

## Prologue

**The shocking possibility that dumb people don't exist in sufficient numbers to warrant the millions of careers devoted to tending them will seem incredible to you. Yet that is my central proposition: the mass dumbness which justifies official schooling first had to be dreamed of; it isn't real.**

- [Bianca, You Animal, Shut Up!](#)
- [I Quit, I Think](#)
- [The New Individualism](#)
- [School As Religion](#)
- [He Was Square Inside And Brown](#)
- [The New Dumbness](#)
- [Putting Pedagogy To The Question](#)
- [Author's Note](#)

## PART ONE

Of Schooling, Education, And Myself

### Chapter One

The Way It Used To Be

Our official assumptions about the nature of modern childhood are dead wrong. Children allowed to take responsibility and given a serious part in the larger world are always superior to those merely permitted to play and be passive. At the age of twelve, Admiral Farragut got his first command. I was in fifth grade when I learned of this. Had Farragut gone to my school he would have been in seventh.

- [A Nation From The Bottom Up](#)
- [You Had To Do It Yourself](#)
- [No Limit To Pain For Those Who Allow It](#)
- [The Art Of Driving](#)
- [Two Approaches To Discipline](#)
- [The Schools Of Hellas](#)
- [The Fresco At Herculaneum](#)
- [The Seven Liberal Arts](#)

- [The Platonic Ideal](#)
- [Oriental Pedagogy](#)
- [Counter-Attack On Democracy](#)
- [How Hindu Schooling Came To America \(I\)](#)
- [How Hindu Schooling Came To America \(II\)](#)
- [How Hindu Schooling Came To America \(III\)](#)
- [Braddock's Defeat](#)
- [Farragut](#)
  
- [Ben Franklin](#)
- [George Washington](#)
- [Montaigne's Curriculum](#)

## **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](#)
- [Extending Childhood](#)
- [The Geneticist's Manifesto](#)
- [Participatory Democracy Put To The Sword](#)
- [Bad Character As A Management Tool](#)
- [An Enclosure Movement For Children](#)
- [The Dangan](#)

- [Occasional Letter Number One](#)
- [Change Agents Infiltrate](#)
- [Bionomics](#)
- [Waking Up Angry](#)

### **Chapter Three**

#### Eyeless In Gaza

Something strange has been going on in government schools, especially where the matter of reading is concerned. Abundant data exist to show that by 1840 the incidence of complex literacy in the United States was between 93 and 100 percent, wherever such a thing mattered. Yet compulsory schooling existed nowhere. Between the two world wars, schoolmen seem to have been assigned the task of terminating our universal reading proficiency.

- [The School Edition](#)
- [Intellectual Espionage](#)
- [Looking Behind Appearances](#)
- [The Sudbury Valley School](#)
- [Bootie Zimmer](#)
- [False Premises](#)
- [A System Of State Propaganda](#)
- [The Ideology Of The Text](#)
- [The National Adult Literacy Survey](#)
- [Name Sounds, Not Things](#)
- [The Meatgrinder Classroom](#)
- [The Ignorant Schoolmaster](#)
- [Frank Had A Dog; His Name Was Spot](#)
- [The Pedagogy of Literacy](#)
- [Dick And Jane](#)

### **Chapter Four**

#### I Quit, I Think

I lived through the great transformation which turned schools from often useful places into laboratories of state experimentation with the lives of children, a form of pornography masquerading as pedagogical science. All theories of child-rearing talk in averages, but the evidence of your own eyes and ears tells you that average men and women don't really exist except as a statistical conceit.

- [Wadleigh, The Death School](#)
- [Dr. Caleb Gattegno, Expert](#)
- [Intimidation](#)
- [Hector Of The Feeble-Mind](#)
- [Hector Isn't The Problem](#)
- [One Lawyer Equals 3,000 Reams of Paper](#)
- [The Great Transformation](#)
- [Education As A Helix Sport](#)
- [I'm Outta Here!](#)

## **PART TWO**

### The Foundations Of Schooling

#### **Chapter Five**

##### True Believers And The Unspeakable Chautauqua

From start to finish, school as we know it is a tale of true believers and how they took the children to a land far away. All of us have a tiny element of true believer in our makeups. You have only to reflect on some of your own wild inner urges and the lunatic gleam that comes into your own eyes on those occasions to begin to understand what might happen if those impulses were made a permanent condition.

- [Munsterberg And His Disciples](#)
- [The Prototype Is A Schoolteacher](#)
- [Teachers College Maintains The Planet](#)
- [A Lofty, Somewhat Inhuman Vision](#)
- [Rain Forest Algebra](#)

- [Godless, But Not Irreligious](#)
- [An Insider's Insider](#)
- [Compulsion Schooling](#)
- [De-Moralizing School Procedure](#)
- [William Torrey Harris](#)
- [Cardinal Principles](#)
- [The Unspeakable Chautauqua](#)

## **Chapter Six**

### The Lure Of Utopia

Presumably humane utopian interventions like compulsion schooling aren't always the blessing they appear to be. For instance, Sir Humphrey Davy's safety lamp saved thousands of coalminers from gruesome death, but it wasted many more lives than it rescued. That lamp alone allowed the coal industry to grow rapidly, exposing miners to mortal danger for which there is no protection. What Davy did for coal producers, forced schooling has done for the corporate economy.

- [So Fervently Do We Believe](#)
- [The Necessity Of Detachment](#)
- [Enlarging The Nervous System](#)
- [Producing Artificial Wants](#)
- [The Parens Patriae Powers](#)
- [The Plan Advances](#)
- [Children's Court](#)
- [Mr.Young's Head Was Pounded To Jelly](#)
- [William Rainey Harper](#)
- [Death Dies](#)
- [The Three Most Popular Books](#)
- [No Place To Hide](#)
- [The Irony Of The Safety Lamp](#)

## Chapter Seven

### The Prussian Connection

In 1935, at the University of Chicago's experimental school where John Dewey had once held sway, Howard C. Hill, head of the social science department, published an inspirational textbook called *The Life and Work of the Citizen*. The title page clearly shows four cartoon hands symbolizing law, order, science, and the trades interlocked to form a perfect swastika. By 1935, Prussian pattern and Prussian goals had embedded themselves so deeply into the vitals of institutional schooling that hardly a soul noticed the traditional purposes of the enterprise were being abandoned.

- [The Land Of Frankenstein](#)
- [The Long Reach Of The Teutonic Knights](#)
- [The Prussian Reform Movement](#)
- [Travelers' Reports](#)
- [Finding Work For Intellectuals](#)
- [The Technology Of Subjection](#)
- [The German/American Reichsbank](#)

## Chapter Eight

### A Coal-Fired Dream World

A dramatic shift to mass production and mass schooling occurred in the same heady rush. Mass production could not be rationalized unless the population accepted massification. In a democratic republic, school was the only reliable long-range instrument available to accomplish this. Older American forms of schooling would not have been equal to the responsibility which coal, steam, steel, and machinery laid upon the national leadership. Coal demanded the schools we have and so we got them—as an ultimate act of rationality.

- [Coal At The Bottom Of Things](#)
- [The Demon Of Overproduction](#)
- [The Quest For Arcadia](#)
- [Managerial Utopia](#)

- [The Positive Method](#)
- [Plato's Guardians](#)
- [Far-Sighted Businessmen](#)
- [Coal Gives The Coup De Grâce](#)
- [The Spectre Of Uncontrolled Breeding](#)
- [Global Associations Of Technique](#)
- [Labor Becomes Expendable](#)
- [Burying Children Alive](#)
- [The End Of Competition](#)
- [America Is Massified](#)
- [German Mind Science](#)

## **Chapter Nine**

### The Cult Of Scientific Management

"In the past," Frederick Taylor wrote, "Man has been first. In the future, System must be first." The thought processes of the standardized worker had to be standardized, too, in order to render him a dependable consumer. Scientific management spread rapidly from the factory into the schools to seek this goal.

- [Frederick W. Taylor](#)
- [The Adoption Of Business Organization By Schools](#)
- [The Ford System And The Kronstadt Commune](#)
- [The National Press Attack On Academic Schooling](#)
- [The Fabian Spirit](#)
- [The Open Conspiracy](#)
- [An Everlasting Faith](#)
- [Regulating Lives Like Machinery](#)
- [The Gary Plan](#)

- [The Jewish Student Riots](#)
- [The Rockefeller Report](#)
- [Obstacles On The Road To Centralization](#)

## **PART THREE**

A Personal Interlude

### **Chapter Ten**

My Green River

The great destructive myth of the twentieth century was the aggressive contention that a child could not grow up correctly in the unique circumstances of his own family. Forced schooling was the principal agency broadcasting this attitude.

The Character Of A Village Singing And Fishing Were Free The Greatest Fun Was Watching People Work  
Sitting In The Dark I Hung Around A Lot In Monongahela Shooting Birds On Punishment Separations  
Principles Frances "Bootie" Zimmer Walking Around Monongahela The College Of Zimmer And Hegel **PART  
FOUR**

Metamorphosis

### **Chapter Eleven**

The Crunch

The experience of global war gave official school reform a grand taste for what was possible. Government intervention was proclaimed the antidote for all dissent. In every nook and cranny of American life new social organizations flourished, all feeding on intervention into personal sovereignty and family life. A new republic was here at last just as Herbert Croly announced, and government school was its church.

The Struggle For Homogeneity Eugenics Arrives Mr. Hitler Reads Mr. Ford Racial Suicide The Passing Of The  
Great Race The Poison Of Democracy The American Protective League Guaranteed Customers Industrial  
Efficiency High Pressure Salesmanship A New Collectivism



**Chapter Twelve**

Daughters Of The Barons  
of Runnemedede

The new compulsion-school institution was assigned the task of fixing the social order into place, albeit with the cautions of Pareto and Mosca kept in mind. Society was to reflect the needs of modern corporate organization and the requirements of rational evolution. The best breeding stock had to be protected and displayed. The supreme challenge was to specify who was who in the new hierarchical order.

The Scientifically Humane Future Exclusive Heredity Divinely Appointed Intelligence The Paxton Boys Soldiers For Their Class Organizing Caste Your Family Tree The Fatal Sound Shift Our Manifest Destiny The Lost Tribes Unpopular Government Kinship Is Mythical The Machine Gun Builds Hotchkiss Fountains Of Business Wealth The General Education Board And Friends

**Chapter Thirteen**

The Empty Child

The basic hypothesis of utopia-building is that the structure of personhood can be broken and reformed again and again. The notion of empty children was the most important concept which inspired social architects and engineers to believe that schools could indeed be remade into socialization laboratories.

Miss Skinner Sleeps Scientifically Behaviorists Plasticity Elasticity Emptiness: The Master Theory A Metaphysical Commitment The Limits Of Behavioral Theory Reality Engages The Banana Programming The Empty Child Dr. Watson Presumes Cleaning The Canvas Therapy As Curriculum The New Thought Tide To Abolish Thinking Wundt! Napoleon Of Mind Science What Is Sanity? Bending The Student To Reality Paying Children To Learn

**Chapter Fourteen**

Absolute Absolution

God was pitched out of forced schooling on his ear after WWII. This wasn't because of any constitutional

proscription—there was none that anyone had been able to find in over a century and a half—but because the political state and corporate economy considered the Western spiritual tradition too dangerous a competitor. And it is.

The Problem Of God Spirits Are Dangerous Foundations Of The Western Outlook Codes Of Meaning The Scientific Curriculum Everson v. Board of Education (1947) Judaism The Dalai Lama And The Genius Of The West Religion And Rationality The Illusion Of Punishment

## **Chapter Fifteen**

The Psychopathology Of Everyday Schooling

None of the familiar school sequences is defensible according to the rules of evidence, all are arbitrary; most grounded in superstition or aesthetic prejudice of one sort or another. Pestalozzi's basic "Simple to Complex" formulation, for instance, is a prescription for disaster in the classroom.

An Arena Of Dishonesty The Game Is Crooked Psychopathic Programming What Really Goes On Pathology As A Natural Byproduct A Critical Appraisal Vox Populi The Systems Idea In Action

## **PART FIVE**

The Problem Of Modern Schooling

## **Chapter Sixteen**

A Conspiracy Against Ourselves

Spare yourself the anxiety of thinking of this school thing as a conspiracy, even though the project is indeed riddled with petty conspirators. It was and is a fully rational transaction in which all of us play a part. We trade the liberty of our kids and our free will for a secure social order and a very prosperous economy. It's a bargain in which most of us agree to become as children ourselves, under the same tutelage which holds the young, in exchange for food, entertainment, and safety. The difficulty is that the contract fixes the goal of human life so low that students go mad trying to escape it.

- Two Social Revolutions Become One

- The Fear Of Common Intelligence
- The Cult Of Forced Schooling
- Disinherited Men And Women
- Serving The Imperial Virus
- Quill-Driving Babus
- The Release From Tutelage

## **Chapter Seventeen**

### The Politics Of Schooling

At the heart of the durability of mass schooling is a brilliantly designed power fragmentation system which distributes decision-making so widely among so many warring interests that large-scale change is impossible without a guidebook. Few insiders understand how to steer this ship and the few who do may have lost the will to control it.

- Three Holes In My Floor
- Power ÷ 22
- Valhalla
- I'm A Flunky, So's My Kid
- It's Not Your Money
- A Billion, Six For KC
- Education's Most Powerful Voice
- Letter To The Editor
- Letter To The Principal
- Who Controls American Education?
- The Logical Tragedy Of Benson, Vermont Natural Selection
- The Great Transformation
- Propaganda
- Freud's Nephew

- Magic At Work
- The Culture Of Big Business
- Four Kinds Of Classroom
- The Planetary Management Corporation

## **Chapter Eighteen**

### Breaking Out Of The Trap

The only conceivable way to break out of this trap is to repudiate any further centralization of schooling in the form of national goals, national tests, national teaching licenses, school-to-work plans, and the rest of the utopian package which accompanies these. Schooling must be desystematized, the system must be put to death. Adam Smith has correctly instructed us for more than two centuries now that the wealth of nations is the product of freedom, not of tutelage. The connection between the corporate economy, national politics, and schooling is a disease of collectivism which must be broken if children are to become sovereign, creative adults, capable of lifting a free society to unimaginable heights. The rational management model has damaged the roots of a free society and the free market it claims to defend.

- Silicon Valley
- Selling From Your Truck
- Mudsill Theory
- Autonomous Technology
- The Bell Curve
- George Meegan
- Necking In The Guardhouse
- Tania Aebi
- A Fool's Bargain
- Roland Legiardi-Laura
- The Squeeze
- Wendy Zeigler/Amy Halpern
- A Magnificent Memory

- Prince Charles Visits Steel Valley High
- Empty Children
- Schoolbooks
- Almost The End
- I Would Prefer Not To
- Nuts And Bolts

## **Epilogue**

What has happened in our schools was foreseen long ago by Jefferson. We have been recolonized silently in a second American Revolution. Time to take our script from this country's revolutionary start, time to renew traditional hostility toward hierarchy and tutelage. We became a unique nation from the bottom up, that is the only way to rebuild a worthy concept of education.

## **About The Books I Used**

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## **Acknowledgments**

## **About The Author**