A Closer Look at the Products of Education in 1950s, 1960s…

1950s

*OUR SCHOOLS—THEIR FOUR GRIEVOUS FAULTS**

BERNARD IDDINGS BELL

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All the disillusioned share a common belief: that those in charge of what is called "education" have little perception of what schooling is supposed to be or to do. Ours should be a "democratic education"—splendid!—but the beauty of the adjective does not conceal the vacuity of the noun. Let whatever we have be "democratic"—but let us be sure it is also *education*.

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Another great failing of American schools is a basic irresponsibility which they develop in the students. For society there is grave danger when its youth are unchallenged in the impression that there can be reward without quest, wages without work, a master's prestige without a master's skill, marriage without fidelity, national security without individual sacrifice.

Our school system seems to presuppose that, for education to be democratic, every man's child must be treated as the equal of every other's both in kind of brains and in educability. The effect of this is to herd an increasing number of unfit persons into colleges of liberal arts whose proper business is to help students of exceptional intelligence to understand human affairs and develop sound judgment therein.

They are deeply skeptical of what is being produced in the way of a people personally content, socially responsible and politically effective. Thoughtful parents organize, agitate and petition. Leaders of business commonly deplore the ignorance and laxness of the products that tumble by the thousands each year from the end of our educational assembly line.

1952

"High School Youth Held Deficient in Spelling, Arithmetic, Writing"

New York Times TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1952.

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WEST SIDE STREETS FLUSHED OF AUTOS

Sanitation Men Get Police Aid as Alternate-Side Parking Is Extended Above 91st St.

307 SUMMONSES ISSUED

Tow Trucks Haul 61 Vehicles to Pound—Omission of Drive Will Be Remedied

By JOSEPH C. INGRAHAM

For the first time in years streets on the upper West Side received a thorough cleaning yesterday. The Sanitation Department's alternate-side-of-the-street parking program was extended to the car-congested sector between Ninety-first and 109th Streets, inclusive, from Central Park West to, but not including, Riverside Drive.

The police cracked down heavily on violators parked on the wrong side of the street and issued 307 summonses from 8 A. M. to 1 P. M., in which period parking was banned. Tow trucks hauled away sixty-one vehicles, including one car containing a friendly big brown dog.

Dog and car were taken to the Sanitation Department's impounding depot at West 125th Street and Twelfth Avenue. Workers forced open a door to free the animal, slaked its thirst with water and sent out for hamburgers for the animal.

The samaritans wound up eating the hamburgers. Soon after a messenger had started for the food Harold Kramer of 78-22 Kneeland Avenue, Elmhurst, Queens, arrived to claim the dog and the car. Mr. Kramer paid the $10 haulage charge, stuffed the "green" tag for illegal parking in his pocket and drove off.

Two Types of Summonses

The summons called for a $15 fine, the penalty that will prevail in the area in the street-cleaning hours. At other times $4 summonses for mere overtime parking will be issued.

The results of the first day of the new rule will swell the city's coffers by $4,605 in fines and $610 in towage charges.

Sanitation Commissioner Andrew W. Mulrain said that the new restrictions had produced highly satisfactory results. He was disturbed that so many cars had to be towed away.

Mr. Mulrain recalled that when the one-side-of-the-street plan first was introduced on the [illegible]

High School Youth Held Deficient In Spelling, Arithmetic, Writing

In Jobs They Expect High Pay and Quick Advancement, Commerce Group Finds—'Opinion Survey,' Jansen Comments

The trouble with the high school students and graduates employed by local concerns is, according to the Commerce and Industry Association of New York, that their spelling is bad, their handwriting mostly illegible, their arithmetic unreliable, they can't compose a business letter and they expect too much pay and too rapid advancement.

However, they are passably able to read and they make up in willingness what they lack in adequate schooling, according to a report on an association survey made public yesterday by Thomas Jefferson Miley, executive vice president of the group.

Mr. Miley said he had sent to Dr. William Jansen, Superintendent of Schools, a copy of the report and eight recommendations for improving the fitness of young men and women who go from high school into offices, shops and factories.

Dr. Jansen, who said he had not seen the report, declared he had been informed it was "an opinion survey with all the advantages and disadvantages of that type of research." He said he hoped the association would support his efforts to obtain budgetary funds "to get additional teachers for the training of slow learners."

Other officials at the Board of Education, refusing to be quoted by name, criticized Mr. Miley's report as consisting of generalizations unverified by detailed facts.

Mr. Miley said the report was based on the answer to questionnaires filled in by executives of 165 concerns who appraised the aptitudes, attitudes and job-preparation of 23,234 employes who had come to them from the high schools within the last five years.

The main question put to the employers was: "From your observations, do you believe that high school recruits coming to you have received sufficient basic training and education in reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, grammar?"

Mr. Miley said 68 per cent had answered "yes" for reading, but only 45 per cent for writing, 46

Continued on Page 30, Column 3

Rise in Academic Freedom Curbs Reported by Harvard Newspaper

Special to The New York Times.

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., June 16—The Harvard Crimson, university daily newspaper, reported in a copyrighted supplement to today's edition that at least fifty-three cases involving violations of academic freedom had occurred in twenty-five of the country's colleges. Last year The Crimson reported thirty-five such cases.

In its fourth annual survey of academic freedom, The Crimson, in the twelve-page supplement, covered dismissals of both students and faculty members, the banning of speakers, loyalty legislation, court cases involving teachers and the ill-effects of pressure groups.

In an editorial, The Crimson defined academic freedom as "a sort of intellectual free enterprise" that "turns students loose in a flood of viewpoints, problems, and interpretations, leaving them free to form their own conclusions without aid" and allied it "essential in a society based on almost unlimited interchange of ideas."

Opponents Are Named

Groups and persons [illegible]

FINANCIAL AID AWAITS WAR ATTACK VICTIMS

CITY UPHELD IN T/ ON LIQUOR LICENSI

Justice Greenberg Finds L Constitutional and Declin to Halt Operation Monda

YIELD OF $3,500,000 SE

Court Also Rules That Pow of Taxation Is Not Wrongl Delegated to Municipality

Supreme Court Justice Hen Clay Greenberg upheld yesterd the constitutionality of the city recently enacted tax on reta liquor licenses, which has been s at 25 per cent of the $1,200 year fee now paid the state. The cou also refused to grant an injunctio to halt the new law's operatio effective next Monday.

The court rejected the theor that the tax violated the State an Federal Constitutions, was dis criminatory and conflicted wit the Alcoholic Beverage Contro Law.

The plaintiffs in the action, Th Steuben Restaurants, Inc., and th Restaurant League of New York sought to test the law as one o several emergency levies imposed by the city to help balance the 1952-53 budget with an estimated yield of $3,500,000 annually.

The plaintiffs contended that the new law deprived them of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed them under the Fourteenth Amendment, and that it conflicted with the constitution of the state

No Violation Found

As against these arguments, Justice Greenberg wrote:

"The plaintiff argued that both the local law and the enabling act pursuant to which the local law was adopted, violates the State and Federal Constitutions. Study of the contention advanced by the plaintiff satisfies me that its position cannot be upheld."

In passing on the argument that the tax was discriminatory because it singled out retail dealers, Justice Greenberg wrote: "It is elementary that the Legislature, in exercising the power to tax, may resort to classification.

"Nor is it a valid ground of attack that practical administration of the tax was not taken into account in making the classification. Since the classification adopted here cannot be pronounced arbitrary, the tax must be declared valid. It follows that the motion for an injunction must be denied."

1953

Lacking in Basic Research

applied research. We are now living on the accumulated capital of the pure research of the last 50 years, and we are doing very little to replenish this capital. Figures released last week state that of our 400,000 scientists in America, only 15,000 are engaged in basic research. We shall defend intelligence better by keeping our best minds, the Einsteins of the future, at work on basic problems.

R. P. McCutcheon, "*In Defense of Intelligence*," School and Society, August, 1953.

The Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training

Are we robbing the nation's future by not devoting a greater effort to basic scientific research?

No single investigation can secure all the information needed to answer these questions. But each calls for study, for facts which will aid in the formulation of sound national policy. The recognition of this need led the four national research councils—American Council of Learned Societies, American Council on Education, National Research Council, and Social Science Research Council—to request the Rockefeller Foundation to provide financial support for a comprehensive survey of the specialized manpower resources and requirements of the United States. Agreeing upon the importance of such a study, the Rockefeller Foundation granted the necessary funds. The Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training was established by the four research councils to carry out the studies. In considering the current and future manpower problems of the nation, the Commission organized its studies around three interrelated problems.

The growing demand, problems of supply, and the failure to make full use of the potential supply all call for accurate manpower information. Such information is basic to the satisfactory handling of a number of important and immediate policy problems which confront the nation: Is it in the national interest to postpone the military service of qualified students until they have completed their education? Is there need for more scholarships to equalize the economic barriers to higher education? How can employers make up for the shortage of engineers, schoolteachers, and other critical specialists? Are the men and women who are trained in these fields being properly utilized in civilian and military life? When a special draft law is required to get enough doctors into military service can the country afford to continue current restrictions on medical school enrollment? Are the manpower resources adequate to support the foreign commitments which the United States has assumed?

Shortage of Human Resources in Every Field

While shortages plague the nation's employers, the United States is wasting much of its intellectual talent. College graduating classes could be twice as large as they currently are, and with no loss in quality. Every study which has been made of why and when and how many students drop out of school has shown that the potential supply of well-qualified college graduates gets drained off, in large or small amounts, all the way through the entire educational system. Practically all the potentially well qualified enter high school, and most of them graduate, but after high school graduation the loss is large. Fewer than half of the best 25 per cent of all high school graduates now graduate from college. Only 6 out of 10 of the potentially most promising 5 per cent of high school graduates earn college degrees.

1954

In purely academic positions, there is also a grave shortage of new mathematical talent. Today the United States is one of the two or three leading countries in the development of pure mathematical research, but this position has been achieved only thanks to the presence here of many talented mathematicians from Europe. At four leading American institutions for pure mathematics, over forty per cent of the full professors are men with European backgrounds.

Curriculum Problems E. *The Impact of Modern Mathematics,* Saunders MacLane, National Association of Secondary-School Principals, **May, 1954**, pp. 66- [p. 67]

1959

Vice Admiral Hyman. G Rickover's Complain:

Among the young engineers we interview we find few who have received thorough training in engineering fundamentals or principles . . . . . .

I have interviewed more than two thousand young men in the last twelve years. My naval-reactor engineering group presently numbers about one hundred fifty. Since the men I interviewed had already passed through a number of previous interviews which weeded out all but the best, it can be seen that those who could not meet the requirements of the nuclear-power project—and hence inferentially of *any* new development project—vastly outnumbered those who qualified.

This experience made a deep impression on me. It led me directly to a study of why our educational system produces so few men who are qualified to do the work which we must do if we are to progress.

Hyman. G. Rickover, Education and Freedom, 1959.

1967

Over Fourteen Hundred Factory Errors Killed Three Astronauts

On Friday evening, 27 January, exactly two weeks after he arrived home, von Braun was at a dinner for Gemini and Apollo corporate leaders at the International Club in Washington. Gemini had just concluded, and Apollo was about to begin launching astronauts: Gus Grissom, Edward White, and Roger Chaffee were in training for a multiday test of the Command and Service Modules in Earth orbit, to be launched on a Saturn IB in late February. As he was standing around at cocktail hour with Lee Atwood, Jim Webb, Bob Gilruth, Kurt Debus, and Sam Phillips, Atwood was called to the bar for an urgent phone call. Ashen-faced, he turned to Gilruth, who was nearest: "Bob, we've had a tragedy." It was Harrison Storms calling—a fire in the spacecraft at the Cape had killed all three astronauts just after 6:31 p.m. Von Braun and Debus came up, followed by others. Webb took charge, and Phillips, Mueller, and Gilruth flew to the Cape. Atwood soon headed that way too. Von Braun was left to share a depressing dinner with the others. . . .

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The fire set off the biggest crisis in NASA history, at least until the Space Shuttle *Challenger* accident nineteen years later. It forced a massive overhaul of the Apollo program, delaying the first manned launch until late 1968, although that was certainly not the expectation immediately afterward. But that was before NASA's leadership grasped how problem-plagued the Apollo spacecraft was. The space agency was allowed to investigate itself, as it was not in the two later shuttle accidents, but the fire inevitably attracted a lot of intrusive media and congressional attention, exposing how troubled the North American contract had been, both for the S-II and for the CSM. . . .

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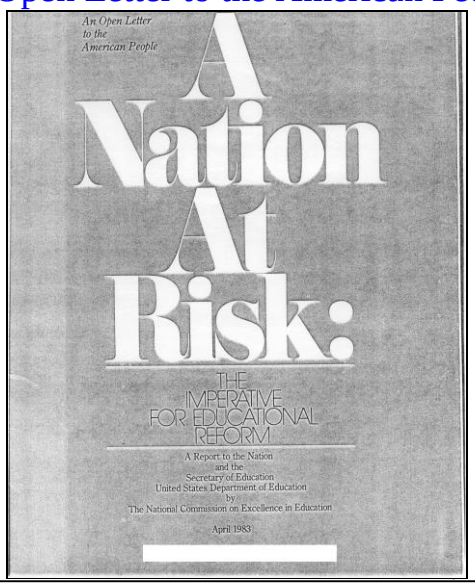
. . . Crews at the Cape took apart the Block I Command Module for the mission, the same type that had killed Grissom, White, and Chaffee, and found over fourteen hundred factory errors in wiring and other systems. The rocket's stages and all the pad systems and software also were full of problems. In June, after the vehicle was already stacked in the monumental assembly building of Launch Complex 39, concern about the quality of S-II welds forced the Kennedy Space Center crew to unstack the spacecraft and upper stages. To help Debus's KSC, von Braun decreed that a number of Marshallites would go to Florida on temporary duty assignments. Success was "a necessity."[10]

Michael J. Neufeld, Von Braun, Dreamer of Space, Engineer of War, 2007, 415ff.

April 1983

"A Nation at Risk"

An Open Letter to the American People



Indicators of the Risk

The educational dimensions of the risk before us have been amply documented in testimony received by the Commission. For example:

- International comparisons of student achievement, completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests American students were never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last seven times.
- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
- About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent.
- Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.
- Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school.
- The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points.
- College Board achievement tests also reveal consistent declines in recent years in such subjects as physics and English.
- Both the number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement on the SATs (i.e., those with scores of 650 or higher) have also dramatically declined.
- Many 17-year-olds do not possess the "higher order" intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps.
- There was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments of science in 1969, 1973, and 1977.
- Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72 percent and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.
- Average tested achievement of students graduating from college is also lower.
- Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation. The Department of the Navy, for example, reported to the Commission that one-quarter of its recent recruits cannot read at the ninth grade level, the minimum needed simply to understand written safety instructions. Without remedial work they cannot even begin, much less complete, the sophisticated training essential in much of the modern military.