Ultimately, as DiIulio himself says, law-abiding blacks hold the key to solving the black crime problem. Kennedy sees a hopeful sign: a movement, "across the political spectrum and within black communities," toward giving more sympathy to the victims of crimes than to those who commit them.

School Choice for Some

"Somebody's Children" by Diane Ravitch, in *The Brookings Review* (Fall 1994), 1775 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Since the early 1980s there has been wave after wave of education reform, yet the worst schools, the inner city schools so wretched and dangerous that they should not even be called schools, remain largely unchanged. Although she considers herself a supporter of public education, Ravitch, a Senior Research Fellow at New York University and a noted historian of education, says she has come around to the view that parents faced with such dreadful schools should be given a choice.

"The best solution I see," she writes, "is for states, cities, or the federal government to provide means-tested scholarships to needy families, who may use them to send their children to the school of their choice, be it public, independent, or religious." The size of the scholarship would vary according to family income, with needier children getting larger grants. "For the neediest, the grant should be at least equal to the state average per pupil expenditure.... Since funds will necessarily be limited, highest priority for such scholarships should go to children who are now enrolled in schools identified by public authorities as the worst in the district."

She proposes, in other words, a "liberal" version of the school-choice idea championed by some conservative reformers. Putting tuition money in the hands of the parents of "at risk" urban children would encourage creation of the sort of schools such youngsters need, Ravitch maintains. "Whether public or private, the most successful urban schools share certain characteristics.... All have in common a sense of purpose, a mission, an identity of their own. And all function *in loco parentis*, with the knowledge and assent of parents who welcome a partnership with the school."

Fears that a "choice" program of the sort she advocates would destroy public education are groundless, Ravitch asserts, citing a survey showing that only 19 percent of all public school parents would like to send their children to a private school. "In a means-tested system, many of these families, of course, would not qualify for scholarships," she notes. The public schools would retain 80 percent or more of all students (instead of today's 90 percent). "Far from being destroyed," she concludes, "the public school system would be strengthened because it would be able to shut down bad schools."

Proto PC

"Political Correctness and American Academe" by Peter F. Drucker, in *Society* (Nov. 1994), Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

The current attempt to impose an orthodoxy of "political correctness" on the American university is not unprecedented. The Stalinists did much the same thing during the late 1930s and early '40s, recalls Drucker, a professor of social science and management at Claremont Graduate School. The tactics then and now, he says, were quite similar: "intimidation, character assassination, hounding of 'resisters' and 'reactionaries,' denial of discourse and of freedom of thought and of speech." But academia then was a very different place—and, as a result, so were the radicals' strategic goals.

Today, Drucker says, the proponents of political correctness seek to gain control of colleges and universities. These institutions "have become power centers through control over the granting of degrees which, in turn, controls access to jobs and careers;

through their budgets which rival those of big business; through the numbers of their students and their faculty."

A half-century ago, in contrast, the university was far from being a center of power, Drucker says. "The Stalinists were actually not a bit interested in academia itself and even less in students," he notes. "No attempts were made to dictate what or how a faculty member should or should not teach. . . . What the Stalinists were interested in were American politics and American public opinion; academia was to them a 'bully pulpit.' "

While academia itself had little influence, individual professors then enjoyed a great deal, Drucker says. Prominent scholars in fields from classics to economics "were 'personages,' if not 'celebrities.' " Their books made the best-seller list, they were in demand on the lecture circuit, they were often interviewed by the press, and they appeared on "serious" radio programs. And it was they whom the Stalinists sought to influence.

"Fellow travelers" were more numerous than party members among the professors, Drucker notes, and they could be used to form "front organizations" and lend "bourgeois" respectability to communist ventures. "And for every fellow traveler in academia there were a dozen apolitical colleagues who were being sweet-talked" into signing petitions or otherwise going along, by the argument that all who opposed Nazism and anti-Semitism had to stand together. There also were promises of jobs, promotions, and tenure. "And if promises did not work there were threats: those who resisted were fired—as I was at Sarah Lawrence College in the spring of 1941." (He had refused to sign a manifesto that "viciously and falsely attacked" the liberal president of Brooklyn College.)

With a handful of courageous exceptions such as New York University philosopher Sidney Hook, academic leaders failed to stand up against the Stalinists, Drucker recalls. His followers were defeated in the end by Stalin's own acts. Today's "new barbarians" have no similar "Stalin" to do them in, but Drucker sees "signs that academia is beginning to realize the danger and is beginning to fight back, especially against the imposition of political correctness on freedom of thought and speech."

PRESS & MEDIA

Famine Frenzy

"Feeding a Famine" by Michael Maren, in *Forbes MediaCritic* (Fall 1994), P.O. Box 762, Bedminster, N.J. 07921.

When 1,800 U.S. Marines in full combat regalia hit the beaches in Mogadishu in December 1992 to do battle with famine, they were met by American newsmen wearing T-shirts and Levi's Dockers. At that point, asserts Maren, a former food assessment specialist for the U.S. Agency for International Development, "everyone should have known something was wrong."

None of the reporters at the time asked why troops were needed when they themselves were able to move about Somalia safely. For many months, journalists had given the world a simplistic and emotional story about mass suffering, Maren argues, and so helped "[to] create a crisis demanding international attention." What they failed to communicate was that conditions in Somalia had been improving before the U.S. armed forces showed up.

Even in relatively good times in Somalia, and indeed elsewhere in Africa, he notes, people die of diseases related to malnutrition. The famine in Somalia, like most on the continent, "had its roots not in poor harvests or drought but in colossal malevolence on the