

from
Upholding the Law
and Other Observations

by
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Save The Children, Save The Future



As another September approaches, so too does another season of clamor regarding "values" in the nation's government schools. Sadly, all the effort and passion devoted to this debate will not only be completely ineffective at infusing the schools with virtuous character, it will actually be counterproductive, as it serves to divert the attention of parents and tax payers from clear thinking about the government education industry.

Parents who care about the culture in which their children are indoctrinated, or tax payers concerned about the kind of influences on future neighbors and voters for which they are paying, should face the inconvenient truth that satisfactory respect for liberty and high cultural standards will never flourish, or even abide, in government schools. Not only are such schools inherently socialist, being founded, financed, and administered through socialist processes, they quite properly reject a formal adoption of or respect for any particular world view. They ARE coercively funded, and it would be utterly wrong for them to formally promote any particular creed, values, or perspective. As Thomas Jefferson said,

"To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical."

Thus, such schools are incapable of offering an institutionally virtuous environment to which parents might commit a child. This would perhaps be acceptable by itself-- there are other forums in which virtue can be taught. But it is worse than simply that government schools cannot promote worthwhile values-- they of necessity promote destructive values. The problem is that they **MUST** promote some perspective, for an education of other than the narrowest scope cannot be "values neutral"

If an education was limited to math and the sciences, and even within that narrow range of subject matter was confined to only the numbers, values neutrality might be possible. But it is not possible under any circumstances to teach history, art, philosophy, literature, etc. objectively. All such material must be analyzed for causal relationships and interpreted as to meanings, and discriminatorily judged. Because this is so, and because the proper refusal of the schools to adopt any coherent, purposeful and time-tested perspective leaves a vacuum which must be filled, an inevitable proliferation of fads-- half-baked, contradictory, and self-serving-- and the mindless and nihilistic "values neutrality" of moral relativism and deconstructionism become the dominant cultural elements to which the students are exposed.

This corruptive process, natural in any institution not disciplined by a free market, has always been at play in the government schools. It is dramatically enhanced by court decisions bestowing on the pragmatic and socialist perspective the means to both impose itself and to suppress alternative influences. Every year that has passed since the government schools first became widespread in the early 20th century has

seen an increasingly large and centralized bureaucracy grow more insular, alien, and less responsive to an increasingly captive "clientele", to whom every nickel of increased taxation extracted to support the government school is one less nickel available for buying an alternative private education.

The only productive response by parents and taxpayers to dissatisfaction or dismay with the government school cultural atmosphere is withdrawal. Withdrawal of children and withdrawal of support. To seek or endorse reform is to merely delay facing the truth, and in the meantime more irretrievable years of the children's lives are lost-- or worse. Here is another quote, which like the words of Thomas Jefferson cited earlier contains wisdom, but from the opposite end of the moral spectrum: V. I. Lenin, commenting with satisfaction on the performance of the government schools in the Soviet Union said,

"Give me a child for ten years, and I will give you a communist for life."

The public school version of this is:

"Give me a child for twelve years, and I will give you an adult who is incapable of distinguishing right from wrong; certain that respect and reward are entitlements with no relationship to effort or accomplishment; a well-taught enemy of clarifying logic and intellectual rigor; and not only oblivious as to why any of these things are significant, but convinced that anyone not similarly handicapped is an enemy of social justice."

While the refusal to pay the taxes extracted to finance government schools may not be practical (though they should be resisted and denounced with both words and votes), the refusal to surrender the children is certainly within the means and power of most two-parent households, as well as many single parents. In both situations, private schools offer fine alternatives to government schools at very reasonable prices,

and the two-parent families have available the best possible educational approach: homeschooling. This alternative, rapidly gaining in popularity throughout all areas of the country and in all segments of society, offers unparalleled quality-of-life benefits as well as outstanding academic results, and for minimal costs of both money and time. It is viciously criticized by the government education establishment-- what more need be said to prove its worth?

Those voicing their concerns about the cultural morass into which the vast majority of the nation's children are thrown *do* have clear vision as to the gravity of the problem. There is no greater threat to the health and preservation of liberty and morality in America than these corrupt schools, churning out illiterate, cocky, ignorant socialists ready and waiting to vote and serve on juries-- along with an occasional literate and technically competent ethical void on the fast track to a career as a judge or politician. The education of our children is the future of America. In that regard, today's disgrace is tomorrow's catastrophe, and the magnitude of that catastrophe grows with each passing moment. Thus, patience with the niceties of debate or the political process is worse than simply time wasted, it is ground lost.

It's time to act, implementing some of the 'values' whose lack in the public schools trouble so many of us. Values such as taking individual responsibility for that future, and for the well-being of those children, even if the prospect sounds a little inconvenient or frightening. So, if you have school-age kids, look into homeschooling. Whether you have school-age kids or not, do everything possible to marginalize and defund government schools, in recognition of the fact that they are not simply not your friend-- they are your enemy. Each of us can be either the master of the future, or its victim. Master is better.