

ARTXXIV & Doctemp:fldbxs2.doc

Ver date: 11 Oct 2000

**Content of the boxes in the diagram on Educational System's contribution to the
destruction of the planet**

BOX 1

Main Features of the Educational System

- A “Miniature of Society”: Unarguable authority who knows best; tasks set by authority; authority has the right to determine what one will do (regardless of one’s personal talents and interests) and control the terms in which one’s worth will be evaluated; single-factor models of ability (monocultures of mind); ability conceived individualistically rather than collectively; acceptance of compulsion, however absurd the tasks, fraudulent the claimed benefits and irrelevant they are to personal or societal needs; acceptance of required attendance for arbitrary hours; required tolerance of boring and useless tasks; tolerance of being treated with disrespect, disdain, contempt, and indifference to personal qualities and needs; tolerance of inability to influence; required recitation of “truths” which conflict with direct knowledge and common sense, thus inoculating people from the feelings of discomfort which otherwise come from mouthing lies; promotion of those who ingratiate themselves with authority – ie work out what to do to gain esteem and do whatever is necessary to gain preferment; encouragement of the perception that those who succeed are “clever” and those who fail are lazy, incompetent, and undeserving of respect;
- Exposure to role models (teachers) who portray the most down-trodden, ineffectual, behaviour of any of the groups we have studied. These role models demonstrate, not only an inability to gain control over their destinies, not only no evidence of resigned acceptance of their inability, but even no evidence of feeling that they might have a *right* to do so. They lack resourcefulness and allow themselves to be forced to work in resourceless conditions, set tasks they have no hope of achieving, and judged against criteria they have had no hand in setting and which they have little hope of reaching. They allow themselves to be pushed about by authority ... accepting that authority has the right to treat them in this way because they believe that duly elected popular authority has the right to do what it wants.
- Compulsory acceptance of fraudulent “choice” mechanisms: a choice of school – but only between schools which all do the same thing, choice between schools pursuing alternative *goals* having been deliberately eliminated.
- Inducement to grudgingly accept a system which does not do what one wants it to do or what it claims to do in order to gain entirely other (materialistic and sociological; instrumental) benefits.

BOX 2

Main outcomes of the “educational” process

Reinforcement of

- a) Single-factor models of “ability”.
- b) Notion that worth inheres in competitive individualistic characteristics.
- c) Idea that there is only one “correct” way of thinking about things.

Acceptance of

- a) The right of others to allocate one’s tasks, determine the criteria against which one’s contribution or worth will be evaluated, and assess one against their criteria and thus determine life style and respect.
- b) A hierarchy of power legitimised by “ability” or “contribution” and thus the legitimacy of an underclass of disenfranchised who are viewed as incompetent and unemployable.
- c) The dominance mind set: might = right; the right of man to dominate man; “men” to dominate “savages”, “homo sapiens” to dominate nature. There is not enough to go round: competitiveness and greed is required for personal and social “success”.
- d) (Through teaching, especially in science and religion) the view that “the world is not as it seems to be”. This undermines ‘common sense’ and the right of the individual to reality-test statements of authority. This becomes especially important in the acceptance of the right of authority, economics, law etc.
- e) “Trained Incapacity”; the *breeding* of incompetence (in this way undermining faith in direct action) arising from the pervasive belief that a long training and specialist knowledge are required before one can start to do anything and observation of teachers who never *do* anything.
- f) Abuse, boredom, denigration, and de-humanising treatment.
- g) The right of authority legitimised through the “democratic” process to inflict abuse and denigration.
- h) The view that current forms of public management are “of the people, by the people, and for the people”, and that they, together with the market system, give one both access to information and an appropriate voice or means to influence what goes on.

BOX 3

Main features of current society

Structural

- Steep hierarchies of influence, prestige, well-being, and conventional wealth with those at the bottom conspicuously disenfranchised and subjected to demeaning, degrading, and dehumanising treatment.
- Pervasive insecurity.
- Externalisation of major costs to the 3rd world, the environment, and the future.
- Proliferation of unnecessary work so as to make the belief that only by working does one acquire the right to live credible and, simultaneously, removal of time for thought and socially-oriented action: production of junk food, junk toys, junk security (“insurance”), junk “education”, junk “science”.
- Monocultures: of mind, in science, in agriculture, and in human culture to discredit alternatives and legitimise hierarchy.

Specific means of compelling participation in the main activities of modern society

- Widespread and strong (moral) belief that only by working does one acquire the right to a decent way of life.
- Widespread acceptance of the myth that hierarchies which promote dominators are hierarchies which promote the most able and those most concerned with common good.
- Publicising the (manufactured) deteriorating conditions of life of a large underclass who are castigated as scroungers, parasites, incompetents, and idlers whilst simultaneously creating the illusion that all is due to the impersonal operation of mechanical economic forces.
- Privatisation and individualisation; denial of the social.
- The enforcement of monocultures of mind to discredit discussion of wider issues and alternative perceptions and, indeed, render those issues invisible and thus undiscussable.
- Reductionist science and thinking more generally.
- Generation of an appropriate set of myths.

General beliefs/Myths (which have somehow been crafted)

- Authority tends to be good (ie to act in the public interest), right, and necessary.
- From both an economic and evolutionary point of view, ‘there is no alternative’ to the present system.
- The current state of things stems from the impersonal workings of economic forces.
- A hierarchy of worth/wealth/power/right to power is natural and inevitable.
- Social division is part of the natural order.
- “The most able naturally rise to the top”.
- Individual competition to succeed at tasks set by authority with single-valued criteria of success is the best way to tap human motives for social progress.
- “Full employment” is a pre-requisite to economic and social development.
- More (formal) education is a pre-requisite to economic and social development.
- The market mechanism creates genuine wealth and the variety needed for well being; it stimulates innovation, delivers high quality of life, rewards the industrious, provides meaningful choice and opportunities to influence what happens, and it delivers such benefits as it does deliver in an equitable and efficient way. (All of these myths contribute to the creation of useless work, the performance of which consumes endless resources.).
- Happiness comes from material possessions.

Beliefs about public management

- Public provision should be uniform and lack lustre.
- The role of public servants is only to implement decisions taken by elected representatives and not, for example, to release people’s energies in a ferment of innovation and learning.
- Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people ... and it works!
- Democracy provides an effective way of orchestrating communal action for the common good and ensuring that leaders act in the public interest. (Such myths conceal the persisting power of elites and their ability to control what happens in such a way as to determine their continued support.)
- Democracy involves the right of the majority to impose their will on all.
- Public Management (“communism”) does not work.

BOX 4

Outcomes of the operation of modern society

- Accelerating intra- and inter-national division.
- Exponentially accelerating consumption of both renewable and non-renewable resources.
- Concentration of power in fewer and fewer hands.
- “Globalisation”.
- Destruction of diversity in human, animal, and plant culture.
- Destruction of soils, seas, and atmosphere.

DESTRUCTION OF THE PLANET

BOX 5

Public Awareness

- Alienation arising from sensed discrepancy between forced way of life and human nature on the one hand and activities that are heterotelic to Gaia on the other.
- Awareness, through the media, of destruction of soils, seas, and atmosphere and thus imminence of collapse of food base.
- Awareness that economic indicators (GNP) and materialism do not deliver high quality of life: we have been duped by economists, politicians, advertisers, and the myths of “civilisation”.
- Feelings of unease generated by conflict between our essentially thical natures and observation of plight of lower socio-economic groups and plight of third world and ethical nature.
- Sensitivity to the unethical – ie the long-term anti-social – nature of the activities one is required to engage in on a daily basis.
- Vague awareness that one has been tricked; that one does not live in a market economy at all, that the market process does not work, and that 3rd World has been systematically exploited by the “developed” countries.

BOX 6

The New Values

Support for:

- **Exchange based on Personal Relationships**
(instead of commercial transactions)
- **Ownwork (Communework)**
(in place of Organisationally organised Work)
- **Decentralised Production**
- **Community support networks in place of:**
 - a. drugs-based health care
 - b. insurance
- **Reduced Transportation of**
 - Goods**
 - People**
- **Concentration on Quality of Life** (rather than GNP)
- **Fair Trade with Third World**
- **Recycling**
- **Conservation of:**
 - Non-renewable and Renewable Energy**
 - Minerals;**
 - Food**
- **Dismantlement of Defence Industry**
- **Stemming Destruction of Rain Forests**
- **Development and Utilisation of *all* Human Resources**
- **Equitable Distribution of Incomes**
- **Stemming Destruction of Soils, Seas, Atmosphere**
- **Sustainable Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry**

BOX 8

Dissatisfaction with current system of education

- Awareness that one's talents have been neglected (mostly adult).
- Awareness that the system does not develop talents useful in life or work, but instead allocates position and status.
- Awareness that competition for scarce resources is heading planet towards destruction which collaboration could halt.

BOX 9

Attempts to Change the Educational System

- Establishment of Bodies like:
 - Antidote
 - Education for Capability
- Government sponsored activities like:
 - The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
 - The world-wide multi-billion dollar Competency-Based Education movement
- Utilisation of Independent schools
- Use of home schooling