PS2 for 1/19/89 # Carnegie's Plan for Controlling U.S. Education

Americans spend about $300 billion per year on education, a truly impressive sum. If any group could control that spending Goliath, it would have incredible power because it would control not only buildings and books and personnel, but also control the minds and behavior of our nation's youth.

That's why the fundamental ideology of what we affectionately call "the American way of life" demands that public schools be locally controlled. That's why, when federal aid to schools became part of our education infrastructure, Congressmen wrote into the law a provision that prohibits the Federal Government from exercising any "direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration or personnel of any educational institution, school or school system."

The Carnegie Corporation of New York is one of the few institutions in America wealthy and influential enough to dream of controlling education in the United States. Obviously, anything that promotes centralization or nationalization of education policy or personnel would make it easier to influence what transpires in our 15,500 school districts.

In 1986, Carnegie released a 77-page report called "Teaching As A Profession – Teachers for the 21st Century" – an innocuous title for a far-reaching strategy for taking control of public school education policies, plus a political plan to achieve that objective. Carnegie sold 35,000 copies of this report and its task force members traveled to 29 states that year to sell its ideas.

In a nutshell, the Carnegie elite want to nationalize American education. The game plan to achieve this goal, using Carnegie's ample financial resources, is to define the problem so that it will point to a Carnegie-engineered "solution," establish a "partnership" with prominent business leaders to give verisimilitude to Carnegie-written proposals, and then persuade selected Governors to push Carnegie's proposals through Congress and reluctant state legislatures.

The Carnegie report was unveiled at the 1986 Governor's Conference at Hilton Head, South Carolina. Carnegie's sop to the business community was the first sentence in the report: "America's ability to compete in world markets is eroding." Prior to that, no one had thought that the number-one propose of education should be to enable American business to compete in world markets.

The Governors who seem willing to promote Carnegie's proposals, and even present them as their own, are former North Carolina Governor James Hunt, New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, Kentucky Governor Wallace Wilkinson, and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

The Carnegie report calls for what it labels "sweeping changes in education policy." The principal changes are the creation of a national certification board for teachers and the restructuring of schools to accept performance goals.

National teacher certification would be the fulcrum of control. Colleges would inevitably try to train teachers so they would be accepted by the national certification board.

The Carnegie proposal would also significantly after the organization of the public school. It would eliminate the position of school principal and replace with him autonomous decision makers called “lead teachers” (with salaries ranging up to $72,000) **provided they are nationally certified**.

There is no evidence that centralization or nationalization of public school policies or personnel will solve any of the problems we face today. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that a major part of the problem is the nationalization that has already occurred as a result of the two powerful national teachers unions.

It isn’t just coincidence that the presidents of those two unions, Mary Futrell of the National Education Association and Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers, as well as John W. Gardner, founder of the liberal activist organization Common Cause, were members of the Task Force that produced this power-grabbing Carnegie report.

A National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has already been created with generous funding from Carnegie. Two-thirds of the 64 board members just happen also to be members of the two top teachers unions, including Futrell, Shanker, and other senior NEA and AFT officials. Isn’t that cozy?

Before it start certifying teachers, however, the board says it needs $50 million for ten categories of research and is lobbying hard to get half of that amount from the taxpayers via a bill sponsored by Senators Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Claiborne Pell (D-RI).

The whole scenario sounds like a game of expanding the influence of a wealthy foundation and the political power of the teachers unions at the expense of the U.S. taxpayers. Incidentally, there would be no benefit to children or their education.