

Dumbed Down and Destructive American Education

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

The Killing Fields

On April 20, 1999, two 17-year-old students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, after a year of careful preparation, carried out a murderous rampage in the school, resulting in the shooting deaths of 14 students (including themselves), a teacher, and wounding 23 others. The two ~~murderers~~ ^{teenagers} were heard by witnesses proclaiming "This is what we always wanted to do," "This is awesome" and "Today's the day we die." They had actually tried to blow up the school cafeteria with 488 people. That morning they had placed in the cafeteria duffle bags with two 20-pound propane bombs. They then sat in their car waiting for the ~~fireworks~~ ^{bombs} to go off. But they didn't. So they decided to go into the school and shoot the place up.

The library was the scene of the worst carnage. In seven minutes Klebold and Harris shot and killed ten people and wounded 12 more. They had enough ammunition to kill all 56 people in the library.

Where did this insanity come from? What was it about Columbine High School that drove these two perfectly normal kids into this murderous and suicidal Satanic rampage? These boys had everything. They came from good two-parent families. They had cars, they had spending money. They were normally intelligent. And that is why everyone has asked why.

Actually, this massacre was just the most spectacular of a number of such school massacres that have taken place since 1992. On May 1st of that year, a former student at Lindhurst High School in Olivehurst, California, entered the school wearing camouflage gear and an ammunition belt. Three students and a teacher were shot to death, eleven students were wounded, and 80 students were held hostage. At the end of an eight and a half-hour standoff, the former dropout surrendered.

According to the arresting sheriff, "He was a student here in 1988 and '89. He failed a class. He came back today to vent his frustration and retaliate and shoot people." One of the students who had been a hostage related, "He just kept saying that 'the school failed me.' He kept repeating it. 'The school failed me. They left me with a crappy job.' He had nothing to live for."

On February 2, 1996, in Moses Lake, Washington, a 14-year-old honor student with a high-powered rifle killed a teacher and two students and seriously injured another student at ~~the~~ Frontier Junior High School. One classmate said the assailant wasn't the kind to

make trouble. "He was an honor student. He was not involved in gangs or drugs. He was a normal student among the rest of us."

^{simple}
Apparently, something happens to normal kids that turns them into deadly killers. Is it the absence of biblical morality—"Thou shalt not kill"—and the promotion of moral relativism that contributes to a nihilism that seems to afflict so many young people these days? What about the fact that so many children are taking powerful mind and behavior = altering drugs. Over four million school children are on Ritalin alone.

On February 19, 1997, a 16-year-old student killed the principal and a student at Bethel Regional High School in Bethel, Alaska. He had a "hit list" that included the two victims and other students. The ~~killer~~ ^{at school} used a shotgun.

On October 1, 1997, a 16-year-old student killed his mother, his ex-girlfriend, and wounded seven at Pearl High School in Pearl, Mississippi. The killer told police, "The world has wronged me and I couldn't take it anymore." At the trial he said that he was driven by demons who told him he would be "nothing" if he didn't kill. It was also revealed that he was under the influence of a 19-year-old Satanist who was plotting to kill students at Pearl High School.

On December 1, 1997, a 14-year-old student opened fire on a prayer group that met before school and on several other students in the hallway at Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky. Three girls were killed, five wounded, including one girl left paralyzed. The killer had a history of heckling the prayer group. Apparently, it has now become dangerous to be a Christian in a public school.

On March 24, 1998, two students, one 11 years old, the other 13, pulled a fire alarm at the Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and began firing at the students as they exited the building. Four girls and a teacher were killed, and 10 were wounded. It was reported that one of the killers had dabbled in the occult and had drawn Satanic pentagrams on his hands and the covers of his schoolbooks.

On May 21, 1998, a 15-year-old student, troubled with dyslexia since the first grade, shot students in the cafeteria at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, as students were leaving an honors breakfast just before 8 a.m. One student was killed and 23 were wounded. The killer had also murdered his mother and father, both of whom were public school teachers.

Nor did the massacre at Columbine end the killing spree. One month later, a student open fire on his classmates in a crowded hallway at Heritage High School in Conyers, Georgia, wounding six. Then, despite all the talk and education about how to prevent such massacres, another took place March 5, 2001, at Santana High School in Santee, California, a suburb of San Diego. At 9:30 a.m. a 15-year-old freshman killed two students and wounded eleven other students and two staff members.

Santana High School was in a district that received over a million dollars in safe-schools funding. The system employed safety officers and counselors, provided peer-mediation and conflict-resolution classes and encouraged students to report violent threats made by other students. But none of these ~~remedies~~ addressed the real question. Why are perfectly normal kids becoming killers? Is it the lack of the fear of God that has removed all restraints on moral behavior among kids? The theory of evolution teaches children that they are not made in the image of God, but are animals with a direct link to the animal kingdom where moral codes do not exist. When you remove the God-given human soul from a child, he can easily become a devil.

and why do they vent their murderous impulses on fellow students and teachers? Is there hatred of schools, intense class only murder, preventatives will satisfy their need for retribution. apparently, the

What we see today in American schools is the result of decisions made by educator-psychologists during the last one hundred years. And we must go back that far to find the original cause of the horrors we see today. But before we do that it is important to know what education meant to the men and women who founded this nation.

The Quest for a Commonwealth Based on Biblical Literacy

The early Puritan settlers in New England were determined to create a Bible commonwealth in the New World. Thus biblical literacy was needed to insure a Christian future. Harvard was founded in 1630 by Calvinists as a seminary for training up a learned clergy. Grammar schools were created to prepare scholars for Harvard. In other words, the main force behind education in those early days was religion.

However, the Bible commonwealth did not last long. After a long period of liberal gestation, a Unitarian heresy arose at Harvard, and in 1805 the Unitarians took complete control of the university, expelling the orthodox Calvinists. The Unitarians no longer believed in the divinity of Christ, thus no longer believing in salvation through Christ. They now put their faith in education as the producer of human moral perfectibility. They also believed that such education should be nonsectarian, or secular, and conducted by government. Such an arrangement would reduce the influence of Calvinism, which they detested.

And so, the Unitarians, led by Horace Mann, laid the groundwork for America's public education system. That system, however, still maintained a high level of academic standards until the late 19th century when a revolutionary change took place among the academic elite who became known as the progressives.

The New Faith Based on Science

Influenced by the theory of evolution and the new psychology coming out of Professor Wundt's laboratory, ^{at the University of Leipzig in} Leipzig, Germany, the progressives gave up their faith in biblical religion and placed their new faith in science, evolution, and psychology. Science gave them the means to understand the material world. Evolution scientifically explained the origin of organic matter. And the new psychology gave them a scientific way of studying human nature and an equally scientific way of controlling human behavior.

However, they had one crucial problem that they had to deal with. Evil. Where did it come from? What caused it? The Bible explained that evil was caused by man's fall in the Garden of Eden, which brought sin into the world. Man did evil things because, as *John* Calvin explained, man was innately depraved having inherited his sinful nature from Adam and Eve.

To the progressives, this was mythological hogwash. They had better ideas. They believed that evil was caused by ignorance, poverty, and social injustice. Thus, a good education would get rid of ignorance, which in turn would get rid of poverty. As for social injustice, that was caused by our horrible capitalist system, with its unbounded individualism, private property, and economic competition. So they became socialists and proclaimed that the only way to get rid of social injustice was to destroy the capitalist system. But how were they to do it?

needed As intelligent human beings, they realized that Americans weren't interested in a socialist revolution. They weren't about to give up their private property, free enterprises, or their religious beliefs in favor of some humanistic utopia. So the progressives decided that the only way bring about socialism would be through the education of America's children. What was ~~necessary~~ *needed* was a completely new curriculum that would stress socialization over academics, thus preparing the young for a future under socialism.

The Plan for Fundamental Change

The plan for fundamental curriculum change was outlined by John Dewey, the philosophical leader of the movement, in an essay ~~he wrote~~ *written* in 1898 entitled "The Primary School Fetich." He wrote:

There is ... a false educational god whose idolaters are legion, and whose cult influences the entire educational system. This is language study—the study not of foreign language, but of English; not in higher, but in primary education. It is almost an unquestioned assumption, of educational theory and practice both, that the first three years of a child's school-life shall be mainly taken up with learning to read and write his own language. If we add to this the learning of a certain amount of numerical combinations, we have the pivot about which primary education swings....

... It does not follow, however, that because this course was once wise it is so any longer. On the contrary, the fact, that this mode of education was adapted to past conditions, is in itself, a reason why it should no longer hold supreme sway.... My proposition is ... that the time has come for a thoroughgoing examination of the emphasis put upon linguistic work in elementary instruction.

...The plea for the predominance of learning to read in early school-life because of the great importance attaching to literature seems to me a perversion.

However, Dewey realized that parents wanted their children to learn to read well as early as possible and that they might rebel against the kind of radical changes in primary education he was advocating. So he wrote:

Change must come gradually. To force it unduly would compromise its final success by favoring a violent reaction. What is needed in the first place is that there should be a full and frank statement of conviction with regard to the matter from physiologists and psychologists and from those school administrators who are conscious of the evils of the present regime. ... There are already in existence a considerable number of educational "experimental stations," which represent the outposts of educational progress. If these schools can be adequately supported for a number of years they will perform a great vicarious service.

The Wundtians Take Over American Education

So Dewey had made it quite clear to his colleagues what had to be done. Who were his colleagues? They were men like G. Stanley Hall, James McKeen Cattell, Charles Judd, and James Earl Russell, all of whom had studied the new evolution-based psychology under Prof. Wilhelm Wundt at ~~the University of~~ Leipzig. Hall eventually became president of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts; Cattell became an advocate of Eugenics and became head of educational psychology at Columbia University; Charles Judd became head of the education department at the University of Chicago, and James Earl Russell became head of Teachers College, Columbia.

(scientific racism)

Dewey didn't go to Leipzig. He got his training in the new psychology from G. Stanley Hall at Johns Hopkins University. In 1894, Dewey was appointed head of the department of philosophy, psychology and education at the University of Chicago, which had been established two years earlier by a gift from John D. Rockefeller. In 1896, Dewey created his famous Laboratory School, in which he could test the new psychology and the new curriculum on real live children. The results of his experiments were summed up in 1899 in his book, *School and Society*, which has become a bible of sorts among progressive educators. In it he wrote:

Said

[T]he tragic weakness of the present school is that it endeavors to prepare future members of the social order in a medium in which the conditions of the social spirit are eminently wanting....

The mere absorbing of facts and truths is so exclusively individual an affair that it tends very naturally to pass into selfishness. There is no obvious social motive for the acquirement of merely learning, there is no clear social gain in success thereat.

In other words, the traditional school promoted individualism which was a form of selfishness. What were needed were schools that promoted the collectivist spirit of socialism. Dewey and his colleagues did not, for the most part, get their socialism from Karl Marx. They got it from an American by the name of Edward Bellamy who wrote a

book in 1884 entitled *Looking Backward*, a fantasy of a socialist America in the year 2000. The book describes a totally transformed America in which the egalitarian ideal *egalitarianism* has been achieved and is working with marvelous efficiency. It was this vision of a socialist future that drove the progressives in their messianic crusade to use education as the means of changing America into a socialist society.

Creating a Socialist Curriculum

In creating his Laboratory School, Dewey had to devise a curriculum that would produce little socialists and collectivists, and in order to do so he analyzed the traditional curriculum that sustained the capitalist, individualistic system. He concluded that it was high literacy and he spelled all of that out in his 1898 essay. To Dewey, the greatest obstacle to socialism was the private mind that seeks knowledge in order to exercise its own private judgment and intellectual authority. High literacy gave the individual the means to seek knowledge independently. It gave individuals the means to stand on their own two feet and think for themselves. This was detrimental to the "social spirit" needed to bring about a collectivist society. Dewey wrote in *Democracy and Education* in 1916:

[W]hen knowledge is regarded as originating and developing within an individual, the ties which bind the mental life of one ~~of~~ that of his fellows are ignored and denied. *to*

When the social quality of individualized mental operations is denied, it becomes a problem to find connections which will unite an individual with his fellows. Moral individualism is set up by the conscious separation of different centers of life. It has its roots in the notion that the consciousness of each person is wholly private, a self-inclosed continent, intrinsically independent of the ideas, wishes, purposes of everybody else.

It seems incredible that a man of Dewey's intelligence could assert that traditional education lacked social spirit when it produced the Founding Fathers and the wonderful inventors of the 19th century, the very individualists who created the freest, happiest, and most prosperous nation in all of human history. It was the progressives' rejection of God, which made them yearn for a utopia created in their own image. They were convinced that the success of socialism in eliminating ignorance, poverty, social injustice, crime, and evil would prove that they were right and the Bible was wrong.

The Dumbing Down Plan Is Promoted

In 1908, the authoritative book on reading, which Dewey had called for in his essay of 1898, was published. It was entitled *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*, written by a young professor of psychology, Edmund Burke Huey, who had gotten his Ph.D from G. Stanley Hall at Clark University. That Huey got his inspiration from Dewey is made clear by his reference to Dewey's 1898 essay ~~in the book~~ and expounding favorably on Dewey's arguments. He wrote:

in the book

Against using the period from six to eight years for learning to read and write, Professor Dewey accepts the opinion of physiologists that the sense-organs and nervous system are not adapted then to such confining work, that such work violates the principle of exercising the fundamental before the accessory, that the cramped positions leave their mark, that writing to ruled line forms is wrong, etc. Besides, he finds that a certain mental enfeeblement comes from too early an appeal to interest in the abstractions of reading.

Huey then went on to suggest a better way to teach reading, a way compatible with the goals of progressive education:

The history of languages in which picture-writing was long the main means of written communication has here a wealth of suggestions for the framers of the new primary course....

It is not indeed necessary that the child should be able to pronounce correctly or pronounce at all, at first, the new words that appear in his reading, any more than that he should spell or write all the new words that he hears spoken. If he grasps, approximately, the total meaning of the sentence in which the new word stands, he has read the sentence. Usually this total meaning will suggest what to call the new word, and the word's current articulation will usually have been learned in conversation, if the proper amount of oral practice shall have preceded reading. And even if the child substitutes words of his own for some that are on the page, provided that these express the meaning, it is an encouraging sign that the reading has been real, and recognition of details will come as it is needed. The shock that such a statement will give to many a practical teacher of reading is but an accurate measure of the hold that a false ideal has taken of us, viz., that to read is to say just what is upon the page, instead of to *think*, each in his own way, the meaning that the page suggests....

Until the insidious thought of reading as word-pronouncing is well worked out of our heads, it is well to place the emphasis strongly where it belongs, on reading as *thought-getting* independently of expression.

There you have in Huey's own words the beginning of the dumbing-down process, which starts with changing the way reading is taught, from the alphabetic-phonetic method to the look-say, whole-language. ^{Sight method.} The need for Dewey-inspired radical change was nicely summed up by Professor Huey, whose book is still considered the authority on reading instruction. It is not known whether Dewey or Huey had ever taught a child to read. But their views went on to dominate reading pedagogy in virtually all the teachers colleges since then.

Professor Hall Extols the Virtues of Illiteracy

That the new teaching methods would decrease literacy was well known by its proponents. In fact, G. Stanley Hall went so far as to extol the virtues of illiteracy. After reading Huey's book, he wrote in 1911:

Very many men have lived and died and been great, even the leaders of their age, without any acquaintance with letters. The knowledge which illiterates acquire is probably on the whole more personal, direct, environmental and probably a much larger proportion if it practical. Moreover, they escape much eyestrain and mental excitement, and other things being equal, are probably more active and less sedentary. It is possible, despite the stigma our bepedagogued age puts upon this disability, for those who are under it not only to lead a useful, happy, virtuous life, but to be really well educated in many other ways. Illiterates escape certain temptations, such as vacuous and vicious reading. Perhaps we are prone to put too high a value both upon the ability required to attain this art and the discipline involved in doing so, as well as the culture value that comes to the citizen with his average of only six grades of schooling by the acquisition of this art.

Having grown up with an illiterate immigrant mother, I can attest to the pain that illiterates suffer in a literate society. They're not better off being spared "vacuous and vicious reading." To be illiterate in America is to be severely crippled as an individual. Notice that Hall didn't mention that illiterates were also spared being able the Bible. All of Judeo-Christian civilization is based on the ability of just about everyone to read the Bible. Without biblical literacy, this civilization with its unprecedented levels of learning, individual rights and freedoms would not have been possible.

Why the Elite Favors a Dumbed-Down Population

It is obvious that if you are ~~dumb but~~ *moderately intelligent and* clever enough to find yourself among the power elite, you want everyone below you to be dumber. Thus, there are those among our educational elite who are much more in tune with Hall's views than the views of our Founding Fathers who advocated high literacy for all. For example, Prof. Anthony G. Oettinger, chairman of the Center for Information Policy Research at Harvard University and a member of the elitist Council on Foreign Relations told an audience of communications executives in 1981:

Our idea of literacy, I am afraid, is obsolete because it rests on a frozen and classical definition. Literacy, as we know it today, is the product of the conditions of the industrial revolution, of urbanization....

But as much as we might think it is, literacy is not an eternal phenomenon. Today's literacy is a phenomenon that has its roots in the nineteenth century, and one does not have to reach much farther back to think of civilizations with different concepts of literacy based, for example, on oral, rather than written, traditions.

The present “traditional” concept of literacy has to do with the ability to read and write. But the real question that confronts us today is: How do we help citizens function well in their society? How can they acquire the skills necessary to solve their problems?

Do we, for example, really want to teach people to do a lot of sums or write in “a fine round hand” when they have a five-dollar hand-held calculator or a word processor to work with? Or, do we really have to have everybody literate—writing and reading in the traditional sense—when we have the means through out technology to achieve a new flowering of oral communication?...

It is the traditional idea that says certain forms of communication, such as comic books, are “bad.” But in the modern context of functionalism they may not be all that bad.

We have the potential for using the cathode ray tube [TV] to transmit pictorial information and for developing it to a much greater extent than we have as a dynamic form of communication, whose implications for training and schooling and so on are quite different from linear print or “frozen” literacy.

The Harvard professor wrote that in 1981, before the computer revolution, which requires the kind of traditional literacy that he disparages. High literacy is more necessary today than ever for economic success. Yet our educators are still pursuing the Dewey agenda that downplays high literacy.

Does Prof. Oettinger believe that parents send their children to school to learn to read comic books? And if universal literacy is not to be the goal of the public schools, why should they continue to exist?

Enter Dick and Jane

Naturally, it took some time before the ^{new} philosophy of reading could be translated into textbooks for the schools. The development of these textbooks took place mainly at the University of Chicago and at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York. In Chicago it was William Scott Gray, protégé of Wundtian Charles H. Judd, dean of the school of education, who produced the Dick and Jane reading program. At Teachers College, it was Arthur I. Gates, protégé of Edward L. Thorndike, father of behaviorist educational psychology, who produced the Macmillan reading program. These books were ready for the public schools by 1930, and were widely promoted throughout the education system by articles in the National Education Association’s *Journal*, a virtual mouthpiece for the progressives who had taken control of the NEA earlier in the century.

That the new teaching methods caused reading problems was already known by 1930. In fact, it was known as early as 1914 that the look-say or sight method and the phonics method produced two different types of readers: subjective and objective. Educational psychologist Walter Dearborn, in his monograph, “Perception and Reading,” states:

The chief differences between these types are said to be that the objective readers have a rather narrow span of attention in reading, but see accurately what they do see, and seldom guess or "read into" the material perceived, and that the subjective readers have a wider span, are influenced more by words lying in indirect vision, depend on relatively meager visual cues such as large word wholes, and that they are more likely to misread because of the large apperceptive element which they supply to the reading. (Archives of Psychology, No. 30, 1914, p.42)

That was written in 1914. Today, we recognize the subjective reader as one who has been taught by the whole-language method and has developed a holistic reflex, while the objective reader, taught by intensive, systematic phonics, has developed a phonetic reflex. A child with a holistic reflex makes many errors: he leaves out words that are there, puts in words that aren't there, skips words, mutilates words, guesses at words. He has also acquired a built-in obstacle to seeing our alphabetically written words in their phonetic structure and thus is technically "dyslexic." The only cure for that school-induced dyslexia is the replacement of the holistic reflex by a phonetic reflex, which requires intensive remediation. As Pavlovian psychologists know, it is impossible to have two conflicting, mutually incompatible reflexes at the same time. Thus, imposing a holistic reflex on a child, thereby depriving him of seeing the phonetic structure of the written word, is nothing less than a crime *against these children*.

A full account of how the educators systematically went about changing the entire public school curriculum to serve progressive goals can be found in the yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education, founded in 1901. The Society's Committee on Curriculum-Making was headed by socialist Harold Rugg. Other members included such progressives as Stuart S. Curtis (University of Michigan), Ernest Horn (University of Iowa), Charles H. Judd (University of Chicago), George S. Counts (University of Chicago and later of Columbia), William H. Kilpatrick (Teachers College, New York).

In other words, what we have today in our public schools has come out of the socialist-dominated schools of education in our most prestigious universities. That is the source of the pestilence, and the professors in the universities who continue the Dewey program and write the textbooks are completely insulated from parental or taxpayer protest. When parents confront their local school superintendents, principals, and teachers, they are simply talking to the foot-soldiers who are carrying out the policies of the university professors. And when conservatives get elected to school boards, they simply engage in endless skirmishes with these subordinates whose careers depend on pleasing the powerful establishment who gave them their jobs. Liberal board members seem to enjoy watching conservatives hitting their heads against stone walls.

The Reading Problem Grows

By 1929, there was already considerable convincing evidence that the look-say, sight method of teaching reading was causing reading problems. *Collier's* magazine of November 26, 1954, reported:

Extensive reading-method studies were made in Iowa in 1926-'27 by the late neurologist, Dr. Samuel Orton, under a Rockefeller Foundation grant. At that time children who couldn't read were said to have "congenital word blindness"—but Orton wanted proof. What he found was quite different. He reported his findings in a scientific paper entitled, "The 'Sight Reading' Method of Teaching Reading as a Source of Reading Disability."

Dr. Orton barnstormed Iowa from school to school with a mobile mental-hygiene unit. One of his first observations was: "In my original group of reading disability cases I was surprised at the large proportion of these children encountered." He later compared two towns, one of which had twice as many retarded readers as the other. "In the community with the lesser number of cases," he said, "sight-reading methods were employed but when children did not progress by this method they were also given help by the phonetic method. In the town with the larger number, no child was given any other type of reading training until he or she had learned 90 words by sight ... this strongly suggests that the sight method not only will not eradicate a reading disability of this type but may actually produce a number of cases."

Dr. Orton's research paper was published in the February 1929 issue of *The Journal of Educational Psychology*. The chairman of the Journal's Board of Editors was none other than socialist Harold Rugg, and among its members were Arthur I. Gates and Edward L. Thorndike, both deeply involved in producing the new look-say textbooks. Orton wrote:

I wish to emphasize at the beginning that the strictures which I have to offer here do not apply to the use of the sight method of teaching reading as a whole but only to its effects on a restricted group of children for whom, as I think we can show, this technique is not only not adapted but often proves an actual obstacle to reading progress, and moreover I believe that this group is one of considerable educational importance both because of its size and because here faulty teaching methods may not only prevent the acquisition of academic education by children of average capacity but may also give rise to far reaching damage to their emotional life....

Our studies of children with reading disabilities has also brought to light certain other aspects of the problem which are of educational importance but which can not be elaborated here. Among these were notably the effect of this unrecognized

[on emphasis]

disability, upon the personality and behavior of the child. Many children were referred to our clinics by their teachers in the belief that they were feeble-minded, others exhibited conduct disorders and undesirable personality reactions which upon analysis appeared to be entirely secondary to the reading defect and which improved markedly when special training was instituted to overcome the reading disability.

What could be more alarming than Orton's findings that the whole-word method was having a very damaging effect on perfectly normal ~~kids~~? One would have expected responsible educators and psychologists to have decided against inflicting this form of miseducation on American school children. But the educational psychologists acted otherwise. They proceeded to publish their new whole-word reading programs as if Orton had never sounded his warning. Fortunately, for a lot of students, the Great Depression saved them from functional illiteracy, because it slowed down the process of change in the schools which lacked the money to buy the new books. But once the economy recovered during World War II, the process of change was greatly accelerated.

children

Enter Rudolf Flesch

No sooner were the new books in the schools than parents began to complain about their children having reading problems. Of course, none of them had read the article in the 1929 *Journal of Educational Psychology*. They had to wait until 1955 when Rudolf Flesch wrote his famous best-seller, *Why Johnny Can't Read*. In that book Flesch wrote:

The teaching of reading—all over the United States, in all the schools, in all the textbooks—is totally wrong and flies in the face of all logic and common sense.

He then explained to the American people, most of whom were hearing this for the first time, that the professors of education had changed the way reading was taught in American schools. They got rid of the traditional alphabetic phonics method and replaced with a look-say, whole-word method that taught children to read English as if it were Chinese—that is, composed of characters instead of phonetically structured words. He explained that if you impose an ideographic teaching method on an alphabetic writing system, you cause reading problems. He also explained why it would be so difficult to get phonics back in the schools:

It's a foolproof system all right. Every grade-school teacher in the country has to go to a teachers' college or school of education; every teachers' college gives at least one course on how to teach reading; every course on how to teach reading is based on a textbook; every one of those textbooks is written by one of the high priests of the word method. In the old days it was impossible to keep a good teacher from following her own common sense and practical knowledge; today the phonetic system of teaching reading is kept out of our schools as effectively as if we had a dictatorship with an all-powerful Ministry of Education.

Flesch's book aroused tremendous indignation among parents. They clamored for a return to phonics. But the educators, as devious as ever, circled the wagons and created the International Reading Association, which became the citadel of the whole-word method. The professors of reading denounced Flesch as "a master of histrionics." Paul Witty, a professor of education at Northwestern University, who had been named by Flesch as one of the leading advocates of the look-say method, said in an interview:

How does one tell a gullible public that it is being exploited by a biased writer—as in the case with Rudolf Flesch and his book "Why Johnny Can't Read"? It will take time and patience for parents to learn that Mr. Flesch has mixed a few half-truths with prejudices to capitalize on two misconceptions. The first is his superficial notion as to what reading really is. The second is his misrepresentation as to how reading is taught.

Those two so-called misconceptions are what Whole Language teachers use today to defend their anti-phonics methodology. We've already read what Huey's conception of reading was. Now here's a view of reading given 83 years later in 1991 by Whole Language ~~educators~~ ^{professors} in a book entitled, *Whole Language: What's the Difference?* Three

Whole language represents a major shift in thinking about the reading process. Rather than viewing reading as "getting the words," whole language educators view reading as essentially a process of creating meanings. (See the development of this view in the writings of Kenneth Goodman [Gollasch 1982] and Frank Smith [1971, 1986].) Meaning is created through a *transaction* with whole, meaningful texts (i.e., texts of any length that were written with the intent of communicate meaning). It is a transaction, not an extraction of the meaning *from* the print, in the sense that the *reader-created* meanings are a fusion of what the reader brings and what the text offers. ... In a transactional model, words do not have static meanings. Rather, they have meaning *potentials* and the capacity to communicate multiple meanings.

As one can see, the whole language writers are simply reiterating what Dewey and Huey wrote back in 1898 and 1908, using a more sophisticated vocabulary to express what their earlier mentors meant.

The Success of the Dumbing Down Process

That the educators have been incredibly successful in dumbing down the American people is easily proven by the general decline in literacy in the United States. ~~In fact,~~ In September 1993, the U.S. Education Department revealed the results of its \$14-million study of Adult Literacy in America which shocked the nation. It reported that 90 million American adults could barely read or write. Some 40 million adults had only the most rudimentary reading and writing skills. An additional 50 million adults fared a little better but were still considered to have inadequate reading and writing skills. One-third performed at the middle level, and only about 20 percent—34 to 40 million—scored

high, handling challenging tasks that involved complex documents and background information.

What a disgraceful showing for our education system which devours billions of dollars to produce illiterates by the million. This is the Dewey-Huey progressive legacy. There is no precedent in history of an entire nation being dumbed down by its own government education system. The system is slowly crippling the country by destroying the brains of its youngest citizens. What the survey also revealed is that those with the lowest scores earned a median weekly salary of \$230 to \$245 while those with the highest scores had incomes of \$620 to \$680. In other words, we are also creating a society in which the gap between the haves—the educated cognitive elite—and the have nots—the uneducated and members of the underclass—is growing wider and wider.

The SAT Scores Provide the Evidence

Another symptom of our decline in literacy is the steady decline in SAT verbal scores. In 1969, the average verbal score was 463. In 1991, it was down to 422. Yet in 1991 school funding was higher than ever. That American brain power was in decline was also indicated by SAT scores. In 1972, 116,630 students scored between 600 and 800, the highest possible score on the verbal test. In 1991, that number was down to 74,836. In 1972, 71,084 scored between 200 and 299 at the bottom of the scale. In 1991 that number was up to 134,666. Obviously, the dumbing down process had worked wonders among our best students intending to go on to college. It was even damaging students with the highest intelligence. In 1972, 2,817 students scored at the very highest level: between 750-800. In 1994, that number was down to 1,438.

In 1996, the SAT was re-normed because the average score was now so much lower than the average or norm established in 1941. The SAT scores had been one of the few reliable, constant measures of academic competence over the years. The original norm was 500, and the declining averages provided the public with objective evidence of declining academic competence. But the College Board, succumbing to pressure from educators, decided to create a new norm based on the present average, thus making it easier for the educators to hide their incompetence and more difficult for critics to accurately measure the nation's educational failures.

Humanists Take Over Public Education

Back in 1849, when the organized Protestants of Massachusetts debated whether or not to support the public school movement, which was then being strongly promoted by the Unitarians, they decided in favor of support, but with some very clear reservations. They wrote:

The benefits of this system, in offering instruction to all, are so many and so great that its religious deficiencies—especially since they can be otherwise supplied—do not seem to be a sufficient reason for abandoning it, and adopting in place of it a system of denominational parochial schools.

If after a full and faithful experiment, it should at last be seen that fidelity to the religious interests of our children forbids a further patronage of the system, we can unite with the Evangelical Christians in the establishment of private schools, in which more full doctrinal religious instruction may be possible.

No one can doubt that for the last 150 years the public schools have had that full and faithful experiment, and that the spiritual effect on Christian children has been devastating. As we have shown in our review of school massacres, Christian children have been especially targeted by Satanists for harassment and even murder.

Meanwhile, thousands of Christian parents, without knowledge of what was written in 1849, have removed their children from the public schools and have placed them in private Christian schools or are home schooling them. The simple fact is that the present government education system is not neutral toward religion but increasingly anti-Christian. In fact, it is promoting its own establishment of religion: Secular Humanism. All one has to do to confirm this is read the two Humanist Manifestos. The first, written in 1933 by young Unitarian ministers and signed by John Dewey, asserted that the spiritual power of orthodox religion was in decline and that it should be replaced by a rational, man-centered, non-theistic religion. They wrote:

Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now....

Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

In other words, humanism is the only religion in America that has as its purpose and program the reconstitution of the institutions, rituals, and ecclesiastical methods of other religions. This is an overt declaration of war against biblical religion. Dewey had written in 1908 (*Hibbert Journal*, July 1908):

Our schools...are performing an infinitely religious work. They are promoting the social unity out of which in the end genuine religious unity must grow.... Religion...associated with...dogmatic beliefs...we see...disappearing....It is the part of man to labor persistently and patiently for the clarification and development of the positive creed of life..., and to work for the transformation of

all practical instrumentalities of education till they are in harmony with these ideas.

In 1973, Humanist Manifesto II stated, "As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.... No deity will save us, we must save ourselves."

In the January/February 1983 issue of *The Humanist* magazine, a young scholar by the name of John J. Dunphy expressed the aim of humanists in education with these very blunt words, which won him a prize:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects that spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of educational level—preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new—the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of "love thy neighbor" will finally be achieved.

Despite the fact that humanists are doing all in their power to rid the public schools of every vestige of biblical religion by their endless campaign for the separation of Church and State, we find them gung-ho for the teaching of the humanist faith in these same public schools. How hypocritical can you get?

Nevertheless, we are grateful to Mr. Dunphy for being frank about humanist intentions, thereby warning parents that their children will be proselytized and won over to the new faith whether the parents like it or not. In place of God, the public schools offer evolution, multiculturalism, transcendental meditation, situational ethics, drug education, sex education, death education, sensitivity training, gay studies, condoms, whole language, behaviorism, magic circles, cooperative learning, outcome-based education, Skinnerian mastery learning, and other humanist programs.

Evolution teaches that human beings are animals, accidentally descendant from other animals; multiculturalism teaches that differing moral codes have equal validity; transcendental meditation teaches you to get in touch with the divinity within yourself; situational ethics teaches that it is all right to lie, cheat, and steal if the situation calls for it; drug education teaches the student about decision making while informing him of all the pros and cons about drugs; sex education teaches that premarital sex is okay; death education teaches that death is a friend rather than an enemy; gay studies teach that the gay life-style is normal; condoms are supposed to let you enjoy promiscuity without suffering the consequences; whole language dumbs you down; behaviorism teaches that

human beings can be trained like animals; magic circles are a classroom adaptation of the encounter experience adjusted for little children; cooperative learning destroys individual incentives to learn and makes you dependent on others; outcome-based education transforms traditional schooling into vocational schooling; Skinnerian mastery learning uses operant conditioning as a teaching technique in the classroom. Skinner, it should be noted, developed his learning theory by training rats.

Socialists Take Over the System

As we have already related, the progressives' plan to socialize America required the most thorough and radical reform of American education. That the goal was socialism was clearly known and understood throughout the education establishment. That it meant downgrading academics in favor of socialization was also understood, for in a socialist society an elite rules at the top, and the masses below are relegated to the subservient, mindless tasks of an industrial system.

Prof. Dallas Johnson of the University of Washington wrote in 1915 in an article entitled "Socializing Education," "Scholastic traditions and academic prejudices must give way to the ideal of increasing the social solidarity of our people." (School & Society, 12/18/15)

Prof. Walter R. Smith, of State Normal School, Emporia, Kansas, in an article entitled "The Fundamentals of a Socialized Educational Program," wrote in 1918: "The process of socialization will require greater emphasis upon the social studies in our schools. The linguistic and mathematical core of the old classical curriculum must give way to a social core." (School & Society, 7/13/18)

The vision of the Progressives included a globalist humanism, which was well expressed by Charles H. Judd in a speech in 1918. He said:

I am arguing for a new kind of humanism.... We must build in the future a social structure for which there is no pattern. The humanism of the future will be dependent, not on imitation, but on self-determination....

Perhaps the time will come when the psychological differences of nations will be assimilated into a larger pattern of intelligent appreciation of the solidarity of a rational humanity. (School & Society, 9/10/18)

Some educators indulged in messianic hyperbole when writing of this globalist vision. Prof. J.E. Boodin of Carleton College wrote in 1918 while World War I was still raging:

If the German Junkers have been willing and eager to undergo a life of discipline and sacrifice to promote the illusion of Pangermany, how much more should *we* be willing to bear and do for Panhumanity, for an ideal humanity—counting its riches to promote the general well being, finding our soul in sacrificial cooperation with our fellows, realizing that the only thing that is eternal and worth striving for is the good life. Thus shall we

make the pattern laid up in heaven incarnate on earth. Thus shall we build the city of God.”

Indeed, such a “sacrificial cooperation” was indeed needed to carry out the full program of educational reform. The organizational mastermind who engineered this reform was Charles H. Judd who, in 1915, organized the Cleveland Conference, a semi-secret annual meeting of top educators. Judd urged the members of the conference to undertake “the positive and aggressive tasks of ... a detailed reorganization of the materials of instruction in schools of all grades.”

Indeed, the 1920s and ‘30s were devoted to a total transformation of the public school curriculum. The work, in fact, was being done so vigorously that a reporter, attending the 1932 meeting of the NEA’s school superintendents department, held in Washington, D.C. and attended by John Dewey, Charles Judd and other Progressives, could write:

Here, in the very citadel of capitalism...this group of outstanding spokesmen of American education talked a remarkably strong brand of socialism.

Those were the days when a reporter could call socialism and socialists by their proper names. Today, socialists are called liberals.

Socialism and the National Education Association

When the progressives took control of the National Education Association during the period of World War I, in which the association established its headquarters in Washington, D.C., they intended to use the NEA as a means of influencing teachers so that their programs could be implemented in the schools with little or no resistance.

It is around this time that the NEA also became a maker of national education policy. Its Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education released its famous report in 1918, “The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education,” the blueprint for the new progressive curriculum. The Cardinal Principles emphasized the importance of the new psychology and how it should be applied in reforming public education. It expressed a collectivist view of democracy:

The purpose of democracy is so to organize society that each member may develop his personality primarily through activities designed for the well-being of his fellow members and of society as a whole.

In 1929, in celebration of his 70th birthday, John Dewey was named “Father of Progressive Education” by the NEA and awarded a “Life Membership.” In that same year, Dewey had written, “We are in for some kind of socialism, call it by whatever name we please, and no matter what it will be called when it is realized.”

During the 1930s the NEA *Journal* became radically pro-socialist with monthly editorials critical of capitalism. Its pro-socialist editor, Joy Elmer Morgan, controlled everything

that went into the Journal for 34 years, from 1921 to 1955. During that time, the progressives were so sympathetic toward communist Russia that they sponsored summer schools for American teachers in the Soviet Union.

One of the most frequent writers in the *NEA Journal* was rabid socialist Stuart Chase, author of *The New Deal*. In the March 1936 issue, he offered a minimum program for implementing socialism in America which would include “the nationalization of banking and credit; the use of the income tax to redistribute income and purchasing power, so that savings will be spent; the use of government credit to create vast new industries in the sector of public works and services; the progressive control by government of natural monopolies; the collective control of agriculture; wage and hour controls; consumer protection; and the extension of social security.”

In 1935, Willard E. Givens became president of the NEA. At the 1934 session of the NEA’s Department of Superintendence he had said that “many drastic changes must be made. A dying ‘laissez-faire’ must be completely destroyed and all of us, including the ‘owners,’ must be subjected to a large degree of social control.”

By the 1940s, the concept of globalist humanism had become the idea of world government. In an editorial in the January 1946 *NEA Journal* entitled “The Teacher and World Government,” Morgan wrote:

In the struggle to establish an adequate world government, the teacher has many parts to play. He must begin with his own attitude and knowledge and purpose. He can do much to prepare the hearts and minds of children for global understanding and cooperation.... At the very top of all the agencies which will assure the coming of world government must stand the school, the teacher, and the organized profession.

Since then, the NEA has been a strong supporter of the United Nations and UNESCO, which the NEA had a dominant hand in creating as a future World Board of Education. The NEA still promotes the socialist agenda of the Progressives. That agenda has been expanded to accept gays and lesbians as teachers. At their 1999 convention, they passed resolutions denouncing voucher plans, tuition tax credits, and urged state control of home schoolers and very strict gun control.

The Latest Phase

The latest phase in the march toward socialism via education was blue-printed by Marc Tucker, former director of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, and architect of a new “human resources development system.” With the help of a large grant in 1987 from Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, Tucker set up the National Center on Education and the Economy in Rochester, New York. The NCEE is the quintessential leftist think-tank with a sterling board of trustees from the liberal elite. Among its first members were Mario Cuomo (Honorary Chairman), John Sculley (former CEO of Apple Computer), James B. Hunt Jr. (former Governor of North Carolina), Hillary R. Clinton

(Partner in the Rose Law Firm), Louis Harris (of polling fame), Vera Katz (ultra liberal Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives), Ira C. Magaziner (Rhodes Scholar buddy of Bill Clinton), David Rockefeller, Jr. (Vice Chairman of Rockefeller Family & Associates), and others.

The Center's first report, *To Secure Our Future: The Federal Role in Education*, issued in 1989, proposed the basic agenda that was to lead to Goals 2000. The report helped frame the issues and shape the agreements that were made at the famous Education Summit at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, in the fall of 1989, in which Bill Clinton, then Governor of Arkansas, took a very active role. After the summit, the National Governors' Association asked the NCEE to assist in the development of national goals for education. These were the goals which were subsequently spelled out by President Bush in his 1990 State of the Union address. Thus it was that out of the mouth of a Republican President came an education agenda concocted in Marc Tucker's ultra-liberal think tank.

When Bill Clinton was elected President in 1992, Tucker wrote a lengthy letter to Hillary Clinton, in which he outlined his radical education agenda. He wrote:

What is essential is that we create a seamless web of opportunities to develop one's skills that literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone—young and old, poor and rich, worker and full-time student....Creating such a system means sweeping aside countless programs, building new ones, combining funding authorities, changing deeply embedded institutional structures, and so on. ... Radical changes in attitudes, values and beliefs are required to move any combination of these agendas....Bill's role at the Charlottesville summit leads naturally to a reconvening of that group, perhaps with the addition of key members of Congress and others.

Tucker was calling for socialist revolution and the Clintons managed to get a good deal of the revolution funded by Congress. On March 31, 1994, Congress enacted Goals 2000, described by one critic as "raw social engineering, intended to restructure all of American society and not just the schools." On May 4, 1994, Congress enacted the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, which established a formal partnership between the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. On October 20, 1994, the Improving America's Schools Act, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, was signed into law. All three laws were passed when Democrats controlled Congress. However, in November 1994, the Republicans won majorities in both houses of Congress.

Did this stop the socialist education juggernaut? In September 1995, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Consolidated and Reformed Education, Employment, and Rehabilitation Systems Act, more simply known as the Careers Act (HR 1617). In October, the Senate passed its version of the bill, the Workforce Development Act of 1995 (S. 143). Conservative activists who had read both bills realized that their purpose was to provide funding and full implementation of Marc Tucker's Human Resources

Development System. Their opposition delayed the bills' final reconciliation and passage, but a reconciled bill was finally passed and signed into law.

Oblivious to Congress was also the fact that the federal government had been developing a computerized system to gather detailed personal data on every student in America. To standardize this national data-collection system, the U.S. Department of Education published in 1994 a handbook entitled *Student Data Handbook for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education* (NCES 94-303). Development of this system had been going on for some time. In fact, a first version of the handbook was published in 1964, a second in 1974, and a revision of that version in 1976. The scope of the system reflected Marc Tucker's idea of a system that monitors an individual from cradle to grave.

A second handbook, *Staff Data Handbook: Elementary, Secondary and Early Childhood Education* (NCES 95-327) deals with information about teachers and other staff members. It is this carefully planned data-gathering system for students and teachers that gives away what the planners want: a means of controlling the population through compulsory schooling and remediation. They must have detailed, intimate information about each and every student in order to determine how that student is to be taught or remediated. And they must know as much about each teacher in the system to determine whether or not that teacher is loyal to the system's purpose. It is a system in the making for total social control.

Data will include all means of individual identification, religious affiliation by specific sect (a clear violation of church and state), complete medical and dental records, and results from a battery of assessment tests, such as: Achievement Test, Advanced Placement Test, Aptitude Test, Attitudinal Test—"An assessment to measure the mental and emotional set or patterns of likes and dislikes or opinions held by a student or a group of students. This is often used in relation to considerations such as controversial issues or personal adjustments."

What business is it of the federal government to collect data on your attitudes? What kind of "personal adjustments" are they referring to? Additional assessments include: Cognitive and Perceptual Skills, Developmental Observation, Interest Inventory, Language Proficiency Test, Manual Dexterity Test, Mental Ability (Intelligence) Test, Performance Assessment, Personality Test—"An assessment to measure a student's affective or nonintellectual aspects of behavior such as emotional adjustment, interpersonal relations, motivation, interests and attitudes." Portfolio Assessment, Psychological Test—"An assessment to measure a sample of behavior in an objective and standardized way." Psychomotor Test, and Reading Readiness Test.

What will the government do with all of this private, intimate, personal information? Who will have access to this data? And why should the government of a free people be collecting it in the first place? All of these tests will have been devised by the nation's leading behavioral psychologists whose theoretical goal is the control of human behavior. Clearly, our limited government is assuming unlimited power to control us.

behavior. Clearly, our limited government is assuming unconstitutional unlimited power to control us.

What can we expect from the new occupants of the White House? President Bush is using the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to get his reforms enacted into law. As of July 2001, both the House the Senate have passed their own versions, which must be reconciled in committee. That won't take place until the Fall of 2001. The major bone of contention is how to measure a school's improved achievement by a yearly progress report. Critics claim that the process is so complex that it may not be implementable.

Meanwhile, President Bush has increased spending on education by 11.5% to \$44.5 billion. It is a simple well-known truth by now that throwing more money at education does not result in improvement. Why? Because, when you give more money to the same people who have produced the system's failures, you get more of the same. But the irony is that to these educators the system is hardly a failure. It has achieved what the socialists have wanted: a dumbed-down population, more and more susceptible to control and manipulation by the socialist elite.