

# THE BOOK EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO READ

By Laura Dawn Lewis

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APRIL 15, 2007: After Katrina hit New Orleans and the South, I watched in horror as one after another those interviews displayed a first reaction of, "Where is the US government?"

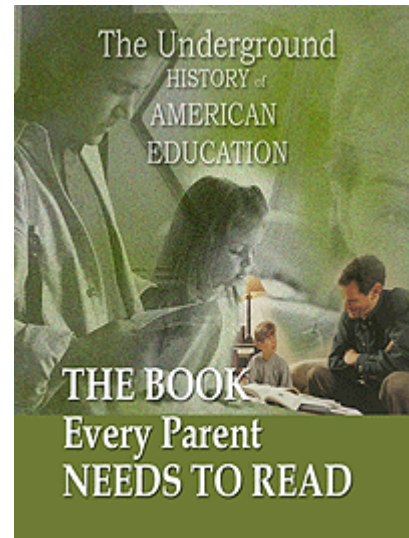
Rather than band together and work together, people waited to be told what to do. Where did that mindset come from? The United States built itself on self-sufficiency, communities and families working together. Waiting for the government to 'save' us...'protect' us, a hundred and fifty years ago would have been unthinkable. What happened?

When did the American people trade independence in thought and deed for government solutions? Where did we learn this? Each question, Gatto answers decisively his book, *The Underground History of American Education*. If ever exists an eye-opener for parents and the American people, this is it. Upon reading his book, many issues you've suspected become clear, and you'll know what to do about them. This book fills in the blanks you suspected, but dared not question.

More importantly, blame lies with the system, a system larger than a district, parent or community. A system created by outside circumstances such as the need for two income households (the direct result of unconstitutional income taxes and increased consumerism), corporate needs and channeled investments. Private schools show only a slightly better track record. Gatto demonstrates in *The Underground History of American Education* how this system evolved and why.

## MY EXPERIENCE

I went through school during the seventies and eighties and often remember sitting in class, bored out of my mind. It wasn't until completing college and engaging people well beyond my level of knowledge, experience and global awareness that a nagging realization bubbled forth. What exactly did I learn in school?



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Basically I learned how to regurgitate information, memorize facts, take multiple choice tests, (which I always hated because each answer effectively may be right given a particular circumstance). I watched a lot of movies with men in horn-rimmed glasses and yes, I read. But my passion for reading developed due to parental influence. My parents preferred to shut off the 'boob tube' and curl up with a good book. Back then we only had one television for the family (with a little black and white in mom and dad's room). Family time allowed one hour a night. Bedtime was 8:30 or 9:00PM.

My junior year of high school I spent overseas at a private Catholic High School, learning in another language, (which was tough for about four months. By six months I was fluent in the new language because nobody spoke English, therefore I learned quickly). School overseas was much more scholastic and intense, very remedial and absent of fluff. Yes, I was a 'good student', scoring in the top ten percent for all the important tests and basically liked learning. No I'm not a genius.

But again, most of my learning came after hours, not at school through documentaries, magazines, books and historical series. Yet with all this, a good student at some of the best public districts in the country, self-study fanatic, avid news consumer and curious, I didn't learn a lot. Not the stuff that counts, like how to think, question, scrutinize and dig. In the real world, once around really smart people, I realized how little I knew and how drastically unprepared I was.

I discovered later propaganda played an important role in my education. I actually thought the Civil War occurred to 'Free the Slaves', (It didn't. That was a positive outcome). Like most Americans I came out of school confusing the Constitution (a job description designating the separation of powers) with the Bill of Rights, (the first ten amendments added later to clarify basic rights). That type of ignorance works well when as an adult you're surrounded by others with the same ignorance. But it is deadly to your credibility once you step outside of the educational cocoon and begin speaking with those who didn't receive our conditioning and actually do know these things. Things as an American I should.

## **USING SCHOOLS TO PRESS AGENDAS**

Political agendas easily slipped in during my tour of duty in the American education system and increasingly corporations, special interests groups and even our military, any group wishing to 'get 'em while they're young' have altered today's curriculums to promote their causes whether homosexuality, various environmental issues (such as coal being a green fuel) or service in maintaining our overseas empire, (no matter how they spin it, any base overseas is offensive, not defensive in nature).

In my day, the big propaganda push was reproductive health from birth control to choice. Like all dutiful American girls culture taught me that Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, represented the most courageous of all women, championing the rights of each to her own body, her own destiny and her own life. A noble woman who empowered every American woman, we owed her our respect and our new found

freedom. I believed this until the turn of the century. Then I started dating a man who held the complete opposite view as me on this issue. After a rather heated argument I decided to ask a few questions and challenge my own position.

In education, the ability to see both sides of an argument for its merits is referred to as critical thinking, if critical thinking were taught in school. Like many, I had to teach myself and at it wasn't always pretty. I started reading through Sanger's speeches, articles and advocacy. Sanger, by her own words and admissions was a white supremacist and a Zionist, two ideologies that place one type of people (due to faith or race) as superior to another, something I consider reprehensible. Her concern and purpose for starting Planned Parenthood, again according to her own words, wasn't for women and reproductive health. Her concern was to limit the number of as she saw them, less than desirable people: the poor, persons of color, average to low intelligence--in reality an agenda hidden under an opaque claim of helping the poor with true intentions of limiting the growth of certain classes of people she deemed inferior. That information gives a new twist to the whole pro-life, pro-choice debate, no doubt one reason for its suppression or omission. It also forced me to seriously re-examine everything I thought I believed and why.

Fluoridated water is another example, this time using government and then the schools to push through something unhealthy as healthy for corporate gain by eliminating the need to dispose of a chemical in a costly manner. Instead add it to the water supply and tell people it gets rid of cavities.

Soon I challenged other beliefs and positions I thought based upon pure fact. Political correctness, a euphemism for censorship, combined with fear of being outcast, ostracized or ridiculed contributes to our society's fear of confrontation and it is taught in our schools through the stress of uniformity, conformity and obedience.

As I questioned, (and started a lot of arguments with people) several of my firmly held beliefs revealed themselves to be based upon less fact and more agenda with liberal doses of myth. Lesson learned. And an easy lesson to teach in school but is not. Perhaps because it is hard to start wars when people are conditioned to question your 'facts' rather than accept them? No, that couldn't be it. Hmmm.

## **ELIMINATING SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Schools today function as hotbeds of misinformation, propaganda, censorship and conformity, thus failing to teach the tools necessary for a society to be informed, engaged, independent and self-sufficient. These skills don't meld well with a drone society of 'yes' men. Thinking people defy control. They're a bit difficult to rule.

Within our education system critical thinking, questioning, espousing, curiosity, the art of written or spoken communication increasingly fall to the margins. Our children learn conditioning, how to follow rather than lead, how to depend upon the state rather than

each other and how to limit their frontiers. According to those who create our standards, elementary aged children can only learn 550 words a year?

Poppycock! Children are sponges, curious and eager to learn. Rather than tap into that, today through institutionalization we place blinders, brakes and shackles on it. By age ten, most children dutifully become state wards, mentally, dumbed down, bored and more interested in letting their video games, television and other distractions create their fantasy worlds, tell them how to think or how to act. (The Federal Reserve and Tax System contribute to this; to my amazement Gatto goes into that too).

Before institutionalized schooling, Gatto shows how eight year olds in 1847 read at a senior college student level...eight year olds reading better than most senior executives today! He also shows that the average person can learn to read by his or herself in just 30-hours. In fact they did before forced schooling. Even African Americans in the 1840's who were kept out of the US society, 80% could read. That's a higher percentage then, when many were slaves than today when all are free. Almost 100% of white children back then read exceptionally well too. So what happened?

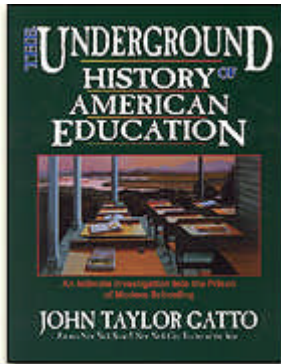
What happened is happening and parents today can change the system. The growth of home-schooling owes itself to what Gatto reveals. After reading it, thou lukewarm on the subject of home schooling, I personally decide if so blessed, my children will be home schooled, (at least through the sixth grade) so they learn to think critically, learn to love learning and never acquiesce simply due to authority.

## **WHERE TO GET IT**

This book remains so thorough in its treatment of American education's past 200 years and what it has done to our society that I now give this book as a baby shower gift. Each couple I've given it to thanks me profusely, stating upon its completion, it remains the most valuable gift they've ever received.

But isn't that what knowledge is supposed to be?

[All 18 chapters are available online](#) for free or you can purchase the [book for \\$34.95](#). I first read the download version, making notes and then purchased the actual book. Below is an excerpt from the book. <END>



EXCERPT FROM  
JOHN TAYLOR GATTO'S

## *The Underground History of American Education*

### CHAPTER TWO

#### *An Angry Look At Modern Schooling*

The secret of American schooling is that it doesn't teach the way children learn and it isn't supposed to. It took seven years of reading and reflection to finally figure out that mass schooling of the young by force was a creation of the four great coal powers of the nineteenth century. Nearly one hundred years later, on April 11, 1933, Max Mason, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, announced to insiders that a comprehensive national program was underway to allow, in Mason's words, "the control of human behavior."

#### **A Change In The Governing Mind**

Sometimes the best hiding place is right in the open. It took seven years of reading and reflection for me to finally figure out that mass schooling of the young by force was a creation of the four great coal powers of the nineteenth century. It was under my nose, of course, but for years I avoided seeing what was there because no one else seemed to notice. Forced schooling arose from the new logic of the Industrial Age—the logic imposed on flesh and blood by fossil fuel and high-speed machinery.

This simple reality is hidden from view by early philosophical and theological anticipations of mass schooling in various writings about social order and human nature. But you shouldn't be fooled any more than Charles Francis Adams was fooled when he observed in 1880 that what was being cooked up for kids unlucky enough to be snared by the newly proposed institutional school net combined characteristics of the cotton mill and the railroad with those of a state prison.

After the Civil War, utopian speculative analysis regarding isolation of children in custodial compounds where they could be subjected to deliberate molding routines, began to be discussed seriously by the Northeastern policy elites of business, government, and university life. These discussions were inspired by a growing realization that the productive potential of machinery driven by coal was limitless. Railroad development made possible by coal and startling new inventions like the telegraph, seemed suddenly to make village life and local dreams irrelevant. A new governing mind was emerging in harmony with the new reality.

The principal motivation for this revolution in family and community life might seem to be greed, but this surface appearance conceals philosophical visions approaching religious exaltation in intensity—that effective early indoctrination of all children would lead to an orderly scientific society, one controlled by

the best people, now freed from the obsolete straitjacket of democratic traditions and historic American libertarian attitudes.

Forced schooling was the medicine to bring the whole continental population into conformity with these plans so that it might be regarded as a "human resource" and managed as a "workforce." No more Ben Franklins or Tom Edisons could be allowed; they set a bad example. One way to manage this was to see to it that individuals were prevented from taking up their working lives until an advanced age when the ardor of youth and its insufferable self-confidence had cooled.

### Extending Childhood

From the beginning, there was purpose behind forced schooling, purpose which had nothing to do with what parents, kids, or communities wanted. Instead, this grand purpose was forged out of what a highly centralized corporate economy and system of finance bent on internationalizing itself was thought to need; that, and what a strong, centralized political state needed, too. School was looked upon from the first decade of the twentieth century as a branch of industry and a tool of governance. For a considerable time, probably provoked by a climate of official anger and contempt directed against immigrants in the greatest displacement of people in history, social managers of schooling were remarkably candid about what they were doing. In a speech he gave before businessmen prior to the First World War, Woodrow Wilson made this unabashed disclosure:

We want one class to have a liberal education. We want another class, a very much larger class of necessity, to forgo the privilege of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks.

By 1917, the major administrative jobs in American schooling were under the control of a group referred to in the press of that day as "the Education Trust." The first meeting of this trust included representatives of Rockefeller, Carnegie, Harvard, Stanford, the University of Chicago, and the National Education Association. The chief end, wrote Benjamin Kidd, the British evolutionist, in 1918, was to "impose on the young the ideal of subordination."

At first, the primary target was the tradition of independent livelihoods in America. Unless Yankee entrepreneurialism could be extinguished, at least among the common population, the immense capital investments that mass production industry required for equipment weren't conceivably justifiable. Students were to learn to think of themselves as *employees* competing for the favor of management. Not as Franklin or Edison had once regarded themselves, as self-determined, free agents.

Only by a massive psychological campaign could the menace of *overproduction* in America be contained. That's what important men and academics called it. The ability of Americans to think as independent producers had to be curtailed. Certain writings of Alexander Inglis carry a hint of schooling's role in this ultimately successful project to curb the tendency of little people to compete with big companies. From 1880 to 1930, overproduction became a controlling metaphor among the managerial classes, and this idea would have a profound influence on the development of mass schooling.

I know how difficult it is for most of us who mow our lawns and walk our dogs to comprehend that long-range social engineering even exists, let alone that it began to dominate compulsion schooling nearly a century ago. Yet the 1934 edition of Ellwood P. Cubberley's *Public Education in the United States* is explicit about what happened and why. As Cubberley puts it:

It has come to be desirable that children should not engage in productive labor. On the contrary, all recent thinking...[is] opposed to their doing so. Both the interests of organized labor and the interests of the nation have set against child labor.

The statement occurs in a section of *Public Education* called "A New Lengthening of the Period of Dependence," in which Cubberley explains that "the coming of the factory system" has made extended childhood necessary by depriving children of the training and education that farm and village life once gave. With the breakdown of home and village industries, the passing of chores, and the extinction of the apprenticeship system by large-scale production with its extreme division of labor (and the "all conquering march of machinery"), an army of workers has arisen, said Cubberley, who know nothing.

*Furthermore, modern industry needs such workers.* Sentimentality could not be allowed to stand in the way of progress. According to Cubberley, with "much ridicule from the public press" the old book-subject curriculum was set aside, replaced by a change in purpose and "a new psychology of instruction which came to us from abroad." That last mysterious reference to a new psychology is to practices of dumbed-down schooling common to England, Germany, and France, the three major world coal-powers (other than the United States), each of which had already converted its common population into an industrial proletariat.

Arthur Calhoun's 1919 *Social History of the Family* notified the nation's academics what was happening. Calhoun declared that the fondest wish of utopian writers was coming true, the child was passing from its family "into the custody of community experts." He offered a significant forecast, that in time we could expect to see public education "designed to check the mating of the unfit." Three years later, Mayor John F. Hylan of New York said in a public speech that the schools had been seized as an octopus would seize prey, by "an invisible government." He was referring specifically to certain actions of the Rockefeller Foundation and other corporate interests in New York City which preceded the school riots of 1917.

The 1920s were a boom period for forced schooling as well as for the stock market. In 1928, a well-regarded volume called *A Sociological Philosophy of Education* claimed, "It is the business of teachers to run not merely schools but the world." A year later, the famous creator of educational psychology, Edward Thorndike of Columbia Teachers College, announced, "Academic subjects are of little value." William Kirkpatrick, his colleague at Teachers College, boasted in *Education and the Social Crisis* that the whole tradition of rearing the young was being made over by experts.

### **The Geneticist's Manifesto**

Meanwhile, at the project offices of an important employer of experts, the Rockefeller Foundation, friends were hearing from Max Mason, its president, that a comprehensive national program was underway to allow, in Mason's words, "the control of human behavior." This dazzling ambition was announced on April 11, 1933. Schooling figured prominently in the design.

Rockefeller had been inspired by the work of Eastern European scientist Hermann Müller to invest heavily in genetics. Müller had used x-rays to override genetic law, inducing mutations in fruit flies. This seemed to open the door to the scientific control of life itself. Müller preached that planned breeding would bring mankind to paradise faster than God. His proposal received enthusiastic endorsement from the greatest scientists of the day as well as from powerful economic interests.

Müller would win the Nobel Prize, reduce his proposal to a fifteen-hundred-word *Geneticists' Manifesto*, and watch with satisfaction as twenty-two distinguished American and British biologists of the day signed it. The state must prepare to consciously guide human sexual selection, said Müller. School would have to separate worthwhile breeders from those slated for termination.

Just a few months before this report was released, an executive director of the National Education Association announced that his organization expected "to accomplish by education what dictators in Europe are seeking to do by compulsion and force." You can't get much clearer than that. WWII drove the project underground, but hardly retarded its momentum. Following cessation of global hostilities, school became a major domestic battleground for the scientific rationalization of social affairs through compulsory indoctrination. Great private corporate foundations led the way.

## Participatory Democracy Put To The Sword

Thirty-odd years later, between 1967 and 1974, teacher training in the United States was covertly revamped through coordinated efforts of a small number of private foundations, select universities, global corporations, think tanks, and government agencies, all coordinated through the U.S. Office of Education and through key state education departments like those in California, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York.

Important milestones of the transformation were: 1) an extensive government exercise in futurology called *Designing Education for the Future*, 2) the *Behavioral Science Teacher Education Project*, and 3) Benjamin Bloom's multivolume *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, an enormous manual of over a thousand pages which, in time, impacted every school in America. While other documents exist, these three are appropriate touchstones of the whole, serving to make clear the nature of the project underway.

Take them one by one and savor each. *Designing Education*, produced by the Education Department, redefined the term "education" after the Prussian fashion as "a means to achieve important economic and social goals of a national character." State education agencies would henceforth act as on-site federal enforcers, ensuring the compliance of local schools with central directives. Each state education department was assigned the task of becoming "an agent of change" and advised to "lose its independent identity as well as its authority," in order to "form a partnership with the federal government."

The second document, the gigantic *Behavioral Science Teacher Education Project*, outlined teaching reforms to be forced on the country after 1967. If you ever want to hunt this thing down, it bears the U.S. Office of Education Contract Number OEC-0-9-320424-4042 (B10). The document sets out clearly the intentions of its creators—nothing less than "impersonal manipulation" through schooling of a future America in which "few will be able to maintain control over their opinions," an America in which "each individual receives at birth a multi-purpose identification number" which enables employers and other controllers to keep track of underlings and to expose them to direct or subliminal influence when necessary. Readers learned that "chemical experimentation" on minors would be normal procedure in this post-1967 world, a pointed foreshadowing of the massive Ritalin interventions which now accompany the practice of forced schooling.

The *Behavioral Science Teacher Education Project* identified the future as one "in which a small elite" will control all important matters, one where participatory democracy will largely disappear. Children are made to see, through school experiences, that their classmates are so cruel and irresponsible, so inadequate to the task of self-discipline, and so ignorant they need to be controlled and regulated for society's good. Under such a logical regime, school terror can only be regarded as good advertising. It is sobering to think of mass schooling as a vast demonstration project of human inadequacy, but that is at least one of its functions.

Post-modern schooling, we are told, is to focus on "pleasure cultivation" and on "other attitudes and skills compatible with a non-work world." Thus the socialization classroom of the century's beginning—itsself a radical departure from schooling for mental and character development—can be seen to have evolved by 1967 into a full-scale laboratory for psychological experimentation. School conversion was assisted powerfully by a curious phenomenon of the middle to late 1960s, a tremendous rise in school violence and general school chaos which followed a policy declaration (which seems to have occurred nationwide) that the disciplining of children must henceforth mimic the "due process" practice of the court system. Teachers and administrators were suddenly stripped of any effective ability to keep order in schools since the due process apparatus, of necessity a slow, deliberate matter, is completely inadequate to the continual outbreaks of childish mischief all schools experience.

Now, without the time-honored ad hoc armory of disciplinary tactics to fall back on, disorder spiraled out of control, passing from the realm of annoyance into more dangerous terrain entirely as word surged through student bodies that teacher hands were tied. And each outrageous event that reached the attention of the local press served as an advertisement for expert prescriptions. Who had ever seen kids behave this

way? Time to surrender community involvement to the management of experts; time also for emergency measures like special education and Ritalin. During this entire period, lasting five to seven years, outside agencies like the Ford Foundation exercised the right to supervise whether "children's rights" were being given due attention, fanning the flames hotter even long after trouble had become virtually unmanageable.

The *Behavioral Science Teacher Education Project*, published at the peak of this violence, informed teacher-training colleges that under such circumstances, teachers had to be trained as therapists; they must translate prescriptions of social psychology into "practical action" in the classroom. As curriculum had been redefined, so teaching followed suit.

Third in the series of new gospel texts was Bloom's *Taxonomy*, in his own words, "a tool to classify the ways individuals are to act, think, or feel as the result of some unit of instruction." Using methods of behavioral psychology, children would learn proper thoughts, feelings, and actions, and have their improper attitudes brought from home "remediated."

In all stages of the school experiment, testing was essential to localize the child's mental state on an official rating scale. Bloom's epic spawned important descendant forms: Mastery Learning, Outcomes-Based Education, and School to Work government-business collaborations. Each classified individuals for the convenience of social managers and businesses, each offered data useful in controlling the mind and movements of the young, mapping the next adult generation. But for what purpose? Why was this being done?

### **Bad Character As A Management Tool**

A large piece of the answer can be found by reading between the lines of an article that appeared in the June 1998 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Written by Mortimer Zuckerman, owner of *U.S. News and World Report* (and other major publications), the essay praises the American economy, characterizing its lead over Europe and Asia as so structurally grounded no nation can possibly catch up for 100 years. American workers and the American managerial system are unique. [MORE](#)