about the location of body parts. Kinesthetic learning is the process of making movements automatic; it's the type of learning you do as you slowly master typing, riding a bike, or mincing garlic. In the classroom, a "kinesthetic learning experience" is usually taken to mean any activity that involves movement, e.g., dissecting a worm or using blocks to explore fractions. But the learning that comes from these activities almost always goes along with changes in mental activity—the learning is not really part of the kinesthetic experience. For example, if I handle a Greek costume (rather than watch you handle it), I am the one who decides which part of it to explore, whether or not to try it on, and so on. True kinesthetic learning experiences, like practicing handwriting, do not make up much of the curriculum. To avoid continual qualifications about what is or is not a true kinesthetic learning experience, I will refer mainly to visual and auditory modalities. The conclusions drawn also apply to kinesthetic learning experiences.

racy). That is, subjects were just as likely to remember "Doctor" as "Window." But when subjects judged that a word was on the first list, they also had to say whether a man or woman had said it. For this judgment, subjects were more accurate if the same gender voice spoke the word on the first and the second list (57 percent) than if the voice switched genders (39 percent). This experiment indicates that subjects do store auditory information, but it only helps them remember the part of the memory that is auditory—the sound of the voice—and not the word itself, which is stored in terms of its meaning.

3. Children probably do differ in how good their visual and auditory memories are, but in most situations, it makes little difference in the classroom.

Let's return to classroom education. We've said that some memories are stored visually, some auditorily, and some in terms of meaning. And it's likely that some students should have a relatively better visual memory or auditory memory. Shouldn't that mean that some students will more easily remember material that is presented in their stronger modality? It does, but what advantage would this superior memory provide for the student in a classroom? Teachers almost al-

How Has Modality Theory Been Tested?

The most comprehensive review of studies testing the effect of matching modality of instruction with students' modality preference was a meta-analysis conducted by Kenneth Kavale and Stephen Forness (1987). The study (see p. 34 of the main article) concluded such instruction produced no educational benefit. Here are three examples of the kinds of studies that were included in the meta-analysis.

In one carefully designed study, Thomas Vandever and Donald Neville (1974) examined the impact of modality on learning to read. To determine students' modality strengths and weaknesses, a teacher presented each student with an auditory, a visual, and a kinesthetic lesson on 12 novel words. In the auditory lesson, the sound of the word was emphasized; in the visual lesson, the shape and length or the word form was emphasized; and in the kinesthetic lesson, the words were traced and silently spoken. After each lesson the student's ability to read the words was tested. If a student had similar scores on the three tests, that student was determined to have no modality-based strength or weakness. But if the student scored much higher or lower on one test than on the other two, that student was categorized as having a strength or weakness in the modality. Of the 282 students tested, 72 showed a strength or weakness in a modality that was extreme enough to continue with the experiment.

The second phase of the study was designed to confirm whether or not these 72 students would benefit from ongoing instruction in their strongest modality. Subjects were assigned to further reading training with novel words using a variety of instructional methods that centered on each student's strong or weak modality. Sessions were 25 minutes, four days a week for six weeks. Students' ability to read the words was tested weekly. The data showed that the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods of instruction were equally effective, and that teaching to a student's modality strength or weakness made no difference.

Similar results were found in a study that tested the use of modalities to teach vocabulary (Ringler and Smith, 1973). One hundred twenty-eight students were classified according to their best modality and then taught new vocabulary words with instructional materials that were visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or combined (meaning all three modalities were used). The students were grouped for instruction such that each type of learner was represented in each type of instructional group. That way, the researchers could see if, for example, the visual learners did better in the visual instruction group than in the auditory instruction group. The results showed that the children did learn the new vocabulary—but the instructional modality made no difference at all.

A third study on the influence of modality preference on lesson comprehension also found similar results (Newcomer and Goodmnan, 1975). The researchers tested 167 fourth-graders on a battery of auditory and visual tests. In order to give modality theory the best chance of working, they selected 57 students who showed a relatively large difference on the auditory and visual tests. These students were then exposed to six brief lessons on new concepts. Each lesson was introduced with a theme (e.g., "The Solar System") and consisted of five related facts (e.g., the position of the planets, the function of the sun, etc.). Half of the lessons were presented via brief descriptions (auditorily) and half were presented pictorially, with printed captions (visually). Immediately after the lesson, students' comprehension and retention were tested. While 18 statements relating to the lesson were being read aloud by the experimenter, students silently read along and circled the ideas that had been presented in the lesson. The results showed that the "auditory" and "visual" learners showed no advantage when a lesson was presented in their preferred modality, compared to when it was not.

—D.W.

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ways want students to remember what things mean, not what they look like or sound like. For the vast majority of education, vision and audition are usually just vehicles that carry the important information teachers want students to learn. There are some limited types of materials for which an exact visual or auditory representation is helpful. The child with a good visual memory might have an edge over his peers in learning the location of capitals on a map of Europe, for example. That task is inherently visual. The child with a good auditory memory might learn the correct accent for a foreign language more quickly. (And the child with a good kinesthetic memory may have an edge in sports, handwriting, or painting.) But most of what we want children to learn is based on meaning, so their superior memory in a specific modality doesn't give them an advantage just because material is presented in their preferred modality. Whether information is presented auditorily or visually, the student must extract and store its meaning.

What does the research say about teaching to a child's strongest modality?

Because the vast majority of educational content is stored in terms of meaning and does not rely on visual, auditory, or kinesthetic memory, it is not surprising that researchers have found very little support for the idea that offering instruction in a child's best modality will have a positive effect on his learning. A few studies show a positive effect of accounting for students' best modality, but many studies show no effect (Kampwirth and Bates, 1980; Arter and Jenkins, 1979). The most comprehensive review was conducted by Kenneth Kavale and Steven Forness (1987); it is especially relevant for teachers because it includes many studies that tested the effectiveness of specific instructional approaches (as opposed to laboratory-based exercises). Kavale and Forness analyzed 39 studies using a technique called meta-analysis, which allows the combination of data from different studies. By combining many studies into a single statistical analysis, the researchers have greater power to detect a small effect, if one exists.

The initial results indicated that teaching in the child's best modality might have a small impact on learning, but closer inspection of the studies qualified that conclusion. The studies showing the largest effects had methodological problems. For example, a common error in studies of modality is a failure to ensure that the lesson plans and materials are equivalent in every way except modality (since that is the only way to be sure that any effect found is due to modality). Some studies have used materials specially-prepared for the visual and auditory conditions and then compared those to "regular teaching materials." It is possible that

The *Content's* Best Modality Is Key

The research presented in this article boils down to this: Modality of instruction is important, but it is equally important for all students—not more or less important depending on students' modality preference. There are several important implications for educators. First, teachers need not worry about differences between students in terms of modalities; there are not visual or auditory or kinesthetic learners. Indeed, applying this incorrect theory may actually shortchange some students. For example, a teacher introducing the concept of multiplication may show her students three boxes, each containing two marbles, but insist that the "auditory learners" in the class ignore this helpful visual aid, and instead listen to a verbal explanation. Imposing an ineffective explanation on a child because of a supposed modality fit is poor instruction. Second, modality does have an impact on learning, but this impact is the same for all students. Each modality is effective in carrying certain types of information: If it's important that children know what something looks like, sounds like, or feels like, they should experience the object in that modality. Third, as experienced teachers know, a change in modality can provide a welcome change of pace that brings students' attention back to a lesson. Students who have been primarily listening for 20 minutes will be glad to watch a short video. And students who have been watching a demonstration will benefit from solving a problem on their own. Teachers would do well to consider these uses of content-driven modality, and to disregard the idea that instruction needs to be tailored to a child's best modality. Fourth, as most teachers know, creating visual images is a good way to help you remember. (For example, to remember the parts of a perfect flower, you could imagine carefully peeling away the sepals, petals, pistil, and stamens until all that is left is the stem.) But this does not mean that having a good visual memory will improve memory for meaning. It turns out that the quality of the images people create doesn't seem to matter that much. People who report especially vivid images do not seem to be better at visual memory tasks than people who report poor quality images (Dickel and Slak, 1983; Ernest, 1983; Owens and Richardson, 1979). It is the process of creating the images that gives you the memory boost, and the quality of the final image is irrelevant. Moreover, creating visual images is a memory-boosting strategy that helps all people, not only those with a good visual memory.

—D. W.

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the specially prepared materials were more interesting or better organized than the "regular teaching" materials. This type of mistake calls the results into question because no one can tell if the results were caused by the change of modality or by the use of better materials. (The results may demonstrate that children learn more when teachers use better materials.) When Kavale and Forness limited the meta-analysis to studies with few or no such methodological problems, the modality effect disappeared.[2]

Kavale and Forness's meta-analysis provides substantial evidence that tailoring instruction to students' modality is not effective; across these many well-designed studies, such tailoring had no educational effect. But readers should bear in mind that it is impossible to prove a negative: We cannot be certain that modality theory is incorrect because it is always possible that we haven't looked for just the right sort of evidence. An inventive theorist could always create a new version of the theory with predictions that hadn't yet been tested. Nonetheless, the meta-analysis included a large number of studies that tested many different hypotheses (see box on p. 33 for examples).

Although it is technically true that the theory hasn't been (and will never be) disproved, we can say that the possible effects of matching instructional modality to a student's modality strength have been extensively studied and have yielded no positive evidence. If there was an effect of any consequence, it is extremely likely that we would know it by now.

Teachers should focus on the content's best modality—not the student's.

We have seen that the mind uses different representations to store different types of information and that these representations are poor substitutes for one another. That indicates that teachers should indeed think about the modality in which they present material, but their goal should be to find the content's best modality, not to search (in vain) for the students' best modality. If the teacher wants students to learn and remember what something looks like, then the presentation should be visual. For example, if students are to appreciate the appearance of a Mayan pyramid, it would be much more effective to view a picture than to hear a verbal description.

Many topics may call for information in more than one modality. In a unit on the Civil War, in addition to lectures and reading, it might be appropriate to include recordings of martial music used to inspire the troops, visual representations (maps) of battlefields, and perhaps a chance to handle the pack and equipment the troops carried so that students could appreciate their heft. Similarly, if students are to learn the form of an English sonnet, they should hear the stress forms of iambic pentameter, and then see a visual representation of it.

There are other ways in which modality of instruction can influence the effectiveness of a given lesson—but the influence applies to all children (see box, p. 34). Experiences in different modalities simply for the sake of including different modalities should not be the goal. Material should be presented auditorily or visually because the information that the teacher wants students to understand is best conveyed in that modality. There is no benefit to students in teachers' attempting to find auditory presentations of the Mayan pyramids for the students who have good auditory memory. Everyone should see the picture. The important idea from this column is that *modality matters in the same way for all students.*

If modality theory is so wrong, why does it feel so right?

The belief in modality theory is very common among teachers. More than 25 years ago, Arter and Jenkins (1979) reported that more than 90 percent of special education teachers believed it. Today, the prevalence of books describing the theory and lesson plans suggesting ways to implement it suggest that it still enjoys widespread acceptance. Why is the theory so widely accepted if there is no research evidence to support it?

One factor is that it fits with a more general assumption that many teachers hold: There are genuinely important differences among students in how they learn. Modality gives us an easily understood way to think about the differences among children and it offers a hopeful message—a relatively easy adjustment to teaching practice may provide a boost to kids who are struggling. Further, everyone else believes it. Although false, the truth of modality theory has become "common knowledge."

I think that these factors may contribute to the belief, but I also think that most teachers wouldn't believe the theory if it did not seem consistent with their own experience. There are two ways that a teacher might see what looks like evidence for modality theory in the classroom. First, a teacher who believes the theory may interpret ambiguous situations as support for the theory. For example, a teacher might verbally explain to a student—several times—the idea of "borrowing" in subtraction without success. Then the teacher draws a diagram that more explicitly represents that the "3" in the tens place really represents "30." Suddenly, the concept clicks for the student. The teacher thinks "Aha. He's a visual learner. Once I drew the diagram, he understood." But the more likely explanation is that the diagram would

(Continued on page 44)

[2] This meta-analysis was not without controversy. Rita Dunn, who has proposed a theory consistent with modality effects (e.g., Dunn and Dunn, 1992; 1993; Dunn, Dunn and Perrin, 1994) wrote a rather acrimonious criticism of the Kavale and Forness study (Dunn, 1990), to which they replied (Kavale and Forness, 1990). Dunn later published her own meta-analysis (Dunn et al., 1995), which appeared to provide strong support for a large modality effect. Kavale and his colleagues (1998) noted, however, that only one of the studies reviewed had appeared in a peer-reviewed journal. All the others were unpublished doctoral dissertations, and 21 of these were from Dunn's home institution, St. John's University. This is a problem because of *confirmation bias*—a tendency in researchers to unconsciously slant the design of a study and its interpretation to favor the outcome they hope to observe (Wason, 1960; Mahoney and DeMonbreun, 1981). That's why having impartial, expert reviewers is vital to research. Almost none of the studies included in Dunn's meta-analysis underwent scrutiny by outside reviewers, which makes it hard to take seriously.

Tribute: *to Paul Gagnon*

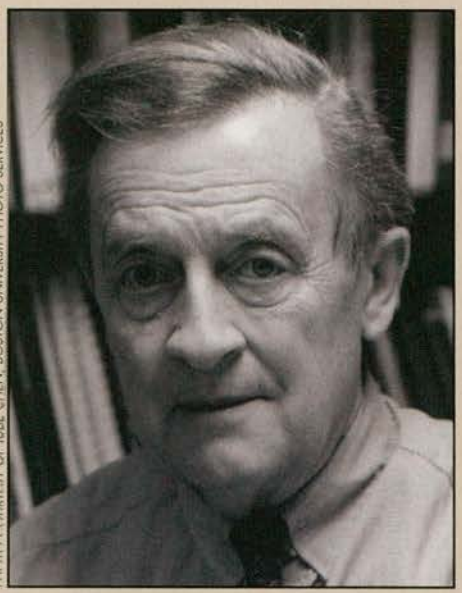

PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIE CHEN, BOSTON UNIVERSITY PHOTO SERVICES

Paul Gagnon, the passionate history educator and great scholar behind much of the AFT's work on education for democracy, passed away in April 2005. Serving in the Navy in WWII sparked Paul's fascination with history: He wanted to know, "What caused the war?" And he wanted everyone else to know, too, so that the same mistakes would not be repeated. Thanks to the GI Bill, he got his Ph.D. from Harvard in history and, by 1952, was teaching European history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Twelve years later he was founding dean of arts and sciences at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. But his drive to bring history to all citizens was not sated.

Upon retiring from the University of Massachusetts, he embarked on a new career that few with his academic distinction have chosen: bringing more—and better—history education to America's K-12 students and teachers. As part of this work, he articulated the role of history as the anchor of reinvigorated civic education and brought together teachers of history, kindergarten through university, to learn and advocate together, as equals.

In his new career, the AFT was lucky. Paul worked closely with us on many projects, beginning with Education For Democracy: A Statement of Principles (1987), *of which he was chief author. Signed by over 100 distinguished Americans, the Statement both signaled and helped bring about a new mood in American education, one that was more sympathetic to explicitly teaching the ideas, history, and values of democracy. Next, he devoted himself to the nitty-gritty: reviewing world history and American history textbooks, evaluating each for its contribution to education for democracy and offering up in each evaluation an understandable account of the ideas he believed should be taught. He went on to serve as principal investigator for the Bradley Commission's report,* Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools, *and helped found and sustain the National Council for History Education, which brought together in a single organization K-12 and university-level history teachers to advocate for history education and work as partners to improve it. He was deeply involved in the debates about history and civic standards and also in the shoulder-to-the-grindstone work of writing and analyzing them.*

When he came on the history education scene in the mid-1980s, just 25 states required secondary students to take at least 2.5 credits in social studies. By 2000, 35 states had such a requirement. For all the kids who will study history as a result, and for all the teachers whose work, commitment, and knowledge he so admired: Thanks, Paul.

Below we share some favorite passages from his many beautiful essays. On the next page, as timely now as then, is his first article written for American Educator, *20 years ago.*

—EDITORS

When students, and school boards, ask, "Why history? What are we supposed to be getting out of this?" The best answer is still that one word: judgment. We demand it of all professionals: doctors, lawyers, chefs, and quarterbacks. And we need it most in the profession of citizen, which, like it or not, exercise it or not, we are all born into. Just as surely, candidates for public office need to know that a fair number of citizens possess judgment.... Judgment implies nothing less than wisdom—an even bigger word—about human nature and society.

—"Why Study History?" November 1988, The Atlantic Monthly

Another reason for the difficulty of civic education, as Alexis de Tocqueville explained in *Democracy in America*, is that most of the important problems for democratic politics are not solvable in any neat or final way. To take his foremost example, democratic people cherish both liberty and equality, both personal freedom and social justice. There is no recipe for just the right blend in a given situation of liberty and equality. The two impulses inevitably collide, yet each is indispensable to the preservation of a bearable level of the other. Civic education teaches the young why this is so—not by some "concept" to be memorized, but by the memorable, sometimes deeply disturbing historical experiences that have convinced us of it....

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Finding Who and Where We Are

Can American History Tell Us?

By Paul Gagnon

A few years ago, David Donald, professor of American history at Harvard, stirred up a little storm on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* by wondering whether his courses were still worth teaching. Students expected, he said, to understand how their American past related to the present and the future. But teaching them the truth as he saw it would only reveal his own sense of "the irrelevance of history and of the bleakness of the new era we are entering." We were no longer "people of plenty," in David Potter's phrase, airily confident of solving every problem by simply cooking up a bigger economic pie. As resources dwindled, the lessons of "incurable optimism" students learned from the American past were "not merely irrelevant but dangerous." Was it not his duty, Donald asked, "to disenthrall them from the spell of history, to help them see the irrelevance of the past?"

Professor Donald was worried for the wrong reasons. American history is not irrelevant or misleading because it is optimistic. Does one nourish optimism by studying the slave trade, the Civil War, the Depression, or Vietnam? It is, however, irrelevant and useless to many people because it is drastically insufficient on its own. We have taken to teaching it by itself, as though it were rooted nowhere, as though the "American past," in which David Donald's students hoped to find understanding of themselves, reached back only to Columbus rather than to Noah and before.

The plain fact is that American history is not intelligible, and we are not intelligible to ourselves without a prior grasp of the life and ideas of the Ancient World, Judaism and Christianity, of Islam and Christendom in the Middle Ages, of Feudalism, of the Renaissance and Reformation, of the English Revolution and the Enlightenment. Contrary to the image we often formed in school, the pilgrims did not sail into view out of the void, their minds as blank as the Atlantic sky, ready to build a new world out of nothing but whatever they could find lying about the ground in eastern Massachusetts. They and all the others who landed in the Western hemisphere were shaped and scarred by tens of centuries of social, literary, political, and religious experience.

Even to begin to comprehend them, and through them to measure ourselves and our institutions, American history is not nearly enough. Ideas of human equality and dignity, of individual moral responsibility, are based on the ancient texts of Judaism and Christianity—as are the debates between individualism and collectivism, between reformism and resignation, between the spiritual and the material. The glory and failure of democracy emerge with the Athenians. Our constitutional ideas go back to Rome, are worked out during the feudal era, find full expression in 17th-century England. Whence the notions of civil rights, of religious tolerance or intolerance, of economic and social justice, of free enterprise and free inquiry, of academic freedom and cultural innovation, of faith in science, reason, and progress? And what battles were won and lost, and why won and why lost, over them all? Those who sailed westward to land here did not in fact try to build a new world at all but struggled to rebuild what they treasured most of their old world in a new setting.

In this perspective, ours is one of the great, multifarious adventures of human history. It can fascinate the young, who need and want to find themselves in time and place, to see where their life histories join the history of the race. Their "American past?" Their blood ran in men and women working the soil of Burgundy and the Ukraine, of China and Africa, before the Normans set out on their conquests. Our ideas of good, evil, honor, and shame weighed upon Jews and Greeks and Christians before the Middle Ages. But we do not want to look back. We do not even look south of the Rio Grande. We prefer the myth of the New World, the U.S. world innocent of the stains of the old or of the rest of the hemisphere, somehow outside of the ordinary human condition. It is our own special sin of pride, shutting out the possibility of comprehending ourselves, much less of understanding others. Its educational consequence has been the shrinking of American history to mean only U.S. history and the nearly total abandonment of Mediterranean, European, and British history, the study of that Western civilization whose ever-shifting ideas and works, both beneficent and destructive, have made us what we are.

What remains in most "American" history courses, though not always so misleading as David Donald feared, is

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Paul Gagnon was professor of modern European history at the University of Massachusetts at Boston and a member of the Paideia Group when he wrote this article for American Educator *in spring 1985.*

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There is no trick to virtuous behavior when things are going well. Most people will hold right attitudes without much formal instruction when they feel themselves free, secure, and justly treated.

The tough part of civic education is to prepare people for bad times. The question is not whether they will remember the right phrases, but whether they will put them into practice when they feel wrongly treated, in fear for their freedom and security. Or when authorities and the well-placed, public or private, appear to flout every value and priority taught in school. The chances for democratic principles to surmount crises depend upon the number of citizens who know how free societies, their own and others, have responded to crises of the past, how they acted to defend themselves, and how they survived. Why did some societies fall and others stand?

—Democracy's Half-Told Story, *1989, AFT*

As the years pass, we become an increasingly diverse people, drawn from many racial, national, linguistic, and religious origins. Our cultural heritage as Americans is as diverse as we are, with multiple sources of vitality and pride. But our political heritage is one—the vision of a common life in liberty, justice, and equality as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution two centuries ago....

Devotion to human dignity and freedom, to equal rights, to social and economic justice, to the rule of law, to civility and truth, to tolerance of diversity, to mutual assistance, to personal and civic responsibility, to self-restraint and self-respect—all these truths must be taught and learned and practiced. They cannot be taken for granted, or regarded as merely one set of options, against which any other may be accepted as equally worthy.

—Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles, *1987, the Education for Democracy Project, a joint effort of the AFT, Freedom House, and the Educational Excellence Network*

Setting the right balance between Western and non-Western studies in the education of American citizens requires more than wearisome assaults on "rootless multiculturalism" or "elitist Eurocentrism." Advocates for "global studies," asking equal time for all world civilizations, forget that the story of democratic institutions—and of their most virulent enemies—until recently has been a largely Western story, and not always pretty or elitist. Advocates for the West alone forget that a great many non-Westerners have treasured and fought for human dignity, freedom, and justice since ancient times. Failing to tell the two stories misprepares Americans of all backgrounds....

To begin with, not much of any story can be told in states holding on to one-year surveys of the worlds' past. But even three years is not enough to teach everything. The case for relative stress on Western history is that America's democratic ideas and practices are rooted in the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman, and Anglo-European past. The significance of Western civilization to Americans of any origin is not that it is "ours" and we "see ourselves" in it. In fact, the peasant ancestors of European-Americans were no closer to high Western thought, culture, or politics than their African, Asian, and pre-Columbian counterparts. Nor can Western civilization be honestly taught as treasure alone, a saga of progress, superior in all ways to the legacies of other civilizations. It has given birth to some of the very best and worst in politics, economics, culture, class, and race relations. It is the legacy we live with every day, genes of the mind inherited just as the body inherits immunity or vulnerability to certain diseases. The West has never had a single "canon," but rather a ceaseless warfare of ideas and ambitions across ethnic, religious, linguistic, social, and cultural divides and limitless economic and political appetites. We study it to know who we are and what to expect from each other, given such a conflicted heritage.

It is not all we need to know. Global educators rightly warn us to study other peoples. The globe is not yet a village, and soon half of us will have non-European roots. Good standards pay attention to each major civilization. The question for teachers is how much attention. What should Americans of any origin know of "others" abroad and arriving? What should Chinese-Americans, African-Americans, and Franco-Americans know, in common, beyond American society and each other's experiences of it? None needs the detail of ancient Chinese dynasties, or African kingdoms, or Merovingians and Carolingians. But they should know the main ideas and experiences of each other's ancestors. They should have an idea of the beauty each people created as well as the oppression they suffered or imposed on others, and their lasting traditions and memories—in short, what we should want other peoples to know of us.

—Educating Democracy, *2003, the Albert Shanker Institute*

The question of which history to teach would ... be less pressing, less divisive, if American schools were to require a substantial history course as the core of the social studies every year beyond the primary grades, in the European style.

—Democracy's Untold Story, *1987, AFT*

Most [vital civics topics] appear in detailed state standards, but are often buried in long, unprioritized lists of topics, subtopics, and skills. Documents show that writers fail to distinguish the important from the unimportant. If they try specifics, they seem unable to stem the flow of endless topics. If they avoid specifics, they turn to sweeping questions whose answers would need at least as many topics. In each case, they propose more than can be taught in the time teachers have. Writers forget a few simple numbers that limit teachers' work: fewer than 180 days a year for instruction; the three purposes of schooling; the eight or so subjects that the three purposes require (arts, civics, English language, math, literature, geography, history, and science—other nations add foreign language)....

If a civic core is to work, two things need doing: Mountains of fact and concept in social studies must somehow be cut to a teachable number of priorities widely agreed upon across states and districts; and state tests must allow choice, especially in essay questions.

—Educating Democracy, *2003, the Albert Shanker Institute*

not nearly enough to tell us who we are, where we came from, why we think the way we do, why others may think differently, and how the world got itself into the present situation. As George Steiner once put it, what passes for education in this country amounts to planned amnesia. Historical studies, apart from whatever can be called the required year of U.S. history—sometimes no more than a few "projects"—have no fixed place in the curriculum. The recent vogue of Global Studies, sometimes in the guise of World History, is of no help, or worse. As ill-defined and superficial as U.S. history is parochial and fragmentary, World History pretends that students can compare their society with others before they know very much about themselves.

We have always talked a great deal about education for citizenship. But we have usually been content with promoting right attitudes, "doing values" out of current events or case studies, rarely out of any systematic historical knowledge of what Western peoples have actually done in the past, so that students might reflect for themselves upon what has been good or bad, foolish or wise. Even less do we offer them the history of ideas, of competing social and political philosophies, out of which the free citizen could work at his own perceptions. We seem unwilling to lay the record open.

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Many of our freshmen arrive at college, after 12 years of school (presumably in the "college track"), knowing nothing of the pre-Plymouth past, including the Bible! All too frequently, they have not heard of Aristotle, Aquinas, Luther, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Burke, or Marx. They often know nothing of the deterioration of Athens and Rome, of Czarist Russia and Weimar Germany, and next to nothing of the history of science, technology, industry, of capitalism and socialism, of fascism and Stalinism, of how we found ourselves in two world wars, or even in Vietnam. They have been asked to read very little and to reflect hardly at all. At 18 or 19, they are unarmed for public discourse, their great energy and idealism at the mercy of pop politics and the seven o'clock news.

Most college curricula offer no rescue. In the modern American university, nobody takes responsibility for what is taught. Faculty members avoid prescribing any subject matter in particular. The participatory democracy of curriculum making somehow always manages to end at the same point: Anything must be declared to be as good as anything else, lest the balance of departmental enrollments (and faculty positions) be disturbed. The arguments are not, of course, so crudely put. We academicians are too skilled at spinning high reasons for low acts. Letting students ignore the events and ideas that have shaped them and their world is called freedom of choice. Amnesia becomes liberation. The notion that freedom can proceed only out of requirements is too deep for us, especially at budget time, and as enrollments fall.

If American education is ever to be made democratic, so that, as deTocqueville said, democracy may be educated, nothing will be more crucial than a common, sequential study of history throughout the elementary and secondary years. Only history, and particularly the history of Western civilization, can begin to help us find who we are and what choices we may have before us. But history is also, in Clifton Fadiman's words, a generative subject, upon which the coherence and usefulness of many other subjects depend. It is essential to a serviceable view of art, architecture, drama, and literature, of the evolution of the natural sciences and social sciences. These are high claims for the uses of history, but they are justified by the aesthetic and intellectual experiences of countless Westerners, stretching back through time from Churchill to Thucydides. And such claims must be kept uppermost in mind, for otherwise it would prove impossible to decide what is most worth teaching out of the enormous mass of historical data facing us.

In making up our syllabi, we have to be brave enough to declare that some things are indeed more important than others. Brave, because we know ahead of time that our selection will be imperfect, subject to attack. We have no choice; time is limited. So we must pose the question and do our best to answer it honestly: What has made us what we are? What have been the truly shaping experiences for the Western, the American mind? It is not a short list: the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, Judaism and Christianity, Feudalism and the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, exploration and capitalism, absolute monarchy, the English Revolution, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Industrial Revolution, Social Revolution, Imperialism, total war, and what we must now call the shrinking planet! Something substantial of all of these great experiences must be taught. Not only a few, but all, or the complexity will be missed and the tremendous drama of our own time will go unperceived.

It will be objected that a focus on the history of Western civilization is not sufficiently "multicultural," that it leaves out much of the past for native Americans, Afro-Americans, and Asian-Americans. The first response is that French public schools, for example, offer *seven* post-elementary years of history, geography, and culture, amply covering every corner of the world. We can learn from our old sister republic, which now graduates as high a proportion of young people from high school as we do—but all from a common track of academic subjects, heavy in history and the humanities. It is their belated way of responding to deTocqueville's plea that equality be ennobled by preparing all for citizenship and personal cultivation, above and beyond any strictly vocational expectations. Shall we strive for less?

The second, more fundamental, response arises from the nature and needs of any society. Whether by past force or recent choice, the people of non-Western origin living in this country are now part of a community whose ideas and institutions, for good and ill, grow out of the Western experience. Whether they seek to enjoy and enrich Western society, or to exploit or even overthrow it, all citizens need to know much more about it than most do now. And there is little hope that mainstream Americans can come to sympathetic understanding of strangers in their midst, or of foreign lands and cultures, without first facing up to the historical record of the best and worst in themselves. It simply makes no sense in our schools to start anywhere but with the Western experience, and to start from the beginning. As Rousseau might say, we all now owe each other a close knowledge of it, as partners in a social contract.

Educating free citizens is the most demanding of all forms of schooling. Freedom requires a level of personal autonomy and dignity that is possible only when mind and spirit are richly nourished, nourished beyond anything needed for the highest careers or professions. Free people need heartening lives after work and beyond politics. Perhaps the greatest contribution of history to personal liberation is its revelation of the countless alternatives people have found for personal fulfillment and social well-being. The history of Western civilization offers an immense range of ideas and ideologies, of ways to organize political, economic, and social life, of paths to personal integrity or salvation, of modes of behavior, of styles of cultural and intellectual creation. Such a sweep of alternatives frees the student from the cacophony of prevailing fads and orthodoxies, from media hype, and from the grip of present-mindedness dear to special pleaders and profit seekers. The personal dignity of free choice can proceed only out of knowledge of the alternatives possible in private and public life, knowledge that only history can provide.

As the Athenians said, whatever is vital to a full personal life is thereby conducive to active, effective citizenship. The politics of self-government is the most difficult of all, the most decisive for the destiny of most people. What can the study of history contribute? For one thing, the habit of thinking critically. History insists upon the difference between fact and wish. Although the same evidence may mean different things to different observers, the evidence cannot be wished away. It is there to be wrestled with, real and immovable, complicating our dreams and preferences. History constantly forces us back to reality, making us skeptical of quick judgments, cheap and easy answers, resounding slogans. It is the natural enemy of frivolity and abstraction, pushing us to demand evidence, to decide for ourselves the meanings of events, the sense or nonsense of ideas and men, to look behind words to reality.

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How do citizens "grow up" and comprehend reality in the human condition? No sensible teacher would claim that maturity is the product of schooling alone. We learn most, of course, from direct experience, in the family, at work, in the street, in struggle, sickness, and loss. But we cannot directly experience everything of significance to the life and work of mankind. Schooling must extend our experience in many directions. Otherwise, we are prisoners of our milieu, ignorant (either in bliss or despair) of untold dimensions and possibilities.

History, together with literature and the arts, extends our experience. To those who decry schooling and book learning as merely secondhand and "unreal," we must respond in two ways. First, whatever lies beyond our immediate experience is no less real for all that. Even a secondhand notion of reality is better than ignorance. Further, it is universally evident that direct and secondhand experience work upon each other to clarify and deepen both. The more we know of life, the better we understand history. The more we know of history, the better we understand life.

As extension of experience, history lets us look at other

people, places, and times—for perspective, the ability to compare ourselves and our problems with them and theirs. Perspective nourishes patience, sympathy, courage—antidotes to anger, envy, and self-pity. Without perspective, how shall democratic citizens respond to leaders who must, in deTocqueville's words, "stand apart from the tendencies of the age and present men, when necessary, with alternative views and values?" All—not only the few—in a democracy must have wisdom about human nature, about people's needs and desires as these are revealed by philosophy and history.

Wisdom is a big word. In what sense is it nurtured by history? Can the study of history through the secondary school actually develop qualities of mind that approach political wisdom? Let us take a few examples. The young surely can learn history's great law of consequence: Whatever is done, or not done, will have its price and will be paid for, perhaps twice over, by somebody (often innocent), sooner or later. That lesson from Thucydides, or from the origins of the War of 1914-18, or from the history of slavery in the U.S., is, moreover, frequently reinforced by hard experience in the playground or on the street.

History also suggests reasonable expectations of life and politics. It repeatedly teaches a dual lesson: the everlasting hardness of most human enterprise and the ever-recurring margin of chance to make things better, just enough to impose on us the duty to persevere. History rejects optimism and pessimism, refuses us the comforts of easy idealism and easy cynicism. Americans have often rushed from liberal crusades to the most churlish, self-centered hopelessness, prey to the disillusion that always follows upon illusion over what it is reasonable to expect from life—the mark of a people unschooled in history.

History proposes a sensible definition of heritage as both the good and the bad imposed upon us by the past. Western civilization is not treasure alone but a mixed legacy of resources and limitations we must understand if our choices are to be made realistically. Heritage is what we have to work with, no more and no less. If we ignore it, we risk the future. If we fail to recognize the origins, the costs and complexity, the fragility of our heritage, we shall—like Ortega's mass man—assume that everything good from the past is somehow given, permanent, free for our instant gratification, requiring nothing in return from us.

History offers no blueprint, no specific solution to particular political problems. One of its lessons is the folly of expecting such. The essence of history is change. Still, it reveals much about human behavior, its possibilities and its limits, what may be expected under certain conditions, the danger signs to be noted, the aspirations to be taken into account, the effects of pride and ideology, the fruits of endurance and attention to detail. It suggests the insights sometimes gained out of failure and the dangerous temptations of success. Again, the lessons do not tell what is certain, only what may sensibly be expected.

In sum, historical study offers the citizen the perspective, the sense of reality and proportion that is the first mark of political wisdom. As James Howard and Thomas Mendenhall say in *Making History Come Alive,* the student comes to see that not every difficulty is a problem and not every problem is a crisis. Restraint and good judgment are the fruits of perspective. Whether difficulty, problem, or crisis, all have their dimensions in time. Too long have Americans debated political choice as though nothing had ever happened before, as though the past had left behind neither lessons nor limits for our choices. The saddest proof that we have failed to take seriously deTocqueville's pleas to educate democracy is our casual, chaotic, and minimal schooling in history.

The study of history does not guarantee either wisdom or courage. There are too many ways to be unwise or defeatist. But its perspectives do inoculate us against some of the lower orders of stupidity, those states of mindless illusion and disillusion that discourage us from working hard at learning anything at all. No other study comes so close to placing us in reality, but it must reach far beyond Professor Donald's history of the United States. We cannot know ourselves without knowing the entire Western past. We cannot know others, or our situation and theirs, without knowing the history of the rest of the world. As long as we deny ourselves a usable past, we shall have nothing to measure ourselves by. Until history, both Western and non-Western, takes its full role in American schools, we shall remain captive to amnesia, disoriented, often depressed and, possibly, as David Donald said, dangerous. □

Contribute to the Paul Gagnon Prize

The National Council for History Education (NCHE) Board of Trustees has established the *Paul Gagnon Memorial Fund* in honor of their fellow trustee who passed away on April 28, 2005. The Fund will support an annual Paul Gagnon Prize to encourage two of Paul's cherished interests: continuing scholarship on the part of K-12 history teachers and the promotion and protection of history education in the K-12 curricula. The first Gagnon Prize will be given for exceptional historical scholarship by a K-12 history teacher. The second will be given to an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to the promotion of history education. Thereafter, the Gagnon Prize will alternate each year between the two types of winners. The first awarding of the Gagnon Prize will be made at the 2007 NCHE conference. NCHE has set aside funds to administer the prize and welcomes contributions from individuals and organizations who wish to honor Paul's memory. To contribute, make checks payable to NCHE and write "Gagnon Prize" on the memo line. Send to: Gagnon Prize, NCHE, 26915 Westwood Rd., B-2, Westlake, OH 44145. Or, to contribute via credit card, call the NCHE office at (440) 835-1776.

Solidarity

(Continued from page 17)

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[20] Author interview with Czeslaw Bielecki.

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[22] Shea and Kienzle, "An Interview with Lane Kirkland."

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[25] Author interview with Andrzej Celinski.

[26] Lane Kirkland memoirs.

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hours could vastly expand the opportunities for low-income students to experience high-quality enrichment over the summer.

Some lower-cost solutions should help as well. Schools should give children access to their computer labs and libraries over the summer, even just one day a week (after all, these resources often sit unused all summer). For students in low-income communities (where parents often don't feel safe letting kids walk very far), we should also bring more resources *to* children, by funding more bookmobiles (and artmobiles and museums-on-wheels). Finally, we should make sure to advertise existing community resources, parks, and summer programs widely—both to parents and students. Children like Terah should know that the community pool is free. □

Endnotes

[1] See Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., and Lindsay, J. (1996), "The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review," *Review of Educational Research* 66:227-268; Entwisle, D.R., Alexander, K.L., Olson, L.S. (1997), *Children, Schools, and Inequality,* Boulder, CO: Westview Press; Heyns, B. (1978), *Summer learning and the effects of schooling,* New York: Academic Press; and Heyns, B. (1987), "Schooling and cognitive development: Is there a season for learning?" *Child Development* 58:1151-1160.

[2] We deliberately chose students from one neighborhood school because we wanted to study children who had similar school-year experiences and lived in the same community. Although our sample allows us to make interesting comparisons, it is important to note that the students who attend this school may differ from students who attend more financially and/or racially homogeneous schools.

[3] We changed the names and identifying features of schools, organizations, and participants to preserve confidentiality.

[4] For example, the California Department of Education Web site provides lists of books for 13 different reading levels and each child in California receives a suggested reading level with his or her standardized test results (**www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp**).

Cognitive Scientist

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have helped *any* student because it is a good way to represent a difficult concept. The teacher interprets the student's success in terms of modality theory because she has been told the theory is correct and because it seems to explain her experience. But cognitive scientists have long known that we all notice and remember examples that confirm our beliefs and, without meaning to, ignore and forget evidence that does not.

Modality theory may also seem correct because, as we have discussed, children probably do differ in their abilities with different types of memories. I remember my daughter commenting (out of the blue, as 4-year-olds will) that her preschool teacher said "white" in a way that made the "h" faintly, but distinctly, audible. I was impressed that she had noticed this difference, remembered it, and could reproduce it. So my daughter may have a good auditory memory, and that might help her in certain tasks, such as remembering regional accents, should she decide to be an actress. It does not mean that I want her teachers to ensure that she receives primarily auditory input in her coursework, because her superior auditory memory will not help her when she needs to remember meaning. But it is easy to see how one might (mistakenly) believe that complex material would be easier for her to master if presented auditorily. Further, as the box on p. 34 indicates, there are various ways in which modality does strengthen instruction (for all kids)—and it's easy to imagine that the effect has to do with a student's modal preference when in fact the effect is due to the content's best modality. □

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