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A Suggested Approach
for

Teaching about Communism
in The Iowa Public Schools

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FOREWORD

He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion.

On Liberty-John Stuart Mill

This approach for teaching about Communism in the Iowa Public Schools is undertaken to fulfill the charge that the Senate Concurrent Resolution 24 passed by the Sixtieth General Assembly gave to the schools of Iowa.

The approach will be directed to those who teach in the junior and senior high schools but can and should be used in appropriate settings in grades kindergarten through sixth grade.

While this is a fulfillment of a mandate by a state legislature, it does not imply that the doctrinaire approach be used. In the doctrinaire method where particular emphasis is placed upon the dangers of Communism, the ways to fight Communism, the evils of Communism, and the false doctrines of Communism, it could become quite dangerous. Richard I. Miller, Associate Director of the National Education Association Project on Instruction, in reporting on Communism to the Council of Chief State School Officers at Miami Beach said:

"School officials may need to resist quickly contrived programs to indoctrinate American students on the good of democracy and the evil of Communism. This black-and-white approach amounts to benevolent brainwashing, and it has no place in education for democratic

citizenship when free inquiry and reasoned judgment are vital."¹

I believe that the State Legislature was quite careful in the wording of this document so that this would not take place.

The approach suggested to be used is an appropriate context approach. This means increased specific and systematic instruction about Communism in American history, economics, and American government. It suggests a comparative approach. The materials used should not constitute a separate unit of instruction, but should be used in the social studies courses. This will give an orderly approach at the proper experience and intellectual maturity level of the students.

This latter approach makes it a distinct differentiation between indoctrination and education. Democracy has always made strides because of learning (through the education process) rather than through forced indoctrination.

PAUL F. JOHNSTON
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

¹Education U.S.A., November 22, 1962, Washington, D.C.

A CHARGE TO THE SCHOOLS

The Senate Concurrent Resolution 24 passed by the Sixtieth General Assembly states the following:

Designed to express the collective will of the Legislators of the State of Iowa that a program of education in the history, dogmas, and tenets of International Communism be undertaken in the schools and colleges of this state, so that the youth of Iowa may better understand the threat of International Communism to our American way of life, and thus, be better prepared to assume positions of leadership in the ideological struggle of the cold war.

WHEREAS, the totalitarianism of aggressive world communism constantly threatens the peace of the world and the continued existence of the United States of America as a free republic; and

WHEREAS, it is becoming increasingly apparent that if we as a nation are to successfully combat and defeat the Communist conspiracy at home and abroad and perpetuate and strengthen our American way of life, it is essential that every American citizen must know and understand the fundamental theories and basic principles of our American constitutional, social, economic and political systems, and by way of contrast, the strategy, tactics, nature, effects, logistics, purposes and principles of Communism as it actually operates in the world today; and

WHEREAS, the legislature of the State of Iowa finds it to be a fact that:

- (a) The political ideology commonly known and referred to as communism is in conflict and contrary to the principle of individual freedom under law, as epitomized in the Constitution of the United States, and those of its several states;
- (b) The exploitation and manipulation of youth and student groups throughout the world by the forces of international communism are a major challenge which free world forces must meet and defeat;
- (c) The best method of meeting this challenge is to insure that our leaders of tomorrow, the youth of this state and of this nation, are thoroughly and completely familiar with the history and doctrines of the American political, social, and economic institutions in contradistinction to the history, doctrines, objectives, and techniques of international communism; and
- (d) That a sound, comprehensive, and universal program of education in the field of Americanism vs. Communism in the schools and colleges of this state and of this nation is essential to this end.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the State Board of Public Instruction, the State Board of Regents, and the governing bodies of all public and private high schools and colleges in the State of Iowa, for the purposes aforesaid, are urged to:

- (1) Place additional emphasis on present instruction on the history of the United States and of the State of Iowa,

on the Constitution of the United States and of that of the State of Iowa, and on the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship; and to

- (2) Establish a course or unit of instruction on the history, doctrines, objectives, and techniques of international communism, or to enrich the present curriculum with instruction in these subjects at appropriate points so as to insure that the graduates of our schools and colleges will have a mature appreciation of the international communist movement and its threat to the American way of life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Public Instruction and the State Board of Regents are urged to take such steps as may be necessary, and in the manner prescribed by law, to survey the current teacher education programs being offered in Iowa, and to provide such additional programs as may be necessary to qualify our teachers to provide objective, meaningful, and comprehensive instruction on the history, doctrines, objectives, and techniques of international communism.

OBJECTIVES OF THE APPROACH

1. To become acquainted with the historical background of Communism
 - (a) The Russian past
 - (1) Russia during the 9th - 13th centuries
 - (2) Russia during the 13th - 18th centuries
 - (3) Russia during the 18th century - 1917
 - (b) Traditions in Russian history
 - (1) The place of the Tsar
 - (2) The peasant society
 - (c) The Russian revolution
 - (1) The March revolution
 - (2) The November revolution
 - (3) Soviet Russia under Lenin
 - (4) The Soviet Union under Stalin
2. To study the geographic features that have influenced Communism
 - (a) The land
 - (1) Size
 - (2) Location
 - (3) Zones of vegetation and climate
 - (b) Rivers
 - (c) Oceans and seas
 - (d) Mountains
 - (e) Natural resources
3. To study the cultural background of Communism
 - (a) The people - ethnic groups²
 - (1) Turks - Tartars, 11.1%
 - (2) Slavs (Ukrainians, Belorussian) - Great Russia, 78.02%

²Howard D. Mehlinger, Communism in Theory and Practice (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964)

(3) Caucasians, 3.56%

(4) Others, 7.32%

(b) Education

(c) Position of women

(d) Religion

(e) Crime

4. To study the Communist form of government

(a) Early plans for Utopia

(1) In Great Britain

(2) In France

(b) Anarchism and the Anarchists

(c) Karl Marx

(1) Marx view of history

(2) Marx political views

(d) Joseph Stalin

(1) Domestic policies

(2) Foreign policies

(e) Nikita Khrushchev

(1) Domestic policies

(2) Foreign policies

(f) Chinese Communism

(g) Dictatorship of the Proletariat

(h) Party and government in the Soviet Union

(i) International Communism

5. To study the economic system of Communism

(a) Living standards

(b) The planned economy

(c) Government controlled agriculture

- (d) Government controlled industry
- (e) Population growth
- (f) Neglect of consumer
- (g) Individual enterprise

6. To study the essential differences between totalitarian and democratic governmental structures

- (a) The constitution
- (b) The party government
- (c) Uncontested elections
- (d) Persuasion techniques
- (e) Terror techniques
- (f) The Soviet citizen and his government

7. To study the influences of Communism on other nations outside the Soviet

- (a) Comintern calls for revolution in the United States
- (b) Comintern orders to American Communists
- (c) American Communist underground
- (d) Colonialism
- (e) Guerrilla Warfare

8. To study the ways in which the free world may meet the philosophy of Communism³

- (a) Worth of Persons

We hold that respect for the dignity and worth of human personality is the basic concept of American democracy. The unique contribution of American civilization is not to be found in the relatively high level of material well-being we have attained, nor in the political institutions we have perfected, great as that contribution is, nor

³American Association of School Administrators, "Ideas We Live By." Educating for American Citizenship. Thirty-Second Yearbook, 1954. Chapter III, pp. 55-64

yet in our esthetic or cultural accomplishments. It lies rather in our conception of the nature and destiny of man, in our high regard for individual personality. The basic premise of democracy, and the one from which all others stem, is that man is endowed with moral and spiritual qualities, that he is capable of achieving a humaneness, a dignity and a worth that all should respect, and that he has the capacity to associate with his fellows on a fraternal rather than a differential basis. And always with us the test of this premise is its application to everyone however much he may differ from ourselves in status, race, national origin, or opinion.

(b) Freedom of the Individual

We hold that men can be free. On the broad base of respect and regard for the dignity and worth of human personality, Western democracy has built the whole superstructure of its ideals. First in importance and in time of attainment was the ideal of freedom -- freedom from tyranny and oppression over the lives of men. We know full well the record of human tyranny, a record written large on the pages of history, past and present, and knowing it, we are committed to a society of free men. And with us freedom is more than a word; the liberties and rights men have deemed essential in a free society have been spelled out in detail. We hold that within broad limits every one is free in his person -- free from arbitrary arrest and search, free to demand the right to judgment on the evidence by a jury of his peers, free from excessive and cruel punishments, free to move from place to place, free to engage in any lawful employment. Nor are we any less concerned with the protection of the property rights of the individual; his home and his papers are protected from unreasonable search or seizure; the obligation of his contracts may not be impaired; his property cannot be taken for a

public use without compensation nor can he in any case be deprived of it without due process of law.

More important still is our insistence on freedom of intellect and of conscience. Tyranny over the mind and conscience of man is tyranny at its worst; democracy is but an idle dream if "forbidden" signs may be erected across any of the highways or byways that lead thru all the depth and breadth of human experience. The quest for truth must be untrammled and in that quest there must be free and equal access to information. With us it is no less important that men be permitted to speak the truth as they see it and to whomsoever they will. Our democracy draws no iron curtains across any of the avenues of communication; it insists rather on broadening these avenues and on making them accessible to all.

A corollary of freedom of intellect is tolerance of spirit. Man cannot be intellectually free in any real sense unless they have respect for one another's sentiments and opinions. The right of every person to seek the truth where he will; to form his own convictions and to convey them to whom he will; to formulate his own value system, so long as it does not conflict with the rights of others; to petition, protest, and debate; and to be accorded a tolerant hearing by his peers -- these are among the rights and freedoms we cherish and defend as a part of our democratic heritage.

(c) Government of Laws

We hold that freedom under law is the essential condition of a free society. As already indicated, the first great milestone on the road to human freedom was the recognition of the fact, boldly asserted in our Declaration of Independence, that men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. But these rights cannot be secured

or enforced without resort to established rules and legal forms and institutions. One of the great achievements of the western world, and of our American democracy in particular, is a legal system by which the relationships of individuals to one another and to society can be and are determined according to established rules. It is this government of laws and not of men that protects the individual citizen from the caprice and injustice of irresponsible rulers. The concept of freedom under law and the establishment of a legal and governmental structure for the orderly regulation of human relation in a complex society is one of the greatest achievement of humanity. It is freedom under law that distinguishes a democracy from a totalitarian state; men who do not have it can neither be free themselves nor build a free community.

But institutions of government for the making of laws and for their interpretation and enforcement are not enough to insure freedom. Government itself must be restrained. Above it is placed a body of fundamental law which is called a constitution. The function of a constitution is to establish government, to define its organs and agencies, and to confer upon them their appropriate powers and duties; more important still, it limits the powers of government. It says to government, "This far you can go and no further."

Much of the struggle for human freedom has taken the form of discovering the civil liberties that are essential to free men in a free society and of developing a legal structure to protect those freedoms once the conscience of mankind had made them clear. With us this protective structure is a Bill of Rights embodied in our Constitution. It is this concept of the function of a constitution as a body of principles embodying the highest moral and spiritual values of mankind, standing

above government and forcing it to deal with individuals equitably and in good conscience, that makes possible a government which respects the natural and inalienable rights of men.

(d) Sense of Justice

We hold that in dealing with one another, men should be governed by a sense of justice, good conscience, equity, and fair dealing.

It is important that men have a system of legal institutions and forms by means of which their individual rights can be protected and their common ends attained thru programs of positive action. It is equally important that in the whole area of their behavior, private and public, men should be governed by a sensitive regard for what is just and fair.

(e) Capacity for Self-Government

We hold that men have the ability to govern themselves. In the long struggle to establish the democratic state the first great victory was the attainment of a constitutional law. The American Constitution with its Bill of Rights provided protection for the individual citizen in the exercise of certain rights and liberties. But the concept that common men have the capacity to govern themselves had not yet won general acceptance. That men are capable of governing themselves, of managing their own affairs, and of achieving their own destiny is a relatively new concept in human history; it came into being and won acceptance even in this country no more than a century and a half ago. The age-old record had been a record of the government of the many by the few. The great masses of men had been denied the right to vote or hold office; in the council of state their opinions had not been asked and their voice had not been heard. But the 19th century brought a change. With us the

struggle for liberty took the form of a determined movement to democratize the political state by shifting the locus of political power from the few to the many. We progressively extended the suffrage and removed property qualifications for public office. We committed ourselves to the world's greatest experiment in free political institutions and to an abiding faith in man's ability to govern himself. This faith rests upon the conviction that men have enough goodwill toward one another and enough loyalty to the common weal to compromise their differences without resort to force; that their sense of justice, tolerance, and fair dealing is such that they can be relied upon to employ the instruments of conference, deliberation, debate, and compromise to build the political state on the solid rock of common consent.

(f) Civic Participation

We hold that the individual has a right to participate in decisions affecting himself. The American system of values stresses the importance of cooperation in all forms of associated behavior. In the making of policy decisions and in the processes of carrying them into operation those who are affected by them have a right to participate. The principle that policy decisions should be arrived at thru group discussion and that all who are to be affected by the decisions should have had an opportunity to be heard applies to all the relationships of life. And a corollary of the right to participate is the obligation, within the bounds of reason, to abide by majority decision. The right to participate where one is to be affected can be defended on the grounds of simple justice; it can be defended, too, because it is of the essence of the democratic process. For democracy to operate successfully, the individual citizen must understand and be committed

to its basic ideals; it is no less important that he be skilled in the democratic process of action. These skills involve argumentation and debate, the presentation and weighing of evidence, sensitive regard for the views and rights of others, the give and take of compromise, and willingness to abide by majority opinion. The structure of a government or of any social institution or enterprise may conform to the requirements of a democracy, those who shape its policies may be committed to democratic goals, but if skill in the essential processes of democratic participation is lacking, the whole undertaking will fail in practical operation. And these skills, so essential to the success of any democratic enterprise, can be learned only thru practice. Our insistence on the right of the individual to participate in the making of decisions that concern himself grows out of our regard for individual personality and our sense of justice; it is based, too, on our knowledge, born of long experience, that democracy can function in no other way.

(g) Love of Truth and Appeal to Reason

We hold that men must entertain a love of truth that is supported by a rational evaluation of the evidence. Love of truth and an abiding faith in its beneficence have been deep in the American tradition. It has been characteristic of us as a people that we have not been afraid to face the facts; indeed, we have vigorously insisted that where possible both individual behavior and public policy be based upon exact and precise knowledge.

The concept that might makes right, the settlement of issues by the use of superior force, has never been in the American tradition. Rather we have held firmly to the conviction that the problems of human living can best be resolved thru trained intelligence, thru

a rational analysis of the facts in hand, and without resort to the use of arbitrary power.

So important have we regarded this appeal to reason in a free society that we have kept wide the channels of communication, we have maintained free access on the part of all to the mind of each. But this love of truth and this free access of all to the mind of each makes it imperative that the citizen be equipped with certain mental skills and habits, that he understand the processes by which knowledge is attained, and that he habitually insist upon a critical evaluation of evidence before arriving at a conclusion. A pastoral fable illustrates the point. Two shepherds were walking past a flock. One remarked to the other, "Those sheep over there have been sheared very close." To which the other replied, "Yes, on this side." It is this insistence on examining all the pertinent evidence that makes a free and progressive society.

The critical issues of our time make it more imperative than ever before that we erect no iron curtains around individual intellect, that the channels of thought -- the press, the radio, television, the platform, the pulpit, and the rest -- be kept open. If America is to remain free, we must insist upon free communication, but herein lies a great danger as well as a positive good. If the citizen is not to become the victim of special interest, of half truths, of unsound premises, of false propaganda, and if he is to escape the grip of mass hysteria, he must be equipped with the habit of demanding adequate evidence to reach conclusions, with the power of rational analysis of the evidence in hand, and with the will to make decisions in the light of that evidence.

(h) An Informed Citizenry

We hold that the citizen must be informed. The right of men to govern themselves and to participate in the making of decisions that directly concern themselves in all life situations has its counterpart in the duty of the individual citizen to be informed on the matters committed to his judgment. Long ago the founders of a New England state declared that "the good Education of Children is of singular behoof and benefit to any Commonwealth" and ever since the ideal of an informed citizenry has been the basic concept upon which our whole educational system has rested. The founders of this nation were fully aware that they were embarking on a momentous experiment in free institutions, they were not sure that the experiment would succeed, but they had no doubt that it would fail if opportunity were not provided for the adequate education of all citizens.

This idea of an informed and broadly educated citizen grows in part out of respect for human personality; more important still, it grows out of knowledge, born of long experience, that enlightened judgment must be informed judgment. The schools and colleges we have founded and maintained have been the symbols of our faith that the problems of human living can best be solved thru trained intelligence without resort to the dictates of arbitrary power. And today more than ever, the individual citizen, in making policy decisions extending all the way from the personal affairs of family life to matters of international concern, must base his decisions on a broad knowledge -- a knowledge of the structure and operation of our economy, of the working of our political institutions, and of political and social forces and processes. And in a shrinking world this knowledge must be extended, as far as may be, to include both the history and contemporary affairs of other peoples.

(i) Social Responsibility the Counterpart of Freedom

We hold that "the price of freedom is its responsible exercise."⁴

Liberty and rights inescapably have their counterparts in self-restraint and obligation. Only those are really free who have freed themselves from the driving impulses of irresponsible self-interest, who in the innermost recesses of soul entertain a sensitive regard for the common good. A democratic society will not long endure if men insist on pursuing their selfish interests in clear opposition to the public interest. If men do not have a genuine devotion to the public welfare and if they are unwilling to subordinate self-interest to it, if they refuse to temper freedom by the spirit of mutual concern, if they fail to recognize their common interest in the good society, they will drive themselves to the extremity of the totalitarian state.

Moral restraint rather than legal compulsion is the governing principle of a democratic state. But this is not to say that citizens will not need to submit to legal restraint in the interest of the common good. It is an assumption of democracy that citizens, when the public interest requires it, will unite in restraining freedom of action by legal enactments. More than that, government is an instrument of positive policy and its authority must be commensurate with the responsibility the people by common consent see fit to place upon it. The price of freedom in the democratic state is its responsible exercise by citizens in their interpersonal relations, in the voluntary groups and organizations they establish to attain common purposes, and in the powers and restraints they impose on the government over which they preside.

⁴John Maurice Clark, Alternative to Serfdom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

In an atmosphere of freedom it is imperative that self-interest be tempered with the spirit of mutual concern and of responsible service. The spirit of mutual concern calls for programs of positive teamwork as varied and extensive as the whole area of human living. The effective citizen votes in public elections; he obeys the laws and assumes his share, whatever it may be, in deciding what the laws shall be; he services thru peace and war in the associated efforts thru which self-governing people control their affairs. He cannot fail to recognize in his birthright of freedom a profound obligation for responsible social behavior.

(j) Equal Opportunity

We hold that each individual should have equal opportunity for self-realization. The ideal of the equal chance has long been in the American tradition. It is the hard core of American idealism. It has made possible the "American dream." As each succeeding generation of our forefathers pushed deeper into the shadows of the wilderness and subdued a raw continent to their needs, men learned the meaning of individual human worth. When they established a new nation, they dedicated it to the principle that all men are created equal. They knew that men differed widely in their abilities and capacities. They knew that in the course of human events some would far surpass others in mental and moral stature, in the acquisition of worldly goods, in the services they rendered society, and in the social esteem in which they would be held. Equality was not conceived as a dead level of sameness but as equal opportunity for each individual to realize the full potentiality of his personality, to achieve according to his capacity and his effort. Equal educational opportunity; equal justice regardless of status, race, religion, or national origin; equal right

to participate in the life of the community and of the nation; an equal chance to make the most of God-given talents and dispositions -- these are the meanings of human equality.

But the principle of equality embraces something more than the concept of equal opportunity to achieve; it is tempered with a spirit of humaneness for those who fail. Some are born with greater mental and physical capacities than others, and some are born into homes that provide them with a far richer inheritance than others. Free use of these unequal powers can lead to no other end than unequal attainments. And for the gifted and the less gifted alike, sheer luck may make the difference between success or defeat. As already indicated, democracy does not attempt to equalize accomplishments and attainments, but in the school and in the larger community alike it is sensitive to human failure or misfortune; even unto the least of these it has its moral obligations and commitments.

(k) Brotherhood of Men

We hold that men have the capacity to associate on a fraternal basis.

Thru the long past, men have been haunted by the fear or stung by the reality of insecurity. Thru the centuries one basic fact has persisted, and men could not escape its all-pervasive influence. This basic fact has been an economy of scarcity; men had not learned how to produce enough to go around. And poverty, hunger, and insecurity have not been conducive to goodwill among men; they have been, rather, the source of selfishness and brutality, of inhumanity and oppression. Since men have been unequal in capacity or in a sense of justice, some have been able to reduce others to slavery and serfdom. Class and caste have had their origin to some degree, at least, in an economy of scarcity and have been supported by monopoly of opportunity and of possessions.

A democracy such as ours sets itself the task of changing fundamentally this historic pattern of human association. By removing monopoly of opportunity, by freeing intellect to seek the truth where it will, by releasing to the full the potentiality of individual personality, by cultivating the spirit of inquiry and inventiveness, we have been able to achieve a technological efficiency that promises to make it possible to produce enough to meet the basic needs of men. And as Merriam has aptly put it: "It is easier to be a good neighbor when there is enough to go around." When most men are able to acquire economic goods adequate for their needs, and when the avenues leading to cultural and intellectual advance are barred only by the lack of ability or effort, snobbishness and exclusiveness will be less common. The increased productive capacity of our free society means far more than the improvement of living standards; it tends to weaken the divisions of class and caste; it hastens the day when the brotherhood of man will be a reality, when men will associate with one another on a more fraternal basis.

(1) The Right to be Different

We hold that men have the right to be different. In the American system of values, the right to be different is given a high priority. Our society requires loyalty to basic democratic ideals, but within the wide framework of loyalty it respects individual differences. This deep respect for personality is but the recognition of a fundamental characteristic of human beings. Every person is a unique self and although he can be a cooperative member of a social unit, he can never wholly surrender himself to it, can never abrogate the prerogative of self. Men can never become cells in a social organism; the human unit can never be submerged in the group unity; there is always

an Ark of the Covenant in the inner recesses of each human spirit. It is for these reasons that we insist on a free market of ideas, that we will not tolerate intolerance nor enforce a narrow and rigid conformity, that we insist upon the right of dissent, that we welcome diversity of cultural patterns and protect the rights of minority groups, that we encourage erratic genius and are patient with the less gifted. The genius of America has been that it could maintain unity and preserve diversity; that it has been able to inspire common loyalties and at the same time to accord men the right to be different.

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