

KNOWLEDGE IS KING

KNOWLEDGE (noun) -1: understanding gained by actual experience <a knowledge of carpentry> 2: range of information <to the best of my knowledge> 3: clear perception of truth 4: something learned and kept in mind.'

- The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Marinate on this for a minute. Most of us are in oppressive situations because we were influenced to believe in "C.R.E.A.M." (Cash Rules Everything Around Me)¹ Nevertheless, it takes some form of KNOWLEDGE, not only to acquire money, but, to maintain it. As hard as one works to obtain money, someone, somewhere, is working just as hard to separate them from it. (E.g., Bernie Madoff, all the way down to the guy selling fake jewelry on the corner.) On the other hand, KNOWLEDGE is so powerful, and essential to dominance, that there are people cleverly working to prevent you (& yours) from even attaining it.

This can be seen in the fact that every time there's a budget cut OUR schools are the first to get the axe. The effects of these cuts have led some already underpaid teachers to purchase school supplies out of their own pockets. As much as teachers are vilified, this is actually a very noble act. These teachers know that the quality of our future depends highly on the KNOWLEDGE we receive during these developmental stages.\

In 2009, the Pew Center on the States, reported that "one in every 31 adults reside in the U.S. correction system." Jessie Hagopian, a public school teacher, interpreted this information as such:

That means roughly one student per classroom in America will end up in prison, on parole, or on probation.²

This is no doubt a 'clear perception of the truth.' KNOWLEDGE proves to us that circumstances do not come into existence on their own. They are always interrelated to other situations.

Twelve years before the Pew report, in 1997, President "Clinton did not want to raise taxes on the wealthy, or to cut funds for the military, the only alternative was to **sacrifice** the poor, the children, the aged - to spend less for health care, for food stamps, for **education**, for single mothers."³

On May 8, 1997, the New York Times reported this regarding the above:

A major element of President Clinton's **education plan** - a proposal to spend **\$5 billion** to repair the nation's crumbling schools - was among the items quietly killed in last week's agreement to balance the federal budget....³

In 1998, Robert Holland commented on education reform:

School-to-work...injects the federal government deeply & dangerously into shaping the curriculum of American schools. It puts the U.S. in the camp of regimes that decree what KNOWLEDGE is '**official**,' & even more than that, how that KNOWLEDGE should be taught & for what purpose.

School-to-work locks students into career tracks much too early, chilling opportunity & **killing dreams**.⁴

Now, it is beyond just killing dreams:

As New School Foundation board member Lisa Fitzhugh notes in her Jan. 19th [2009] Seattle Times op-ed, states like Washington even determine how many prison cells to build based on 4th grade reading scores & graduation rates.²
[all emphases added]

Simply put, a person's KNOWLEDGE can be limited to the point in which his, or her, chances of landing in prison are significantly increased. Like sheep led to slaughter, kids are being guided into becoming assets for the Prison Industrial Complex! This puts into a new light the fact that before President Clinton slashed the education budget in '97, he passed the Antiterrorism & Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) in 1996. Despite its title, this bill actually limits all American's constitutional rights to petition the government for redress of grievances, no matter the alleged crime. In layman's terms, this means that without the KNOWLEDGE to prevent yourself from being unjustly convicted of a crime, your avenues for appeal has been severely limited. This is a catch-22 all the way around.

History is the centerpiece to KNOWLEDGE, & to that part of the curriculum that falls up under the what 'should be taught' category. Without a 'clear perception' of history we are doomed to be oppressed as those in the past. Most of us are familiar with how Blacks were kept inferior for centuries by no, or poor, education. However, we are rarely (or barely) taught that white women were similarly kept down during this period, also. For instance, in 1750, 90% of whites were literate, be that as it may, only 40% of the women were. For this, in the 19th century, women were compelled to hold the 1st Women's Rights Convention to air out grievances, such as:

no right to vote, no rights to her wages or to property, no rights in divorce cases, no equal opportunity in employment, no entrance to colleges....⁵

In this day & age, when one acquires a criminal record the right to vote, & entrance to most colleges, plus, any opportunity for equal employment are **once again lost**. Although the method may be different, history shows us that we are still suffering from the very same iniquities.

Today we can also witness Arizona's governor Jan Brewer's attempt to repress the Mexican-American community by controlling the effectiveness of their KNOWLEDGE via a new education bill.⁶ This bill basically outlaws any history that will cause Mexican-Americans to be proud of their heritage

(esp., rebelling against mistreatment). This is a throwback to the opposition of Black, Asian, & Latino studies of the '60s & '70s!!!

This new attack is not only taking place in Arizona. The Texas State Board of Education has, also, been attempting to effect our KNOWLEDGE of the past. They are demanding that history books be changed to eliminate most of our Freedom Fighters, including universally acknowledged icons like, Cesar Chavez, & the Honorable Thurgood Marshall; any mention of Hip Hop; plus, altering the name of the Slave Trade to something much more palatable. Most tellingly, is their wish to add Confederate President Jefferson Davis' inaugural address along side that of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln's. But, without the KNOWLEDGE that Davis was an avid defender of the Confederate Constitution, which stated in part:

negro slavery, as it now exists in the Confederate States, shall be recognized & protected by congress.⁷

we cannot truly fathom the possibility that the rights some politicians, like these in Arizona & Texas, claim as inherent to them, are more likely the very same ones Jefferson Davis stood for. After all, there has to be some reason for the desire to add Mr. Davis to our history books.

The value of KNOWLEDGE cannot be underestimated. With KNOWLEDGE we can avoid a lot of life's pitfalls & obstacles, plus, guard ourselves from financial scams, & more importantly, ensure our "unalienable Rights" & stay out of the Prison Industrial Complex!!!

A valuable lessons can be learned in the fact that Socrates (469?-399 B.C.E.), known to most as the father of Western Philosophy, taught Plato (427-347 B.C.E.), who in turn, schooled Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.), the mentor of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.E.). This rich heritage gave Alexander the awareness to demand that every ship which docked in his port at Alexandria, Egypt, allow him to copy all books & manuscripts on-board. This was done because the oldest teaching passed down through the ages is that **KNOWLEDGE IS KING, & MAKES KINGS!!!** No doubt this AWARENESS was instrumental to Alexander's ability to RULE his vast empire. K.R.E.A.M. indeed!!!

DISCLOSURE

None of the above information was acquired from the public school system, but, via the following sources:

1. The title of a Wu-tang Clan song.
2. Jesse Hagopian, "The Dog Eats Its Tail: Oversized Classes, Overpopulated Prisons." (www.commondreams.org)
3. Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present (New York: HarperCollins, 1980, 2005), p.651.
4. Barbara Aho, "The Hudson Institute."
5. Zinn, p.123
6. Eugene Robinson, "Outlawing Latinos' Heritage."
7. DeWayne Wickham, "Opportunity Arises in Texas History Dispute," USA Today, May 25, 2010, p.9A.

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