

Dan Leahy's Book Outline:

CLASS WARFARE: THE ASSAULT ON CANADA'S SCHOOLS

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1994, Key Porter Books

PREFACE

Harmonization of the classrooms of publicly funded educational system is a goal of the competitive corporate ideology.

What has changed is that the school's role is no longer to prepare children to create the future, but to prepare students for an inevitable future over which they will have no control, in which at best they can aspire to adapt to the ruthlessness of the inescapable. (viii).

The public must be made conscious of what it will mean if we take the "public" out of public education, if we turn our schools into preemployment centers for pre-adults. (x).

INTRODUCTION

Expanding into Anti-Chaos of the 1980s, schools became the "sole public response" to social problems. Shift from promotion of social values to the prevention of "social collapse." (7) - a "down-loading" of social policy to the schools.

If the demands on schools are contradictory and overwhelming, if unions are paralyzed, school boards are demoralized, and ministries politicized, does it follow that schools are deficient, mind-numbing and unable to change, as has they have been portrayed by their critics? - A great deal of evidence to the contrary.

Indicators of success of the schools? (19)

1. Canada leads all nation's in participation in higher education. 60% age 20-24 are still studying. (UN)
2. Keeping 80% in high school until graduation. Only a generation ago, half graduated.
3. Highest rate per capita of co-operative education students in the world.
4. Canada's student diversity and inclusive system is unique.
5. The Japanese Productivity Center says Canadian workers most productive in the world. Education system?

6. In the past two decades, library use has tripled in Quebec and doubled in rest of Canada.

MYTH #1 : OUR SCHOOLS HAVE FAILED US... AND OUR KIDS

The future is a race between education and disaster. Education is our only means of protecting ourselves from our self-destructive tendencies... the product of education is a collective state of mind. (23)

New definition: Education is an under-utilized commodity that can be exploited to multiply short-term profits. Education has the appeal of virgin forests to a clear cutter. The strategy is to show education as a cause of disaster, not the best defence against it. (24)

1. 25% of Canadians are illiterate and for this we can blame schools. The Conference Board promotes these figures, but there are NO "surveys" that demonstrate it.

2. 30% drop out rate. This figure was only a guesstimate based on students who did not graduate when expected. It did not count transfers, emigration, continuing part time or dropped back in. Actually it is 18% or 82% completion, compared to '56 with 30% and '71 with 52%. -- high school graduation.

3. More money; less to show; bloated bureaucracy. In fact, an OECD study rated Canada first in only one category. Share of public expenditures to education, Canada rated 3rd with 14.4%.6.4% of GDP to public education; (US was 5%). Canada highest on post secondary education; however, 4th lowest of 20 OECD members for elementary/secondary. etc... (32)

4. Japan (243); Germany (240) - Canada 180-185 days. Actually, the Japanese figure is what is allowed, but rarely met. Plus numerous non-instruction days in the formal schedule so that Canadian high schoolers actually received more instruction hours than do Japanese. (952 to 933 hours). (34)

Why do right wing critics and corporate interests invest bad news about our school and students?

Public sentiment still supportive of schools. In the U.S., "the most recent Gallup Poll" found that nationally 47% gave their local schools As or Bs, but only 19% believed the nations schools should have good marks. (42)

MYTH #2: OUR GRADUATES JUST DON'T HAVE THE SKILLS

Skilled labor shortage!!! Actually, it is a shortage of facts. Longer education.

1. 29%, biggest category, is engineering and applied sciences.
2. Canada ranked in top 5 of competitive work force.
3. Canada 1st in G7 countries in percapita science/engineering diplomas granted.
4. No skills shortage. Technology is replacing skilled workers and hiring favors entry level skills. (50).
5. The bulk of new jobs are low-skilled. Only two qualify as high skilled: retail sales, registered nurses - Not a scientist or mathematician among them.

In the US, John Akers (IBM), Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker, and the famous America 2000 all say skills shortage.

1. 1990 study found that 95% of American employers still use methods of production that require less than an 8th grade education. (53).
2. EPI study in May 93 found, college graduate wages fell 3.1% between 87-91; Wages of highly skilled white collar workers fell 3% between 87-92.
3. There is a shortage of jobs, not skills!
4. **Sandia Report completed in 91, but not published.** Findings ran counter to Bush's national policy.
 - a. Since 70s, SATs improving; drop out rates declined.
 - b. Hard science BAs increased by 75% over past 20yrs.
 - c. GRE scores risen significantly.
 - d. US leads world in % of pop with BAs, science greatest.
 - e. Problems are those of inequality and better pay and respect. Schools have nothing to do with decline in global competition.

Stan Karp: the corporate based American economy "has no real need for universally effective schooling for all. There's no economic need in a profit driven system for equity claims on educational resources, or for open admissions to college or for reversing the shrinking number of minority teachers, ---- (59)

MYTH #3: BIG BUSINESS IS CREATING HIGHLY SKILLED JOBS

If we do what business wants, there will be jobs.

However, business knows the structure of work and the distribution of jobs have changed forever with the creation of a global economy.

1. transfer of economic power from nation-state to transnational corporations operating outside national laws.
2. High competitive trade blocs and global workforce competing against each other.
3. Transnationals control 1/3 of private sector productive assets, conduct 80% of world trade and control 80% of land cultivated for export-oriented crops. (UN report). (62)
4. Of the world's 100 leading economies, 47 are transnational corporations.
5. They seek a world without borders or a tightly controlled corporate system in which they do not consider the effects of their activities on countries nor populations. Govt. regulations are a direct threat to them.
6. 90% have hq in the developed world, but increasing their investments and job transfers to the south.
7. Global labor pool. ILO says 30% is either unemployed or underemployed. 820 million workers do not earn a subsistence wage. 47 million job seekers enter workforce each year. Between 79092, Fortune 500 laid off 4.4 million workers.
8. Jobs are not being "lost: to the first world, but "shifted" to the Third. (64)
 - a. Procter & Gamble will shift 10,000 American jobs.
 - b. AT&T has cut 20,000
 - c. Bristol Myers has laid off 7,200.
 - d. IBM reduced workforce 75,000 between 86-92.
 - e. Kodak moved 20,000 off shore.
 - f. Phillips cut 40,000 in three years.
 - g. Exxon downsized by 100,000 since 1990.
 - h. US has lost 3 million manufacturing jobs since 1979.
9. Mexico. 100,000 work in auto parts and assembly plants. Big three have 60 plants and 150 suppliers.

10. US job creation. Wal-Mart created more jobs during recovery than any other company paying between \$5 and 9\$/hour. 60% of jobs created in first half of 1993 were part time. (66)

11. Garrison Economy. Guard labor (eg security forces) and threat labor (eg unemployed) (67)

WHAT DOES BUSINESS REALLY WANT?

(Note: I should try and get "Polystyrene, Plastics and the Environment" by Mobile Corporation.)

North American corporations have three fundamental goals for their preoccupation with and investment in North America's schools.

1. Secure ideological allegiance to free market view on issues of environment, corporate rights and role of government.

2. Gain market access to hearts and minds of young consumers & to lucrative contracts in education industry.

a. Largest untapped consumer market in our society

b. Under 12 market now influence \$132 billion in purchase

c. In US, direct income of children is \$9 billion.

d. "How to Grow your Customers from Childhood" (84)

e. The "bailout education companies" are high tech.

f. "growing up corporate" - ask few questions.

3. Transform schools into training centers producing a workforce suited to needs of transnational corporations.

a. Corporate America is pressing for a more highly educated workforce in order to effect a workerless economy. (87)

HIJACKING A CULTURE.

1. Wal-Mart, world's largest retailer and US's 3rd largest corporation swallowed Woolco

2. Contracting out government to US corporations. Federal government does not use a Canadian reservation, nor credit system for travel. American Airlines and American Express.
3. NAFTA establishes a "whole new framework of social and economic policy for the Americas and create(s) an alternative non-elected continental governing structure. (97)
 - a. Opens up Canadian services, including public sector and educational services. National Treatment.
 - b. No longer have a requirement to have a presence in the country to get contract.
 - c. US corporations have "procurement rights" to bid on public and governmental contracts. (98)
 - d. No new services that compete with private companies without compensation, nor could something privatized be re-publicized without compensation.
 - e. US firms such as ServiceMASTER will contract with Canadian schools to service its cafeterias, cleaning and purchasing. (102)
 - f. Intellectual property will treat knowledge not as a common heritage, but as a commodity and the exclusive property of the company who take a patent out on it. (104).
 - g. Third World genetic wealth in seeds, plants and natural medicines which is being appropriated by transnationals and sold back to them at punitive prices (104)
 - h. Knowledge shift from free, open and benefit to society is now proprietary, confidential and for the benefit of business. (105)
4. **Continental Education Superstructure.** The creation of a North American educational institution to harmonize standards, training and certification of education professions.

RIGHT WING ALLIANCE AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

1. President Bush called for a "national framework for what students should know and be able to do; creating a set of exams based directly on the framework; and setting grading criteria for the exams." Mulronney followed soon... "product-testing" students. (117)
2. National testing. National indicators. BCNI's national achievement test. Mass testing means that "what has been and will be tested becomes a priority, not just in the public mind or ministry policy, but in time and attention in the classroom."
3. What about "testing" for curiosity, judgement, empathy, aesthetic appreciation and skills, respect for difference, etc??
4. Who decides what is worth knowing?
5. The strongest political message is sent each time a student learns that to challenge authority, not matter how arbitrarily it is exercised, is to get into trouble. (125)
6. Received or Generated. Is Knowledge?? Revealed truth, rather than constructed meaning. (134)
7. Appeal to parental anxiety, not ideology.

RESTRUCTURING FROM THE RIGHT

1. The term has been "appropriated and redefined by the ideology and idioms of the marketplace. (141). The needs of students are replaced by the needs of the workplace, ie employers.
2. Computers. Computer literacy seems to refer to students becoming "comfortable with" computers rather than acquiring particular technical skills.
3. Computers have been key in shifting the public's perception of schools as a vocational, rather than developmental area. (147)
4. The substitution of "knowledge" for "information" is a prime example of the elevation of data to the same status as meaning. (150)
5. A technocrat's ideal: a person with no commitment and no point of view but with plenty of marketable skills. (152).
6. YOUTH NEWS NETWORK. \$50g worth of equipment for 12 minutes/day.

7. Business does not want to stop at providing classroom materials and cultivating brand loyalty. They want to shape the basic assumptions that drive the curriculum. (161)

RENOVATING THE STUDENT

The assault on public educational is global. In 1970, education was first priority of publicly financed social programs in 8 of 20 OECD countries.

The same ideology driving the global economy is pushing the goal of universal education to the bottom of the political agenda. (165).

As soon as education becomes a market then it becomes something available only to those who can afford it.. (166)

The share of public expenditures on education decreased. 24.4% in 70 to 17.7 % in 80.