

McDonald, Milo F.  
(Milo Francis)  
"Progressive" poison...  
ADT 9115

830986

"Progressive"  
Poison  
in  
Public  
Education



MILO F. McDONALD

*Copyright, 1951*

*By the American Education Association*

*All Rights Reserved*

*Printed in the United States of America*

**“PROGRESSIVE” POISON IN PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*By*

MILO F. McDONALD, Ph.D.

The American Education Association

New York

## INTRODUCTION

“Progressive” education has been in operation in the public schools of the City of New York for the past fifteen years. In the elementary schools it has found placement under the name of the “activity program.” In the junior high schools its influence has been exerted under the names of “discussion,” “youthbuilding” and “exploration.” In the senior high schools “experience curricula” and “general diplomas” reveal its presence.

The injection into our schools of the poison of “progressive” education has created an alarming situation. It is especially alarming in this era because of the challenges that are being presented to us as a nation. The danger of communism is now realized to be real. We have awakened from an apathy of many years duration. It is generally recognized that to meet our danger we need well educated, well disciplined youth with respect for their elders, for the law and with reverence for religious values and for the ideals that have made our country truly great.

We need to face the facts. We need to substitute honesty for dishonesty in school practices. We need to strengthen the youth of this city by the education we offer them. The schools are false to their trust if they pauperize our youth and weaken them in the face of the imminent danger that threatens. That the children and youth of this city are being weakened by the “progressive” program in our schools is all too evident.

The American Education Association has tried, in many ways, since 1938 to emphasize the need of restoring worthy standards to the public school system of this city. We hope this booklet may have some effect in causing the people of the City of New York to appeal to their representatives in office both in the City Council and in the Board of Education to effect a rapid change in our educational system by following the example so recently set by the authorities in Pasadena, California.

MILO F. McDONALD

*March 1, 1951*

## **“Progressive” Poison In Education**

The activity program was introduced, on an experimental basis, into the public schools of the City of New York in 1935. Several different descriptive terms have been applied to this variety of “Progressive” education since. It has been called the New education and the Experience Curriculum but we are of the opinion that the essence of the educational changes implied are best signalized by the name initially used at the time the plan was introduced into our local public school system in 1935. We therefore shall employ it.

The activity program was introduced on an experimental basis. It was announced at the time that it would be applied only in the first three years of the elementary schools. Furthermore it was to be applied only in nine schools and three schools, operating on the traditional curriculum, were to be used as controls. Results obtained were to be used, one against the other, in each group of schools. The plan adopted as announced, was scientific. Objection could not and was not lodged against it.

### ***Initial Deception***

Actually, however, shortly after the plan was put into operation changes occurred. The original plan as announced of nine schools of activity program type and three schools of traditional type was not followed. Newspaper notices told us that the activity program was spreading like wildfire throughout the school system. Before long we were informed that fifty schools had adopted this activity program. It had even been extended to the junior high schools. The scientific approach was abandoned. The public was informed, through the press, largely by means of the School Page in one New York newspaper that the plan was being widely accepted and widely approved by superintendents, principals and teachers. It became apparent, within a relatively brief time, that the method used to introduce the plan into our public schools was simply a device to gain initial entry. The professional spirit was strained. The heat which was generated at conferences led to statements to teachers about their acceptance or rejection of the new program that not only militated against cool and objective experimentation but smacked of at-

tempts to browbeat and to coerce others into approval of the activity program and of its illegal extension into grades beyond those for which provision had originally been made.

In the meantime, in April 1938, I had organized a group now called the American Education Association to investigate the activity program and the methods being used to extend it throughout the public school system of the city. I recall very distinctly a conversation I had with the late Dr. Harold Campbell, at that time Superintendent of Schools, relative to the activity program. He said "The activity program is supposed to be in a small number of schools under the plan adopted. They tell me it is now in over fifty schools. I do not understand the situation at all". Dr. Campbell was not the only one who did not understand. It was apparent that some power was being exerted to force the activity program upon the city's schools.

The leader of "progressive" education was Dr. John Dewey, of Teachers College, Columbia University. Among the followers of the movement were the Social Frontiersmen William H. Kilpatrick, John L. Childs, George S. Counts, Harold Rugg, Boyd Bode, Grayson Kefauver and others among whom was George W. Hartman, Editor of the *Social Frontier*, the official organ of the group at this time. These soon became the leaders of "progressive" education. These constituted the group whose influence was felt in many places. These were the men who were arranging to use the words of Dr. Counts to "dare the teachers to build a new social order." They were educators and in addition social reformers. They were the leaders of "progressive" education which Dr. Butler, President of Columbia University, described as "Rabbit Education." These men at Teachers College and the philosophy of instrumentalism, the exaggerated pragmatism of Dr. John Dewey, a philosophy which the late William James termed as "too strong for him" constitute one of the most dangerous forces in America today.

### *Dewey's Instrumentalism*

Dr. John Dewey, generally credited with being the father of "progressive" education is, as we have said, usually referred to in philosophy as an instrumentalist. Though often referred to as America's foremost philosopher he is not a genuine philosopher at all. He is a social reformer and an educator. His greatest claim to fame rests not upon his philosophy but rather upon his work in the field of education.



Dr. Dewey came to Teachers College in 1904. Prior to his coming to New York he had between 1902 and 1904 been connected with Chicago University. His original ideas, ideas which later became the key-notes of "progressive" education were tried out in the University of Chicago's High School. His ideas of freedom of expression led not only to retrogression in scholarship but also to bad discipline. Dr. Dewey did not remain long in Chicago. He came to New York and joined the faculty at Teachers College, as we have said, in 1904.

Dr. Dewey's thought as an instrumentalist is that truth is a relative not an absolute matter. He asks with Pilate of old "What is truth?" He answers that historically famous question with the answer as do all instrumentalists, whose philosophy is simply that of an exaggerated pragmatism; that there is no truth; there are many truths. Truth is that which works well for an individual. Dewey conceives of truth as working well for an individual when it helps him to do his part in an effort to bring into activity a new social order. He thinks of the teacher as his disciple Counts expressed it as one who "dares to build a new social order."

According to Dewey schools exist for the purpose of directing pupils and students to life in a democracy. To Dewey democracy is not to be identified with our American system; it is not identical with our representative republic. Democracy to Dewey is a socialized state. Everything our forefathers did in establishing in this country a land of opportunity is to be questioned. His disciple, Harold Rugg, illustrates Dewey's thought in his social study textbooks which are on the official supply lists of the Board of Education of the City of New York. Dewey thinks of education as an agency of social reform. To him interest is of paramount consideration in teaching. For Dewey interest is identical with self-activity. It is only fair to Dewey to add that in a pamphlet he wrote and which was published in 1912 called "Interest as Related to Will" he emphasized the point that in learning activities in the classroom interest, while of paramount importance, must at times give place to the dull grind of effort. He stressed the point that the achievement to be desired was not alone to keep pupils happy by reason of appeal to their genuine interest but to see that they learned, that they knew, appreciated and controlled the fundamental values of life in a democratic society. With Dr. Dewey's thought as detailed in "Interest as Related to Will" we could be in full accord provided he were in accord with what we in America regard as true democracy. Unfortunately Dr. Dewey thinks

we need a new social order. He does not agree with our American notions of free enterprise. He wishes to socialize us. Therein lies the rub. Moreover he believes the schools should be used as instruments to develop socialism in this land of opportunity. With this we most assuredly do not agree.

Dr. Dewey's influence as a philosopher is, in our opinion, infinitesimal. As a social reformer he is dangerous. As an educational reformer bent upon using the schools to change our concepts of American life he is equally dangerous but as an educational reformer interested in effecting changes in some of our classroom procedures his influence is especially noteworthy. His original notions of self-activity, and it is of self-activity and not of activity we are thinking and there is a world of difference between the connotations of the two terms, have had a notable effect upon teaching methods. From his work developed a greater emphasis upon the problematic approach to learning. Through good questioning, setting up genuine problems or even factitious ones upon which pupils, through genuine delight, would exercise their own self-activity in solving, the teaching process was made more meaningful, more alluring and more vital to pupils. It served to break down the lecture system of direct instruction which owing to the influence of Herbart had unfortunately prevailed for too long a time in some areas. It emphasized the use that should be made of the extended means of learning that are afforded by visits to museums, libraries, zoos et cetera. With proper control and supervision such informal education would be a most valuable supplement to the formal aspect of education which is the aspect the classroom logically presents. The classroom is not directly related to informal education. The classroom and the school are artificial institutions. They are not natural ones. Education received in them is formal. We are also being educated always by our many contacts with life. Such education is always informal.

It is this distinction which Dewey does not make. His effort is to informalize education. His effort is to substitute "experience curricula" for well thought out courses of study. His effort is to have the pupils in the schools devise their own courses of study. It is because of this emphasis that there results from Dewey's approach to formal education an exaltation of the pupil and a subordination of the teacher. The teacher is to follow "the whole child," not to lead "the whole child." This ridiculous extreme is an integral part of Dr. Dewey's approach to formal education. It can not be blamed upon his followers. It became evident



in his own attempt, as we have indicated, almost half a century ago personally to realize his ideas in practice.

Dr. Dewey may have been discouraged by his failure in Chicago, but he was not beaten. He kept his idea of effecting social reforms through the schools before all who came under his influence at Teachers College. He built up a body of followers. In a few places his ideas were tried. They were not notably successful in America. They were seemingly, from reports received, approved in China. It was in that country that Dr. Dewey's ideas received their most outstanding approbation until 1917 in which year Russia remodeled her whole educational system along activity program lines.

One question naturally arises. How did the Soviet Socialist Republic come under the influence of Dr. Dewey's ideas in education? The question is most interesting. Its answer is most revealing.

### *The Soviet Adopts the Activity Program*

In 1917 undoubtedly at the suggestion of one of his two chief advisers, Trotsky, Lenin introduced the activity program into Russia immediately following the overthrow of Kerensky's genuinely democratic but brief regime. Stalin who was Lenin's second chief cabinet officer at the time, voiced no objection. As Lenin's principal assistants at this time and in fact until Lenin's death in 1924 Trotsky and Stalin worked together on friendly terms.

By governmental edicts the activity program flourished in Russia. There were those who objected but in Soviet fashion they were dealt with harshly. One of the teachers who saw the implications of the activity program was Demetri Demiaskevich. He fled Russia and came to the United States and for several years taught at the George Peabody Institute in Boston. One morning he was found dead in his room. We did not know in those years with how long an arm the Soviet reached for her opponents and punished them. It was not until Trotsky's murder in Mexico several years later that we realized that communist Russia could reach into other countries for those who would attempt to thwart her purposes and punish them.

Between 1920 and 1924 several leading figures in the Soviet tried to convince Lenin that the activity program was a destructive influence

upon Russian youth. The Commissar of Education in 1920 presented arguments to Lenin against the new educational program. The Commissar was a loyal supporter of Lenin and a true Communist. In those days Lenin believed that communism could never succeed in an agricultural country like Russia. He contended that leaders must be trained in the schools to go into industrial centers such as those in Germany, England and the United States and lead the movement to break down the capitalistic influence upon whose debris, according to Lenin, communism would rise to power. The Commissar of Education tried to show Lenin and the inner clique of the young Soviet that the activity program would not accomplish their purpose. Demiaskevich whom we have mentioned while at the George Peabody Institute wrote a book called the "Activity Program in Russia." In it he gives a most interesting and vivid account of the struggle that went on in Russia from 1920 to 1927 over the activity program.

In the period between 1920 and his death in 1924 Lenin revealed by his methods that he was not aiming at the establishment of communism in Russia. His aim was the establishment of a totalitarian government. He saw in the activity program a means of realizing a new social order in Russia. He saw in it a weapon which he could use to make plausible to the large population of Russia numbering 200,000,000 people among whom there were but 3,000,000 Communists that rigid controls must be inaugurated if anarchy were to be prevented. He saw in the activity program a means of breaking down among youth respect for authority. He saw in it a means of destroying true scholarship. He saw in the theory of "freedom of expression," a challenging of the authority of the teacher at school and of the parent in the home. He saw in the appeal to youth to settle their own problems, even those of love, of marriage and of sex relationships an opportunity of playing havoc with the deep religious convictions of the Russian people, indeed with all the traditions of family and social life of old Mother Russia and creating a new social atmosphere in which totalitarianism and despotic control would have a better opportunity to breathe and to grow to the full stature which he, in time, would come to enjoy. Lenin was simply putting to the test an old thought which had been well expressed long before his time. It is this: "Give me the child for eight years and I can make of him what I will." Lenin saw in the activity program and in Dewey's instrumentalism an opportunity not only to get control of the children through the Russian schools but also to use them for the upbuild-

ing of totalitarian control throughout the Soviet. In his judgment of the consequences of the activity program Lenin proved himself to be a shrewd and correct planner.

Death, however, came to Lenin in 1924 and the struggle for power between Trotsky and Stalin, a short but severe struggle, was initiated. Stalin won. Trotsky believed as Lenin did that communism could be successful only on a world wide basis. Stalin represented himself as in favor of the establishment of communism in the Soviet. Later events proved that his controlling idea was to follow Lenin's plan in ruthless fashion and gain absolute power over Russia.

Stalin's first reform in 1927 was to announce a five year plan. This plan included the reorganization of all governmental departments. About this time Dr. George S. Counts, Dewey's disciple at Teachers College and representative of the Social Frontier groups to the educational world in general paid a visit to Russia. Subsequently it was announced by Stalin that there would be no reorganization of the Department of Education and that the activity program would remain operative in the Russian schools. When Dr. Counts returned from Russia he brought with him specimens of textbooks used in the activity program schools of the Soviet and exhibited them at Teachers' College where the admirers of Deweyism in education viewed them with transports of joy.

### ***Russia Ejects Activity Program***

Between 1927 and 1932, however, protests against the activity program became more pronounced in Russia. Teachers in the secondary schools and in the colleges asked to be relieved of the burden of trying to accomplish the impossible. They asked the authorities to view the situation realistically. It was impossible to give any valid education to pupils who came to them from the lower schools. College professors said that secondary school graduates were disinclined to study or to accept direction from them. Secondary school teachers said that pupils coming to them from the elementary grades were unruly, disobedient, unwilling to put forth effort of any kind unless they felt so inclined.

In fact as the end of the five year plan approached it became evident that self-expressionism had produced undisciplined children and youth. It had produced lawlessness and anarchy. Accounts of what was happening in Russia at this period appeared from time to time in our American

press releases. The New York Times published a vivid account of what it called "The Migratory Children of Russia." Wandering hordes of Soviet youth, boys and girls, became common. These youth were juvenile delinquents of the worst type. They were guilty of extreme excesses. Sexual promiscuity was common among them. In fact it was the normal pattern. Abnormality of conduct had become normality. The transformation was terribly obvious.

For the condition the activity program, aided by governmental edicts aimed at the production of a rebellious condition of thought and action among Russian youth, was held to be primarily responsible. Stalin had achieved by means of Deweyism in Russia a situation which Lenin had envisaged as possible of accomplishment by the schools when he adopted the activity program for Russia in 1917. Now the use of police methods to curb the depravity among Russian youth would be approved by all residents in the Soviet whether they were Communists or not. Now was the time to institute such curbs and to ditch the activity program. Now was the time to emphasize the need for study in the schools; now was the time to reject the theory of self-expressionism without restraint and to substitute for it an emphasis upon discipline in the schools of the Soviet.

So when the Ministry of Education presented a plea for the re-organization of the educational system of the Soviet in 1932 Stalin yielded and ordered the ejection of the activity program from the schools. In the following year the "new" education as it was called was introduced. Old textbooks, specimens of which Dr. George Counts had brought to America and had lauded to the skies when the activity program was in full force in the Soviet Union, were discarded and authors became busily engaged in writing others. New textbooks were needed for this "new" education. What was the "new" education to emphasize? It was to emphasize communism, of course. It was to emphasize what was to be recognized as the materialistic religion, if we can profane the word to that extent, of the Soviet. The Communist theocracy was to have four prophets, which children and youth in the schools, were to recognize as sources of all authority. The four prophets or divinities, to debase a word, were to be Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. In the schools morality according to communistic standards, strong scholarship and good discipline were to be made part of the daily routine.

This plan for the government of the schools has been in operation from 1933 to the present day. Rigid controls are in effect. A child



deficient in his daily school work or one who, for instance, has not done assigned home-work will, on the word of the teacher, be denied the privilege of “going to the movies” until the teacher lifts the ban. In all the textbooks absolute and undeviating loyalty to Stalin is emphasized. A picture of Stalin hangs in every classroom. It should be noted that in history we as a nation are vilified. Our past history is distorted; for instance Lincoln, the children are taught, was shot by an assassin hired by capitalists.

In 1935 Dr. George S. Counts in an article in the *New Republic* informed his readers that the activity program had originally been introduced into the Russian schools in 1917 for political reasons. Dr. Counts should know. He was one of the chief “progressives” of the day. Between 1917 and 1932 he made three long visits to the Soviet. On one of his visits he made a trip of six thousand miles by automobile throughout Russia. Moreover with Nucia P. Lodge, a research assistant at Teachers’ College, Columbia University, he translated *New Russia’s Primer* by M. Ilin. Mrs. Lodge, who was born in St. Petersburg, since coming to the United States has made several trips to the Soviet Union. Both Mrs. Lodge and Dr. Counts know why the activity program was introduced into all Russian elementary schools in 1917. Dr. Counts frankly told us in 1935 it was for political purposes. It was the means by which the teachers of the Soviet by compulsion were going, using Dr. Counts own words, to “dare to build a new social order.”

### ***The City of New York Introduces Activity Program Into Its Public Schools***

In that same year, 1935, by means of the Elementary School Division of Public Schools of the City of New York at that time under Dr. Bayne’s direction, the activity program was introduced into our local schools. Dr. Counts was still the promoter of this brand of Deweyism. He was the same Dr. Counts whose article had appeared but recently in the *New Republic* informing us that the activity program had been introduced into the Russian schools for political reasons. To know where the support for the activity program came from in the Board of Education Mr. Marshall still a member of the Board could tell us if he would. As time went on it became clear to all reasonable people that the teachers in the public schools of the City of New York were being compelled by tyrann-

nical and autocratic methods to use their energy "to build a new social order" by means of the activity program. The end envisaged is the same today, though the methods used are far more subtle than those employed by Dr. Bayne and Dr. Loftus, his assistant in the field. Today Miss Regina C. Burke is the Associate Superintendent in charge of Elementary Schools. Miss Burke is on record as favoring the activity program. We have failed to discover in anything she has ever set forth, that she is at all familiar with the instrumentalism of Dr. Dewey or that she conceives of the ulterior purposes that our "new" education is endeavoring to achieve.

Both Dr. Dewey and Dr. Counts have long since taken to safe shelter. A few years ago Dr. Dewey wrote a little book in which he rebuked the extremists who said they were his followers and told them that they were missing the main points of his philosophy. Dr. Counts in 1947 collaborating again with Mrs. Nucia P. Lodge translated and edited a part of the official text on Pedagogy written by B. P. Yesipov and N. K. Goncharov and arranged for its publication by the John Day Company of New York under the title of "I Want to be Like Stalin." In his introduction to the translation Dr. Counts tells us that in the Soviet children are forced to realize the importance of their daily work. He emphasizes the fact that in Russia of today education is taken as a serious matter. He seemingly approves while his followers in our public schools in the City of New York still believe in keeping children happy, and who does not, even though in addition they play themselves into ignorance and in time become the victims of a "happy illiteracy."

### ***Opposition to the "New Curriculum" Now Marked***

The threat to our civilization presented by the "new" education in the schools of the City of New York has been recognized by the members of the American Education Association for the past twelve years. The fear was expressed long ago by Mr. Winston Churchill in an address to the people of Britain on education and its relationship to post war conditions. The main body of Mr. Churchill's address pointed to his opinion that the country that would survive the war most admirably and weather the gales ahead would be the one that had the best educational system. Is it strange that so many people are asking whether the "new" education meets our needs? President Truman in an address to the Advertising Council on September 18, 1947 showed that he realizes the dangers



presented by the "new" education. He said "There is no doubt we can slip backward with alarming speed if the deterioration which has taken place in that system (our educational system) these past few years continues unchecked."

Since 1947 in some sections of our country the progress of the "new" education has been checked. In Pasadena, California, the people of the city presented strong opposition to the continuation of a system of education that was steadily undermining the scholarship and character of children in the public schools. In consequence "progressive" education has been ejected from the schools and the Superintendent of Schools of the city, Dr. Willard E. Goslin, has been voted his salary in advance and his services discontinued. The people of Pasadena were so happy to be rid of "progressive" education and of Dr. Goslin that they were willing to make a sacrifice to accomplish their purposes. In the City of New York the system still continues. In fact it has been extended and exists now both in the junior and the senior high school divisions of the city's schools.

Those who have been following the troubled state of the public schools in the City of New York since 1935 have been and are dissatisfied with efforts presumably made to reach the genuine source of our difficulties. In view of the many protests made by parents of children in the schools between 1935, in which year the Board of Education had voted to introduce the "progressive" system of education into our local schools and 1938 the late Dr. Harold G. Campbell, who was Superintendent of schools at the time was directed to ask the State Department of Education to survey and report upon the worth of The Activity Program. To this study Dr. J. Cayce Morrison was assigned.

The Morrison Report, as it has been called, was in due time made. Dr. Morrison's report was made to the Board of Education. It was not made to the public. In fact it was not until 1941, though repeated requests were made that it be publicized, that the Board of Education issued what we were told were the findings of the State Department. At the time the methods outlined as having been used by Dr. Morrison were labeled as unsatisfactory by many familiar with the processes of educational surveys.

Even, however, with the carefulness used to guard the original report of Dr. Morrison and to keep the public eye from meeting it directly and within reasonable time, the findings of the representatives of the State Department of Education as read in the releases of the Board of

Education revealed, despite all the time and opportunity for conferences and for editorial revision, the faint praise that condemns. The report that was after long delay issued for public consumption among other things said:

"It appears that the six-year experiment has demonstrated the worth of the Activity Program."

It only appeared so. Dr. Morrison was not sure of the worth of the experiment.

Again we read that the survey did not reveal "significant loss in mastery of fundamental knowledges and skills".

What can we infer but that a loss in mastery of the fundamentals of all learning was clearly indicated. Mr. Morrison's judgment of its significance is not sufficient. The measurements that were reported indicated a clear loss in control of the tools of learning.

Again Mr. Morrison emphasizes the thought that there should not be haste in pressing final judgment upon the activity program's worth or lack of worth. Despite this warning after a lapse of nine months the activity program was officially adopted. It is now operative in 546 elementary schools. This is not the whole picture. The self-expression of "progressive" education has found its way into both the junior and senior high school divisions of our system of schools. The resultant effects upon scholarship, attendance and discipline are apparent. The inherent defects of Deweyism in education is showing itself in our country as it did in Russia between 1917-1932. "Progressive" education carries a poison that destroys.

The words of Vice-Commissar Epstein of the Soviet Commissariat of Education in 1932 to explain the deficiencies inherent in the activity program and the reason for its expulsion from the elementary schools of Russia, are especially pertinent. They describe exactly the prevalent situation in our schools and give force to the effort to drive "progressive" education from the schools of this city as it has been driven from the schools of several cities and towns in our country. The most recent example of which reversal of attitude is Pasadena, California. Vice-Commissar Epstein said "The activity program gave the children a superficial knowledge of a great many things, but no proper groundwork for the foundation of education. Much of the children's time was wasted in fruitless excursions. They could tell about the railroads of

their district, or the local industry but they could not write well nor grammatically. Their arithmetic was in an equally bad state."

Demetri Demiaskevich, to whom we have previously referred, quotes the Russian Commissariat as saying that the Activity Program left the children of Russia "ignorant, undisciplined and irreverent".

Is this not what it has done to the children in our local schools? Is this not the reason why so many parents who really appreciate the effects it has produced upon their own children and against which effects they have constantly to wage war so that these children may be safeguarded from permanent injury are opposed to its continuance?

The evil effects of the so-called new education are shown in an especially clear manner in our junior high schools. Here we have among the children the beginnings of delinquency for delinquency is marked in these schools. The truth of the matter is well portrayed by Beatrice King in her book "Changing Man".

### *The Junior High Schools and Youthbuilders, Inc.*

In the junior high schools the "freedom of expression" theory with its resultant ignorance, lack of discipline and irreverence has been running in high gear. These schools are the most poorly administered division of our entire educational system. The junior high schools of the City of New York are and have been throughout recent years a disgrace to our community.

It was in the junior high schools that the notorious Youthbuilders, Inc. flourished. Under the guise of discussion of controversial issues, the young adolescents in our junior high schools were exposed to the influence of highly trained Communists. Mrs. Sabra Halbrook, founder and Executive Director of Youthbuilders, Inc. in her book "Children Object" announces the policy of the organization. She writes that in her opinion we should not talk to the children about the superior merit of our democracy. We should rather lead them to experiment with it.

Recently, Dr. Nathan M. Pusey, president of Lawrence College, said at a meeting in Milwaukee "Present trends in education are making people happy illiterates." His thought is highly and exactly descriptive of what is taking place and has been taking place for several years past in the junior high schools of the City of New York. Too many of

the children who come, as graduates of these schools, into the senior high schools have bad scholarship records and are confirmed truants. Far too many of these boys and girls are disinclined to study, will not put forth any effort to master a problem that requires effort. They will interest themselves in nothing that does not entertain them. They recognize no rules except those that they themselves make.

The situation in our junior high schools is serious. As a high school principal in the City of New York for the past thirty years I know of these matters from my own personal experiences. I have examined the records of pupils coming from the junior high schools showing failing marks in all major subjects. The scholarship in these schools, I repeat, is notoriously bad. The situation calls for correction within the junior high school system. The pupils are not natively of low mentality. The school system and the "progressive" education of the schools attended by them have made them what they are: happy illiterates, future candidates, as juvenile delinquents, for correctional institutions.

The attendance of many pupils in junior high schools is bad. Those who study this phase of our educational procedures, and the widespread truancy existent in junior high schools today should be made a matter of especial study for truancy leads directly to delinquency and crime, tell us that we always should be careful to distinguish between the attendance of a school and its attendance records. Actual attendance and the attendance record of any given school may differ widely. In too many schools there are artful dodgers who keep records. Children whose absence is unexplained are placed on suspense registers and so are not counted against the school's record of attendance. Recently, principals were ordered not to place pupils on the suspense register except in accordance with the rules governing the situation. The fact that it had become necessary to issue such an order proves the prevalent low morale among some school administrators in our public school system.

### ***The Senior High Schools***

The situation in our senior and vocational high schools presents an equally disappointing picture. The senior high schools have descended to an abject level of capitulation. One has only to watch the conduct of pupils traveling to and from the vocational high



schools to see adolescent behavior at a level which outrages decency and makes it dangerous for people, particularly elderly people, to use the bus and subway transportation systems at the time of day when these schools are dismissed. The number of delinquents, confirmed truants and moral perverts coming to the secondary schools has increased alarmingly during the past decade. It is frankly admitted that pupils are sent to the senior high schools whose records show that they have failed in all major subjects. It could not be denied as a study of admission records would reveal the truth. What is not revealed by records is that far too many pupils coming from the junior high schools show not only unpreparedness for senior high school work but in addition manifest a thorough disinclination for study and an inclination to do only that which they wish to do.

In the senior high schools abject surrender to the prevailing low state of the elementary and junior high school divisions has occurred. Of the condition I know all the details. I have been in intimate touch with them for many years. I have witnessed the public apathy of many supervisors and teachers in the face of a degeneration which they privately admitted. I have seen remedial courses in elementary English and elementary arithmetic introduced into our senior high schools. These courses aim to give a command over the fundamentals of English and of arithmetic to pupils who hold diplomas signed by the principals of the lower schools to the effect that they already have such command. The diplomas testify to an untruth. The teachers in the elementary schools and the teachers in the high schools know the truth but few, relatively few, in a system of schools whose corps numbers approximately 35,000 professional people have the courage to testify to it. Pupils coming to the secondary schools, some directly from elementary schools and others from junior high schools, are not only as a group markedly deficient in elementary English and arithmetic but they are also woefully ignorant of geography and of the basic facts in the history of their own country.

There are, in our senior high school division, principals and teachers who tell us one of two stories. One is that it was ever thus. High schools have always criticized the lower schools. The other story is that we must accept conditions as they are. We must adapt our high school curriculum to meet the needs of pupils who have little or no command over the elementary subjects of study. According to their theory no

abuse would ever be corrected. We are always to accept things as they are, never to fight for better conditions.

A study of our present day garden variety senior high schools in the City of New York presents a truly sad story. It is true that the high school division has favored three high schools: Stuyvesant High School, High School of Science, and the Brooklyn Technical High School. To each of these schools has been granted the privilege of setting up special entrance examinations. Pupils who fail these examinations have to be accepted by other high schools. The effect of this rule is to work hardships upon the high schools which must bear the additional burden imposed. It in no sense corrects the bad situation.

It is true, of course, that the high schools have always criticized the product of the elementary schools as the colleges have, in their turn, criticized the preparation of students coming to them from the high schools. To imply, however, that the general product of our elementary schools, of our junior high schools or of our senior high schools is as good today as it ever was is to maintain error in the face of facts.

### ***Pupil Guidance***

It is also true that secondary schools should always strive to adapt themselves to the varying aptitudes and abilities of pupils coming to them from the lower schools. The whole purpose of the comprehensive or cosmopolitan high school as distinguished from the specialized high school is to do just that. As long ago as 1912, about which time those in favor of the cosmopolitan high school started this work, the emphasis, by intelligent students of American secondary schools, has been placed upon pupil guidance in choice of course, upon the individuation of instruction and upon enrichment of the curriculum to meet student needs. No one ever suggested until the disastrous effects of "progressive" education became apparent that the senior high schools should undertake the work that the elementary schools and the junior high schools were established to do. It was always assumed that the pupil who came to the senior high school would have a command of the elementary tool subjects of learning. The public school leaders of the past were not benighted souls. Long ago, the late Dr. Ettinger, at one time Superintendent of Schools in the City of New York, recognized the fact that



many pupils were unfitted for the academic or commercial courses of the senior high schools. Moreover they were older than the normal pupils of the elementary schools. Their physiological development made them, at times, sources of danger to the younger children with whom they were in daily association. It was this thought which gave original impetus to the development of the vocational schools in this city. Pupils were accepted in these schools from the last two years of the elementary schools. They were not high schools. They were designed to provide adaptation to the needs of the boys and girls who were obliged to remain in school because of the compulsory education law but who were too old to be allowed to continue in the grades of the elementary schools. The courses offered by these vocational schools in the early days of their growth in the City of New York were good. The boys and girls who were graduated from the vocational schools as originally constituted were able to find placements in the industrial life of the city and in business as typists and clerical workers.

Those who have followed the development of our school system know how the condition existent in Dr. Ettinger's day has been changed and the means employed to accomplish the changes. Vocational schools have become vocational high schools. Promoters among aspiring vocational and continuation school principals and teachers saw in their field an opportunity for advancement. The vocational schools were rechristened as vocational high schools. They became extremely selective. By arrangements officially made they were given an opportunity to make their selections among the prospective graduates of the elementary schools. They established tests for entrance, took the cream of the crop among those who desired to go to the vocational schools. The tests used emphasized the controls of fundamental subjects. Boys and girls who had little or no control over these subjects were rejected and the senior high schools were obliged to accept them. It is evident that the vocational high schools had cast aside the idea of adaptation of courses to the needs of non-academic type pupils and thrown the burden of providing for these pupils who were, what we now employ the euphemism "slow learners" to describe, upon the senior high schools. Provision for the educational needs of pupils was wrecked upon the ambitions of vocational school principals and teachers to advance to the prestige and salary of the senior high school rank. The story of the wreckage of Dr. Ettinger's plans of adaptation of courses to the needs of pupils by reason of the excessive ambition, satisfied by political manipulation, of

vocational school principals and teachers in the City of New York over twenty years ago is a tragic story. The story includes the erection in our city of an altar of selfishness and greed at the expense of children's educational needs. At this altar many of the principals and teachers in this city have worshipped and are worshipping now. The present day condition of our secondary school division in the City of New York is sad. The degradation of our old time senior high schools is attributable to the onslaught made upon them over two decades ago and continuing since then until the present day. It was the initial step of "progressive" education to which leaders in the senior high school division succumbed either because they believed in it or lacked the courage and the ability to fight against it.

### *The General Diploma and Examinations*

Since the initial step was taken a wide trail has been established. The senior high school has provided for several years past a general diploma. This diploma is available to pupils who have failed to meet the full requirements of the academic or the commercial course. Unlike the general diploma of many years ago there is no general course of which the diploma is a logical sign of culmination. It is true that pupils are in some high schools grouped into XG classes. For such pupils the usual courses are offered in a "watered-down" condition. In still other high schools there are CRMD classes. These are made up of pupils who have never been graduated from the junior high schools they formerly attended but nevertheless are in senior high schools. CRMD classes, it should be noted, are made up of children who have been classified, after testing, as children of retarded mental development.

It is apparent to any intelligent person studying the secondary school situation in this city that a degeneration in the status of our high schools has occurred. Such a conclusion is inevitable after a study of the changes that have been instituted of late years in the matter of term examinations. Five years ago an attempt to make official the abandonment of mid-term examinations was made. As a high school principal I regarded it my duty to object and to call attention to an existent regulation obliging each principal to set formal mid-term examinations in each term. The attempt to ban officially mid-term examinations was abandoned but in some schools they were abandoned.

*What*

*We Believe*

---

---

**FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES  
OF  
AMERICAN EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION  
and  
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN  
PARENTS**

---

---

ISSUED BY  
AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
545 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

## AMERICAN SCHOOLS MUST REMAIN AMERICAN

Over ten years ago at the time the American Education Association issued its first invitation to membership the following Declaration of Fundamental Principles was published by the Educational Signpost. Now at the request of many this Declaration is republished. Though much has been accomplished over the years by the A.E.A., a careful reading of the Declaration of Fundamental Principles will prove to any loyal American citizen the soundness of our original position and the need for the continuance of our insistence that our American schools remain American.

### A DECLARATION OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES BY THE AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

It is most important that those who are charged with the responsibility of educating American children and youth have a clearly defined set of principles by which to regulate their conduct. Unless we have such a set of principles we are caught by every breeze that flutters and soon we are completely off our course. It is because so many of us have apparently so completely forgotten the purposes of American education that the "Progressives" have been able to go their way not only unhindered but actually helped to accomplish their ends by some educators who are charged by law with the responsibility of advancing the interests of our American civilization. Unless fundamentals had been forgotten the "new" education would not be regarded as new. In reality it is not new. There is nothing in the "new" education which has not been attempted and disproved in years that have long since ceased to be.

Even though the "new" education were new by what strange freak of reasoning do we grant to the word "new" all the meaning that should be inherent in the word "good." Newness does not necessarily mean goodness. It is the same with the word "progressive." The assumption made by the "progressive education" theorists is that they have embodied in their plans and practices all the advancement that has characterized educational procedures since the days of Herbart. As a matter of fact, this assumption is utterly false. The "progressive education" theorists are simply followers of the Dewey Interest Theory in education. Much of the best thought in modern education they not only neglect but apparently do not even know, if we are to depend upon their utterances and activities for a revelation of their thought. The whole



program of Progressive Education centers about three essentials. These are:

1. Educational procedures should be entirely based upon and exclusively follow the originality of the learners.
2. There are to be no standardized procedures, no established or sequential curricula, no norms of conduct, no moral codes to affect the educational procedures or to restrain the freedom of action to be accorded the learners.
3. The betterment of the individual and the betterment of society are to be attained through group activities allowing for full freedom of expression of self without reference to moral standards.

We of the American Education Association are unwilling to accept the essentials of the "Progressives" as sound educational philosophy. In fact, we believe the principles of the "Progressives" are exceedingly dangerous not only to the welfare of individual children but also to the welfare of our American life and our existent institutions.

In order that our position may be made crystal clear and sharply differentiated from the thought contained in the so-called "new education," let us enumerate our own guiding principles. We believe:

1. Public education is an institution of our representative democracy by reason of which the people, as good American citizens, hope to accomplish the following:

- (a) the perpetuation of the principles of American government;
- (b) the perpetuation of our American institutions;
- (c) the individual betterment of children and youth in our schools and colleges so that they as a result of their education may improve our form of government WITHIN THE GENERAL PLAN INSTITUTED BY THE FOUNDERS OF THIS NATION.

2. Education is a process in which teachers are employed by constituted authority to assist pupils and youths in our schools to gain a knowledge of, a sympathy with and a control over what we in America consider to be the essential values of life. Among the values which we expect teachers, as employees of the State, to inculcate in learners are:

- (a) good character
- (b) good citizenship
- (c) love of country
- (d) respect for authority
- (e) good health
- (f) scholastic accomplishment
- (g) vocational adjustment
- (h) social but not class consciousness.

# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN PARENTS

## DEFINITION OF POLICY

I. Whereas, during the past one hundred and fifty years, fostered by the Constitution of the United States of America, there has developed in our country a system of living known as the "American System" under which the individual has enjoyed the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness regardless of race, creed, color or previous condition of servitude upon the divinely inspired assumption that in the eyes of God and under the government of these United States all men are created equal; and

II. Whereas, under that Constitution, as amended, deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed, we have become citizens, as distinct from subjects of the United States under a representative democracy, and have enjoyed under that government a freedom for the individual theretofore unknown in this world and have attained through the untrammelled efforts of the individual in the development of unexcelled natural resources a condition of national and individual wealth and happiness unique in the history of mankind; and

III. Whereas, there is now a spirit of unrest throughout the world as a result of which certain subversive and malign influences seek through devious and hidden methods to undermine and sabotage our American system without sanction of God or man and country

Now, therefore, we resolve:

A. "The Organization of American Parents was conceived for, exists and is dedicated to the purpose of fostering and perpetuating American aims and ideals, preserving the liberty of the individual and the equality of man under the Constitution of the United States and the grace of God for ourselves and generations yet to come."

B. We further resolve that the Organization of American Parents hereby adopts and declares the following:

1. We support wholeheartedly the Constitution of the United States and its process of amendment.
2. We believe there should be instilled in the hearts of our children a love for the United States and a reverent respect for the flag.
3. As parents we have a right to expect teachers to be willing to take an oath to be loyal to the Constitution of the United States of America.
4. We believe that parents, teachers and government officials should strive to co-operate for the best interests of the children.
5. We believe that educational experiments introduced into the schools should adhere to American principles and traditions.



---

---

KEEP OUR  
AMERICAN SCHOOLS AMERICAN

---

---

---

---

KEEP OUR

AMERICAN SCHOOLS AMERICAN

---

---

Now their abandonment is practically universal throughout our senior high schools.

Under the formal mid-term examination arrangement chairmen of departments set the papers and reports of results attained were made to the principal. By such arrangement it was possible for a principal to judge objectively of the scholarship of his school and of each department in it. Under the prevailing method of eliminating mid-terms and arranging for each teacher to set his own examination for each class and for the pupils to write the examination within some class period a principal is denied opportunity to estimate the scholarship of his school and of its several departments. It should be recorded that the abandonment of the formal examination system has taken place illegally since the regulation demanding formal mid-term examination, a regulation upon the enforcement of which the late Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Harold G. Campbell, who knew the high schools intimately, insisted, has never been abrogated. The abandonment of formal mid-term examinations indubitably leads to the degeneration of scholarship within a school. When the pupil is not required to take a formal mid-term examination, when in addition he never writes a Regents examination we can judge the earnestness of the effort he will make. Even if he writes a Regents examination he is informed by his teacher prior to writing it that regardless of his success or failure in the examination he will, in any event, receive a diploma. Of course, the pupil knows in the event of failure the diploma he will receive will be of cheaper grade than the academic or commercial diploma to which he aspires. It is, however, a diploma. Since the school approves why should he object? It has however come within my experience to have pupils object. They knew the misrepresentation provided for by the general diploma would in time be revealed. They were wiser than the school authorities. They were determined to achieve what they had set out to accomplish. They were willing to defer their formal graduation until the following term rather than accept a diploma of pinchbeck variety. School authorities were not interested in scholarship, the pupils of whom I write were. The school authorities were determined there would be no failures and that no one should be made temporarily unhappy. The pupils I have in mind were determined to achieve; they were not willing to call failure "success". They had a higher ethical sense than the school authorities. What an anomalous situation.

The extent to which schools have gone to be able to show successful records by means of the issuance of general diplomas is astounding. Always skeptical of the value of present day general diplomas I made an effort to determine the circumstances governing their issuance. I have had presented to me cases of pupils in the highly important subject of United States History whose classwork and Regents examination record were both of failing grade, and yet were graduated. How? By providing for a last minute change in the record of daily work from an abysmal failure to a passing rating. When a principal orders such a change, without valid reason, what can we expect from those who have seemingly profited by such fraud?

We can reasonably expect in addition the disappointment of business houses in the metropolitan area when they employ boys and girls holding diplomas from our public high schools. Disappointment with the products of public education in the City of New York has been recently expressed by the Transcription Writers Association. This association is composed of a group of representatives of over two hundred commercial houses. Recently they issued a report relative to the worth to business of present day graduates of the public high school system of this city. The report emphasizes the fact that far too many boys and girls who come to them after graduation from our public high schools have proved themselves to have a poor grasp of the fundamentals of learning and are disinterested in doing any job that they do not like to do. If the business of our city is to be carried on, the report of the Transcription Writers Association contends, a way must be found to restore the standards of achievement, interest in work, perseverance and good manners that were once realized in our schools.

The way is plain. It consists briefly in stopping misrepresentation by our school authorities. We have laws aimed to prevent dishonesty and misrepresentation in the distribution of foods and drugs. It is vitally more important that we have honesty and the true presentation of facts governing the issuance of diplomas in our schools. Pupils who have little knowledge or control of the fundamentals of learning are being sent into high schools carrying diplomas which testify that their bearers have proved themselves to be competent in these fields. The situation is bad. It can be remedied only by substituting honesty for dishonesty. It is not remedied by passing them along and ultimately granting them general high school diplomas.



## The Crusade of 1952 Continues

In May the term of Mr. James Marshall comes to an end and we hope it will be the end of his service as a member of the Board of Education in the City of New York.

Under the heading "Rich Playboys Help Finance United States Red Drive," Mr. William Fulton of the Chicago Tribune Press Service several months ago showed how old fortunes are going into the cause of the Communists. His revelations have not been contradicted. Of the Robert Marshall Civil Liberties Trust and Foundation, Mr. Fulton wrote:

Millions are also being funneled into communist and left wing drives via the big foundations. One of the most notorious is the Robert Marshall civil liberties trust and foundation. Robert Marshall, son of Louis, a law partner of Samuel Untermyer, left \$1,534,090 in 1939 for the cause of trade unionism, civil liberties, and preservation of wild life.

About a year ago the Marshall money went into the defense of William W. Remington, commerce department economist subsequently convicted of perjury in connection with spy ring activities. (This conviction was set aside by the higher court because of errors in the charge to the jury made by the presiding trial judge. Mr. Remington will, in all probability it now appears, be tried again.—Ed.) Other Marshall money has been contributed toward the Rev. L. M. Birkhead's "Friends of Democracy," a well known outfit that smears patriotic Americans and organizations.

Trustees of the Marshall civil liberties trust include: Roger Baldwin, who has been identified with organizations deemed subversive by the government; Edwin S. Smith, former member of the national labor relations board and later executive director of the National Council for American Soviet Friendship; John F. Finerty, lawyer for numerous pinko causes; Gardner Jackson, Roosevelt intimate and once chairman of the Council for Pan-American Democratic union which is on the justice department list as subversive; and James Marshall, brother of the late Robert and member of the New York City board of education.

Does the past record of Mr. Marshall as a member of the Board of Education justify his continuance in office? We think it does not. We think, too, that all but members of the "left coalition," and those who hope to profit politically by accepting the support of the American Labor Party and other "leftist" groups of communistic or socialistic variety as well as those others who are "organization" before they are American think so too. We hope, therefore, that Mr. Marshall's services to the Board of Education will cease in May 1952. We hope Mayor Impellitteri will, in the name of good American politics, refuse to listen to the clamor of the "leftists" and deny approbation to Mr. Marshall and the causes he has sponsored.

We ask those who believe Mr. Marshall should not be returned to the Board of Education to write to the Mayor to tell him so. Letters should pour in on the Mayor from now until Mr. Marshall's term of office legally expires. The "leftists" know the value of personal letters. They never fail to write them to aid a cause in which they are interested. Let us, as many as know the record of Mr. Marshall as Trustee of the Robert Marshall Civil Liberties Trust and Foundation and as a member of the Board of Education, write to the Mayor asking that Mr. Marshall's services on the Board of Education be terminated. Let us acquaint all residents of the City of New York, with whom we come in contact, with Mr. Marshall's record. Let us urge them to write to the Mayor. Let us make the cause for his non-reappointment to membership on the Board of Education the Crusade for 1952. We shall do more, if we are successful, to better the public schools of this city and to minimize the influence of the "left coalition" in our midst by ending Mr. Marshall's services in the field of activity officially provided for members of the Board of Education than has been done in the past fifteen years.

The City of New York was known for years as a "melting pot." It has become known during the past fifteen years as a "beach-head" of "left coalition" campaigns. In this change the Robert Marshall Civil Liberties Trust and Foundation has played a major part. Mr. James Marshall, as member of the Board of Education in this city, has enjoyed unusual opportunity to encourage the spread of "leftist" causes throughout the schools and by means of the school teachers to leftist labor union locals of both

*(Continued on next page)*



## THE EDUCATIONAL SIGNPOST

*Published by*

AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

545 Fifth Avenue

New York 17, N. Y.

President . . . . . Cathryn K. Dorney  
 Corresponding Secretary . . . . . Florence Casey  
 Chairman, Board of Directors . . . Gertrude A. Oehl  
 Secretary-Treasurer . . . . . Josephine P. Smith  
 Executive Director and Editor . . . Milo F. McDonald

Vol. XIV, No. 6



May, 1952

**CRUSADE**

Socialistic and Communistic variety. Let us ask the Mayor to end that opportunity by ending Mr. Marshall's services on the Board of Education. The issue is highly important. Let us seize the opportunity to better the public school morale in this city. Let us start the flow of letters to Mayor Impellitteri. Let us make the non-reappointment of Mr. Marshall a Crusade not for the other fellow but for all of us.

**MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN CONTINUES**

Our membership campaign for 1952 is now in full swing. We have decided to continue it until the end of the current term. As of the present the vast majority of former members, many of them members of the A.E.A. since its first establishment in 1938, have re-enrolled. We are happy to note the fact that the total number of Associate and Sustaining members exceeds at this early date in our campaign the number on our rolls in any preceding year.

We are gratified by the fact that many men and women, who live at points far distant from the City of New York, have aligned themselves with us in our crusade for better schools throughout the United States. They realize that our campaign against the conditions prevalent in the New York area are indicative of what also prevails or may prevail everywhere, unless the "leftist" movement is stopped as it was at Pasadena, in their own school districts.

We are also pleased by the vast number of men and women, some of them teachers but others who are not, who have rejoined the A.E.A. for 1952 after having, through negligence, let their memberships lapse. It is strange to say, perhaps, but we hope there were few teachers who feared to be identified with us in other years because of remarks made to them concerning the A.E.A. by their school superiors. We have heard of one school supervisor who told a teacher, one of our fearless members, "you are foolish to be in the A.E.A."

If any one, any "liberal" makes such a remark to any A.E.A. member or within his hearing, or tampers with any of our mail, please let us know. We promise to take care of the situation. No one has any thing to fear by identifying himself with the A.E.A. The "liberal" Socialists and the Communists in any school system in this country have much to fear in 1952.

**Source Materials in Curriculum Development**

A year ago there was issued by the authority of the Board of Education of the City of New York a lengthy report called Source Materials in Curriculum Development. The philosophic basis of the report was the atheistic "instrumentalism" of Dr. John Dewey and his followers in the field of "Progressive" education. As a result of protests made, the report was withdrawn from circulation in so far as that was possible of achievement.

Now, we have been informed, with some minor changes, the report is to be re-issued shortly and re-circulated. The report as it appeared originally was atheistic, completely and designedly so. The report, in essence, violated the American way of life. That way is founded upon belief in God as the Declaration of Independence declares and as our coins testify. It was an un-American report and those responsible for it should have been at the time of its issuance punished in no un-mistakable manner so that the teachers in the schools and the general public would be informed that the Board of Education still adheres to the principles upon which this country was established.

We have been told that the report was issued without knowledge by the Board of Education of what it contained. Accepting that statement in generous manner as applicable to all the members of the Board which we did, though we had reason to doubt, we asked, at the time, whether the Superintendent of Schools did not know the contents of the report before it was issued and circulated. Though the Superintendent had written the foreword to this shocking report we are supposed to accept the statement made officially at the time of its withdrawal that it had been sent to the printer without authorization. The Superintendent had signed his name to the foreword of the report without knowing its nature? If that is his practice in matters of importance, and the report "Source Materials in Curriculum Development" was and still is important, gravely important, then he is not the kind of person to have occupying the position of Superintendent of Schools. A reprimand by the Board of Education for his action in writing the foreword for such a report as the one in question would most certainly have been in place at the time the nature of the report was brought to public knowledge and should be administered at the time the revised report is, if it ever is, issued.

Under the present Curriculum Council and the present Curriculum Committee no revision of the original report should be made. The report should be abandoned and present members of the Curriculum Council and the Curriculum Committee should, for the good of the service of the public schools and of the children and youth in them, be given other assignments where they will have no opportunity to spread the tenets of atheism at public expense.



### **100% Promotions**

Those who approve our present practices are interested in a problem in the solution of which I have as strong an interest as they. It is the problem of the presence of overaged children in the elementary grades. It is true that when children in the pubescent stage of life are in close classroom and school contact with children of younger age a danger presents itself. Young adolescents have interests and desires foreign to their younger schoolmates. It was with the thought of removing this danger that the vocational school movement was started by Dr. Ettinger as we have heretofore related. It was this thought that animated the establishment of junior high schools. Neither of these types of schools has solved this problem. Both have failed; one by reason of excessive ambition on the part of the vocational school principals and teachers, the other by incompetence of administration.

So the problem still remains and the most recent attempt to solve it is that of promotion on the basis of physiological development rather than on that of intellectual attainment. Such thinking is basic to the prevalent 100% promotion plan and the provision of sending to senior high all pupils who have reached their sixteenth year. As we have indicated we are in thorough agreement with the thought that adolescents should be grouped with adolescents. There is a moral peril to children if such a grouping is not accomplished.

Our disagreement is not with the thought of sending all pubescents to junior high schools and of all adolescents of sixteen years or over to the senior high schools. Our thought is that the junior high schools have not made any attempt to solve the problem in an intelligent manner and the senior high schools are not only not solving it but are deliberately and designedly misrepresenting it. In the junior high schools truancy and delinquency have increased to an alarming extent among the pubescents (early adolescents) present in these schools. In the senior high schools the presence of children of retarded mental development and of adolescents of sixteen years or older who have not completed satisfactorily the work of the elementary grades has created a problem which the secondary school division of our local system is befogging not clarifying. In other words we have no disagreement with the thought of all pubescents being in junior high schools nor with the thought of placing all adolescents in senior high schools regardless of their intellectual deficiencies. We agree heartily with the intent of such plan. It is highly

That the possibility of danger still exists is proved by the fact that only recently it was recommended that the committee on extra-classroom groups of the High School Principals Association give further study to the activities of the Citywide General Organization Council. The existence of this group is indefensible and the possibility that it may in some crisis take action contrary to the good of the high schools is real.

My purpose in presenting in such detail the manner in which the Citywide General Organization Council came into existence is that from an understanding of the procedure followed in this case a better grasp can be had of the clever manipulation of interests, distortion of facts and misrepresentation of motives that have characterized much of the so-called "democratic progressivism" that has figured prominently in public education within recent years. It is the line of thought that has fastened the activity program upon our local system of schools. It is the line of thought that tried to place Youthbuilders, Inc. on a permanent basis within the junior high schools. It is the line of Dewey's ethical code, following as it does his instrumentalistic philosophy. It is a line which reveals what fundamentally is wrong with much of our educational leadership of today. Some of our current mistakes in education are attributable to ignorance; some others are attributable to incompetent administration but far too great a number have been planned. The Citywide General Organization Council is an example of the latter group. As a matter of fact the ignorant and the incompetent among the leaders in our local educational system may be but the dupes of the clever manipulators who have been the consistent and highly articulate vanguard of all "progressive" education including not only recent changes in our extra curricular and co-curricular activities but also the whole fabric of our "new" curricula.

The co-curricular tendency is worth attention. Frankly it is an effort to squeeze within the normal school day such activities as clubs, sports both intra-mural and interscholastic, plays, concerts, trips and publications. Experience has proved that the school day is barely long enough to accomplish all that should be accomplished in the way of formal education. Now, however, within the same length of time, we are told, can be done all for which there was formerly not sufficient time and all that was done formerly after the normal school day had ended. From now on there will be no voluntary effort after school for the good of pupils with special interests. All will be cared for within the school day. High school publications will become co-curricular not extra-curricular and there will

be, we are told, no sacrifice of the formal aspects of a secondary school education. It is interesting to note that the publications of the several high schools have been grouped under a citywide control. It is of further interest to learn that members of the citywide publication group complain that their writings are being subjected to censorship. They wish to be relieved of all censorship in their local schools. They are to be privileged to say what they please in the school paper and to write their contributions to it during the school day when they are supposedly being educated by mature teachers of a school supposedly administered by a professional educator. Is this not carrying “progressive” self-expressionism to a ridiculous degree of absurdity and danger?

### *Future Possibilities*

All “progressive” education is dangerous. It threatens our American way of life to which our American youth should be passionately devoted. It is a way of life we wish them to be zealous to preserve, a way of life that spells opportunity to preserve the gifts to humanity of Christianity upon which all true democracy is built. These foundation stones of our American government “progressive” education would destroy. Its intent is to destroy what we have built in the western hemisphere. It is not simply a different approach to education. It is a program, a program of destruction.

We have only to look at what was accomplished by the use in Russia of the activity program as a political tool to see the viciousness of “progressive” education. We have seen how by means of it the youth of the Soviet was prepared for the totalitarian regime Stalin fastened upon an essentially religious people.

We know that many people are fully aware of the many dangers that are presented to our country today in the fields of diplomacy and of actual warfare. They do not always however show that they are convinced that a potent danger presents itself in our schools. Many communities have, of late, become convinced and have taken measures to protect themselves and their children from the “progressives” in our schools who “dare to build a new social order” in this land of opportunity. Those who have followed the “progressives” are apparently afraid of having the term “progressive” affixed to them. They like to call the changes they recommend in our schools the “new” education.



The use of the term "new" education in this country is interesting. The Soviet uses the term to describe her present day procedures. To her "progressive" indicates the "old" education which she discarded in 1932. Russia's "old" is our "new" and her "new" is our "old." What she adopted in 1917 to help her establish totalitarianism in the Soviet and discarded in 1932 when she had achieved her purposes we adopted in the City of New York in 1935 and still follow in 1951. Will the school teachers of the City of New York "dare" to build a new social order here? Is the City of New York to be a trial center? Are the children and the youth of this city to become the tools of the Soviet in its effort to control the world? Does totalitarianism threaten us and are our public schools a possible source of danger? Do we believe we are invincible and immune from sabotage? The planners are with us. They have with them "progressive" poison. Our local schools are being destroyed by it. Let us hope all our citizens will awake and arouse themselves before it is too late.

The nature of the poison the "planners of the future through the schools" are using is revealed by two recent publications of the Board of Education. One is called "Source Materials in Curriculum Development"; the other "Strengthening Democracy". Both are official publications and under the law the Superintendent is responsible for them. The first was originally prepared in 1949, when Dr. Stephen F. Bayne was Associate Superintendent of Schools in charge of the curriculum and Mr. Paul Kennedy was Assistant Superintendent dealing with the same field. The foreword was written by the Superintendent of Schools himself. The second is a more recent publication. Both are under attack at the present time.

The Board of Education of the City of New York has before it now a resolution asking the State Department of Education to survey the record of the city schools and their "progressive" practices of the past fifteen years. If the proposal is handled as the Morrison survey was in 1941 we might as well not waste time on it. The Morrison survey was, as we have indicated, a most unscientific affair. The Morrison Report was pigeonholed for so long a period in the files of the Board of Education that, when issued, no one who knew what had gone on in the interim had any confidence in it.

The City Council has had a resolution before it since April 25, 1950 asking for an investigation of our city's schools. Intelligent people have waited a long time for truth and candor in dealing with the degenerative process at work in our local public schools. Perhaps real action will come soon. We hope so.





TO EACH MEMBER OF  
THE AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
AND  
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN PARENTS

A COPY OF THIS BOOKLET HAS BEEN SENT

Members of either of these groups who desire additional copies for their friends may procure them by ordering them from

THE AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

545 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

*The cost is 35¢ a copy or 3 booklets for \$1.00*

Others desiring copies of the booklet on "Progressive" Education in the Schools of the City of New York may order them directly by writing to the offices of the American Education Association. The cost is 50¢ a copy.

THE AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

545 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

What is taking place educationally in the City of New York is also taking place in other cities and towns of the United States.

## *An Invitation*

The American Education Association invites all who are interested in giving widespread distribution to a knowledge of the deterioration of our nation's schools to join with us in promoting the campaign we inaugurated thirteen years ago.

Those who read this booklet and those who read regularly the Educational Signpost, our official organ, will understand that it is only by preventing further retrogression in educational standards that we shall preserve the basic concepts of our American economic and social life.

Let us send you a membership card. Join our campaign for better schools.

Annual dues . . . . Two dollars a year

AMERICAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
545 Fifth Avenue  
New York 17, N. Y.

OUR AMERICAN SCHOOLS MUST REMAIN AMERICAN

