

"Who Made That Decision?"

America is supposed to be a democracy where everyone has a voice in making the vital decisions that affect his life.

In practice, however, there are many institutions that exercise great control over people without ever giving them an opportunity to make their own decisions.

It is a basic assumption in many schools that students are incapable of deciding the best way to get an education, so they are force-fed, loaded down with regulations and required courses, and threatened with expulsion if they object.

Today it is considered more important to have a degree than to have an education. A person's education is not complete until he has a certificate to prove it.

So we have many schools in the country today which are degree-mills rather than educational institutions. In these places students are not encouraged to think for themselves, which is the most lasting value of any education. They are told what is best for them, told what they have to do, and four years in one of these schools could probably assure that one's mind would be closed forever to the possibility of a real education.

Since the Berkeley demonstrations last fall, students all over the country have been demanding more from their schools in the way of education. Student leader Mario Savio at Berkeley complained: "The University is well structured, well tooled, to turn out people with all the sharp edges worn off, the well rounded person." We are told that the world is ours, but we will not be suited for it if our schools merely train us to be well-behaved children.

The value of education through experience is widely recognized today. No one knows the hardships of poverty like the poor. No one knows the evils of segregation like the Negro. And no one knows the problems of education like the student. The problems we face are not statistics in a book, but something real and tangible. We must examine our views, arrive at conclusions from our own experience, and act to better our condition.

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