

JUNE 5, 1996

LETTER TO A SECONDARY STUDENT

Return to Classical Education

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

With what miserable quality of public education the student is confronted today, how has this come about; and, how do we change it?

To begin a competent discussion of U.S. educational policy today, one must focus on many crucial facts, demonstrating, in total, that, perhaps an average of one recent high-school graduate among 1,000, or fewer, has been provided any significant knowledge of the history of modern civilization, even of the actual history of the U.S.A. To the degree that the young citizen, or future citizen of today, relies upon “mass culture,” as a substitute for, or supplement to public education, today’s recent secondary-school graduate is saturated with popularized, but pervasively false, media mythologies, which, like today’s popular textbooks at their best, have almost no truthful relevance to the past or current realities of either modern European civilization, or today’s world at large. Tests which assess a student’s familiarity with today’s secondary-school curricula, are almost irrelevant, for reasons I shall indicate briefly, each at the appropriate location, below.

Not unusual among not unintelligent, but poorly educated graduates of today’s secondary schools, are opinions such as: “Addis Ababa is the neighboring country of Africa,” or bewilderment when confronted with the fact, that the contiguous 48 states span four, (predominantly) astronomically determined time-zones [not to mention the “international date line”]. Both secondary and higher education in the U.S.A., today, are a

Editor’s Note: This letter by Mr. LaRouche was previously posted on the LaRouchePub.com website, but never published in *EIR*.



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Tests of what knowledge a student has obtained from current school curricula, are almost irrelevant in the real world.

disaster, even as compared with the already flawed standard of 25-30 years earlier.

What Went Wrong?

To address the survey’s questions directly, we must first define the context within which the response is to be situated. (Just as, to define the meaning of observed events, one must first define the special, Riemannian type of physical space-time geometry, to which those events belong.) So, I now add a concluding set of prefatory, historical observations, respecting the several, successive strata of changes which have occurred within general educational practice, in both the U.S.A. and western continental Europe, during the recent seventy-odd years.

It was my good fortune, to have recognized, by no later than mid-first grade in Rochester, New Hampshire, in 1928, that my parents, my peers, and school officials “lied most of the time.” [I have a specific recol-

lection of that thought, from that time, although I believe that that, or a similar thought, had occurred to me earlier.]

Comparing what was discussed privately, with my peers, with what they said publicly, or in front of adults generally, I was shocked to realize, not only that there was no consistency with what that same person, my peer, said under other circumstances; but, that that peer's inconsistency was both conscious and intentional. Among my own, or others' parents, a common euphemism for such forms of "polite" lying, was "company manners." I learned that teachers and others, with reckless disregard for truth, prevaricated (or, simply improvised excuses for subjects they themselves either did not understand, or simply wished to evade). This usually occurred in service of "carrying out policy," or simply in the effort to assert their own personal authority in the situation.

Over the following years, in elementary and secondary education, most among my peers concurred with my judgment on that fact; but, despite that degree of agreement with my view, most among them argued (during those 1930s Depression years) to the effect: "Learn what you are told to learn, and keep your mouth shut about the rest, if you wish to get ahead." Sociologist Riesman had another name for such lying: typical American "other-directedness." For others, American "pragmatism," was the preferred euphemism.

It is fair to cite, that the central principle of Plato's dialogues coincides with Paul's *I Corinthians* 13: without love [the Greek term used by Plato, et al., is *agapē*, not *eros*] of justice, and love [*agapē*] of truth, there is nothing of value within us. Plato's policy, the self-reflexive equivalence of truth and beauty, is the subject of one among John Keats' most famous poems, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Education must be a program of development of the student's ability to discover and know the truth about (the historical form of expression of) the importance of each individual person, and his or her creative powers of mind, within society as a whole.

Some of the roots of today's decadent classroom, may be recognized from the experience of my childhood, adolescence, and young manhood. Then, education was organized in a way eerily suggestive of the kind of utopian, "class" distinctions described in Aldous



"Plato's policy, the self-reflexive equivalence of truth and beauty," is the subject of John Keats' poem *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, a sketch of which by Keats is shown here.

Huxley's *Brave New World*. To wit:

The highest class of students was relatively a tiny minority. These represent the very few deemed destined to occupy the elite positions of intellectual authority in society. These pupils were presumably destined to become part of that elite, which taught the ruling elite of financial and political life how to think. Only in such rare cases, was the student encouraged to develop socratic knowledge respecting the way in the axiomatic assumptions [e.g., underlying constitutional principles] of society are formed.

Below that, there was a less privileged stratum, a less well-educated minority, whose education was designed to train candidates who would obey blindly the underlying axioms, but who might expect to participate, when they become qualified as scientific workers, or other professionals, in the shaping and enforcement of the theorems, called policies, which are derived from currently prevailing, axiomatic assumptions.

Still lower, was education for the training of sundry types of technicians, from engineers on down.

Near the bottom, were those whose prescribed educational opportunities were trivialized, to such an extent as not to foster discontent with the relatively low social station the pupils on this track were deemed destined to occupy in adult life.

The reader might, therefore, recognize why I hated most of the secondary education to which I was exposed at Lynn's [Massachusetts] English High School.

By the age of 12, my concern for truth, and hatred of that “pragmatism” which I had, earlier, regarded simply as lying by my peers, parents, and others, had impelled me into an intensive reading of notable English, French, and German philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries; by the age of 14, I had become a convinced advocate of Leibniz, in both philosophy and science, against Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Newton, and Hume; this extended to my subsequent years defense of Leibniz against Kant.

Lynn’s English High School, in an area in which the principal employer was the General Electric Company, provided a relatively good (i.e., useful) education for second, third, and fourth class students, for future employment by GE, or like employers, according to the “politically correct” standards of the time. The Lynn school system wasn’t intentionally mean about it, just stubborn; the effect was approximately the same.

Later, at the beginning of the 1960s, I compared my views on problems of creativity, with those of Yale psychoanalyst Lawrence Kubie’s 1958 *The Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process*, and his 1962 Daedalus paper, “The Fostering of Creative Scientific Productivity.” I recognized the accuracy of Kubie’s clinical observations, from my own observations of secondary and university education. The impact of the lower tracks in public and higher education, from the second level, on down, is to tend to transform promising young minds into sterile pedants, and the like.

Nonetheless, with all its faults, the society which I knew from Lynn English High School days, typified the culture of the generations which fought, and won, World War II, and, under Franklin Roosevelt’s leadership, brought the United States out of the dust-bin of the 1930s Depression, to resume, more than ever before,



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“By the age of 14, I had become a convinced advocate of Leibniz, in both philosophy and science.” Shown, a statue of Gottfried Leibniz at the University of Leipzig.

our position as the greatest agro-industrial power the world had ever seen.

During the two decades immediately following the war, the *per-capita* quality of average education was improved, temporarily; but, the *per-student* quality of higher education deteriorated significantly. That secular trend continued, accelerating through the present time. *On the good side:* The “levelling” effect of the post-depression World War II, as typified by the “G.I. Bill of Rights,” increased the percentile of the population entering higher education, and also fostered improvements in the per-capita education offered the “Baby Boomer” generation, especially among many of the “more affluent” bed-room communities of the 1950s and early 1960s.

On the bad side: So-called “Generation X,” with its children, has been struck by an educational disaster. During the recent quarter-century, but for

some temporary benefits of integration, both public and higher education have deteriorated, in both per-student and per-capita terms. The key factor in this spiralling degeneration of U.S. education today, is the economic and cultural impact of what the London Tavistock Institute identified, then, as the “cultural paradigm-shift” of the 1964-1972 interval: the shift from a *culturally optimistic* society, based upon the policy of scientific and technological investment (to foster improvement of both standard of living and productive powers of labor), to the prevailing *culturally pessimistic* “post-industrial” utopianism of today. This latter was ushered in by the “rock-drug-sex youth counterculture” of the middle to late 1960s, the 1960s of the Beatles, of Robert Theobald’s ‘The Triple Revolution,’ and of Aldous Huxley’s living parody, Timothy Leary.

The mid-1960s “paradigm shift” is, both directly, and indirectly, the key to the rapid deterioration in the



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The culturally pessimistic, post-industrial utopianism of today was ushered in by the drug-rock-sex youth counterculture. Shown is Aldous Huxley (above) and his living parody, Timothy Leary, recording Give Peace a Chance, with John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

content of education's curricula and pedagogy, and, indirectly, the key to the collapse of the per-student budgetary, and related economic prerequisites of functioning educational institutions. The direct influence, is seen in the increasing irrationalism of the beliefs which were inculcated by the "post-industrial" shift in content of curricula, over the recent quarter-century. The indirect influence, is the interrelated social and economic impacts of "post-industrial" utopianism, upon patterns of employment, household income, and deteriorating functions of nurture within the family household.

During the immediate post-war period, the percentile of the labor-force employed in production of physical goods, was in excess of 60%. This declined somewhat into and during the 1960s, but, then, collapsed rapidly, since the 1969-1972 interval. The functions of management and operatives in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and basic economic infrastructure, require a high degree of performance-oriented rationality, akin to that we might associate with engineering. Excepting highly skilled professions and related categories, sales and services employment tolerates large margins of irrational behavior.

Constraints of convention, rather than rationality, determine much of employee behavior in these modes of employment. What you are doing tends to be less significant, than the *style* with which one is seen to be conducting one's duties. "Style" in this instance, often verges on "socially significant basket-weaving," as opposed to function. As a reflection of this trend, much of

secondary and higher education verges on "socially significant basket-weaving." This is not confined to the "social sciences," but, has come to corrupt the science curricula, pervasively.

The former educational system was premised upon communities in which students were drawn from family households, premised then upon a presently vanishing social-economic species, called "the good provider." During the recent quarter-century, the continued, post-World War II trend of suburban sprawl, has interacted with the increased number of jobs required to sustain a household. The effect of this trend, away from the "good provider"-centered household institution, has acted virtually to destroy effective nurture within the institution of the family. This has been aggravated by the drug-like role of television and related entertainment, in suffocating intellectual life within the household. With day-care programs and other programs attached to it, public education assumes, or neglects the burden of much that was formerly family life, former family functions dumped, increasingly, into a kind of Brave New World-like, extended creche, the extended-function education system.

All of this is complicated by the corrosive impact of a twenty-five-year pattern, of worsening collapse of tax-revenue base, at each and all of the Federal, state, and local levels. Quality of teachers, quality of teacher education, loss of teacher-preparation hours, increase of class size, and overcrowded and otherwise deteriorating quality of educational facilities, are part of this



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“The drug-like role of television and related entertainment has suffocated intellectual life within the household.”

pattern.

Similar disasters are seen in western Europe. There, the systematic, willful destruction of pre-1963 attempts at educational excellence, have been destroyed under the influence of a policy launched by the same Dr. Alexander King, as 1963 Director for the Paris-based OECD office, who later launched the famous Club of Rome. One example of King’s policies for destroying education, in Germany, is the effect of the repeal of the Humboldt program in education, by enactment of the so-called “Brandt reforms.” The post-1960s implementation of this “Brandt reform,” has produced a German version of “Generation X,” which exists at relatively “third world” levels of impoverished cognitive development, relative to the German “Baby Boomers” educated within the pre-Brandt-reform system, which had been dominated, axiomatically, by the Wilhelm von Humboldt reforms.

The questions in the survey symptomize, but do not address, the magnitude and severity of the past quarter-century’s worsening crisis in education. Nor, do those questions address explicitly those overriding issues of education, the issues of education which determine whether or not this nation will survive the monetary and financial crisis currently descending upon us. An education adapted to what most younger generations today would perceive as “issues relevant to current reality,” would be a disaster for all concerned. We require something much less superficial than the survey’s questions imply. The continued existence of this nation demands a sweeping reform in education, whose most dramatic

feature is, that it reverses, axiomatically, the mistakes of the past twenty-odd years’ trends.

We require, a form of education whose goal is, at a minimum, to provide each student the quality of cognitive development formerly intended only for the relative handful of future elite.

The crucial issue not referenced in the survey’s questions, is the most vital one: the issue of *knowing versus mere learning*, the issue of *cognition*, as opposed to *textbook learning* and to the travesty symptomized by multiple-choice examinations. I weave in these issues of cognition, at the appropriate locations below.

For my response to your survey taken as a whole, I change the order of queries, as follows.

What is Education (Queries 10,7)

QUERY 10: “What is the most important question a youth can ask?” As an integral part of the response to that, I include a response to QUERY 7: Is a person more than a combination of genetics and environment?” The proper response to those two, interdependent queries, identifies the principles which govern every aspect of a competent educational policy.

For the purposes of my response, I reformulate these two queries, as follows: The central question of all human knowledge, and, therefore, of all sound educational policy, is: *Does man differ from the beast? For example, is Genesis 1:26-30 just a religious teaching, or could we prove, that that statement from Genesis coincides with crucial scientific evidence? If man is set apart from the beasts in that way, “is a person more than a combination of genetics and environment?”*

In response to that combined query, under questioning by audiences of parents and others, I prefer to begin with the following, exemplary proposition: In any proper program of secondary education, every student qualified to graduate from the tenth grade would be able to perform the following task, either at the blackboard, before the class, or as the leading question of a written examination:

During the third century B.C., the famous Eratosthenes constructed an estimate for both the curvature of the planet Earth, and the length of the meridian. Given the fact, that no person saw that curvature of the Earth until the modern space-age explorations, how did Eratosthenes, more than 2,000 years before the space-age, construct the observations and measurements by

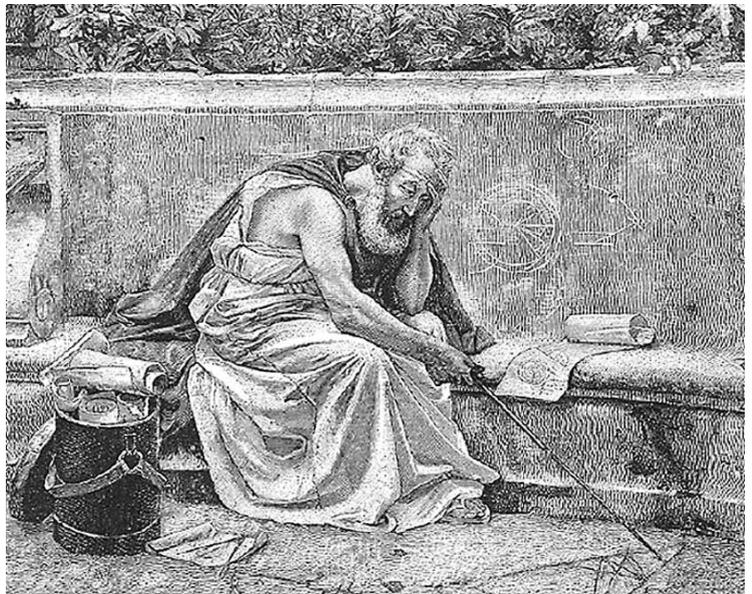
means of which he achieved an accuracy of about fifty miles error in estimating the polar diameter of the Earth? Present the crucial features of Eratosthenes' proof for his measurements. Also, show the method by which ancient Greek geometers, including Eratosthenes, estimated the distance from the Earth to the Moon.

The ancient Greeks could not see the Earth's curvature with their senses. Therefore, that curvature could be known to them only by means of the kind of scientific discovery known as a *platonian idea*. The same is true, still today, of all of the ideas associated with *microphysics*. Still today, most of the ideas we associate with *astrophysics* can not be seen by the human senses, but are principles of the type we validate by their measurable efficiency.

Mathematically, Eratosthenes' measurement of the Earth's curvature is very simple. That simplicity makes it a most convenient example to use in classrooms, for the purpose of helping students, such as those at the ninth and tenth grade levels, to reach a rational comprehension of the meaning of valid scientific discovery, or of that class of scientific ideas otherwise known to scholars as *platonian ideas*. The use of the principle of parallax for estimating the distance from Earth to Moon, and so on, follows nicely in the ninth and tenth grade curriculum.

This type of discovery represents *cognition*, as distinct from mere learning. The student who is qualified to answer the question, is a pupil who has reenacted the mental act of Eratosthenes' discovery, within the sovereign precincts of the pupil's own mental processes. Thus, that student has not merely learned to spout the right set of words, as answers to a question; that pupil has not learned the answer; that student knows the answer, because he, or she, has relived the act of validating the original discovery. A system of education which prompts pupils to relive such valid original discoveries, is providing the student with a Classical form of *education for citizenship*; a different sort of school, merely trains the student to behave as a special kind of performing animal, with a repertoire of learned tricks.

As the case of the famous Brotherhood of the Common Life illustrates the fact, the student who benefits from a Classical approach to education of the cognitive processes, is the student who stands, at



More than 2,000 years before anyone physically observed the curvature of the Earth, Eratosthenes accurately measured its polar diameter and the distance to the Sun.

worst, a decent chance of becoming a qualified original genius.

This quality of cognition, is what distinguishes man from the beasts. It is those validated discoveries of principle, discoveries made by individual minds, and transmitted among individual human minds, which have enabled the human species to increase mankind's potential population-density, from the level of a higher ape, not more than several millions poor quality of individuals, to more than three hundred millions by the 15th Century, and more than five billions today.

The object of education should be, to provide the pupil an ordered experiencing, successively, of those mental acts of reenacting crucial discoveries of principle, which represent the most important bequests of the cognition by past humanity, to the cognition of present humanity. The student who gains such an education, knows many among the most crucial discoveries of all mankind, from the earliest time, to the present. The student who has relived many of the greatest discoveries of principle, by the greatest minds of history and prehistory, is a student who has learned to use his, or her, cognitive powers.

These points are more immediately recognized, from the standpoint of the increase in productive powers of labor achieved through investment in scientific and technological progress, and in education for such progress. However, the mental processes by

which valid original discoveries of physical principle are achieved, are the same processes at work in the role of metaphor in the Classical discoveries in art by a Scopus, an Aeschylus, Raphael (Sanzio), Shakespeare, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Friedrich Schiller, or John Keats.

History, if taught from the vantage point of the cognitive development of entire cultures, and of the individual person within the culture, also acquires the quality of a true science. It is by valid ideas, that mankind is set above the ape, and that the majority of mankind is uplifted from the barbaric and feudal condition of virtual “human cattle.” History, in that sense, is the history of ideas, their production, their circulation, and their realization.

A Classical education, so defined, from the premise of cognition, is implicitly a moral education. To relive the noblest moments from the mental life of the greatest creative thinkers before us, is to recognize, in the proper terms of reference, our moral connection to mankind in the past, the present, and the future. Nazi existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger, and his like, teach their dupes to regard themselves as mere, intrinsically feral, individual entities, thrown into society, as if against one’s will. Contrary to such existentialists, our conscious participation in the cognitive process, shows us our efficient interrelationship, as sovereign individuals, to all that was best in the past, and as contributors, in some degree, to the best that will be in the future. The sense that one must not dishonor those connections across the span of time, is the moral sense which a good Classical form of education in science, Classical art, and history bestirs within the child and adolescent.

On the subsumed topic, “Is a person more than a combination of genetics and environment?” By referencing a creature as being one which were essentially a combination of “genetics and environment,” we are implying any animal of the kind of “ecological” characteristics adopted by the late Julian Huxley, et al., and their followers among today’s malthusians. Mathematically,



Wikipedia

Martin Heidegger, Nazi existentialist philosopher.

the behavior (the ecological potential) of such a creature is of the form which might be described by a deductive form of theorem-lattice. That is, a network of theorems, none of which is inconsistent deductively with any among the others of the same network. Such a theorem-lattice is typified by a textbook euclidean geometry, or by the system of Descartes; we may add theorems, more or less indefinitely, but all will be consistent with a set of underlying assumptions in common: axioms, postulates, and definitions. The relationship between an “ecological” species and its environment, can be represented graphically, in terms of systems of curved surfaces, all of which curves are deductively consistent in their underlying, axiomatic quality of assumptions.

In human progress, the increase of the potential relative population-density of the human species,¹ as from the potential of a higher ape to several decimal orders of magnitude greater than that, is accomplished by axiomatic-revolutionary forms of valid discoveries of physical and other principles of nature. Through these, validated, axiomatic-revolutionary discoveries, mankind changes, willfully, the underlying, axiomatic assumptions of social and individual behavior. No reductionist’s method of ecology can represent such a process. As Genesis 1:26-30 asserts, the individual person, man and woman, are above the beasts, not subject to fixed constraints of genetics or environment. Man is a “cognitive animal,” and, thus, no animal at all. All the putative “branches” of humanity are demonstrated to be alike in this regard.

For mankind, education is the keystone of increased productivity. More immediately, a good quality of education is the precondition for that state of the individual mind, the which is the source of individual human freedom.

1. For an introduction to the notion of potential relative population-density, see my introductory textbook in physical economy, *So, You Wish To Know All About Economics?*, 2nd Edition, EIR News Service, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1995.

Sundry Other Survey Queries

QUERY 1: "How are students in poorer school districts guaranteed equal educational opportunities to those students in wealthier areas?"

There are three leading qualities which define a competent education, in the following descending order of impact: a) quality of teacher, and allowed ratio of teacher preparation-hours to classroom-room hours in the working day of that teacher; b) class size (should not exceed 15 to 18 pupils); c) cognition-relevant qualities of classroom and school facilities. In the setting of today's worsening crisis of nurture in the family household, a fourth, supplementary requirement must be added: pre-school and after-school programs.

All these elements must be judged from the functional standpoint defined by the notion of cognitive education, as I have referenced that conception, above.

It is in the vital interest of the United States, that this quality of education be provided to every child and adolescent, and that supplementary programs exist to ensure the opportunity for a higher education of a quality also determined by cognitive standards. This interest is expressed in the fundamental, all-subsuming statement of law of the U.S.A. Federal Constitution, its Preamble, i.e.: "... promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity,..."

Where the state or local community lacks the means to provide those indicated qualities of primary and secondary education to the children and adolescents of the community, the state and Federal governments must act in concert to fill the gap.

The 1976 Chase Econometrics study of the impact of the Kennedy space program, reported, that for each dollar expended on such aerospace research and development, fourteen dollars in income were generated within the national economy. It is that increase of the per capita productive powers of labor of the population, which fosters scientific and technological, and related progress, which is the primary source of all national wealth. A cognitive quality of education is the foundation for such growth; a cognitive education is the prerequisite for producing a young citizen who is capable of voting intelligently.

How the required education is provided, is one thing. The fact that it must be provided, to all parts of



USAF/Siuta B. Ika

"A cognitive education is the prerequisite for producing a young citizen who is capable of voting intelligently." Shown is retired Master Sergeant Carl Vetter, teaching a class in Aerospace Science at Cimarron-Memorial High School in Las Vegas, Nevada.

the population, is, in the last resort, the duty, responsibility, and authority of the Federal government.

QUERY 2: "Should minors lose rights because they are not considered full citizens?"

This question mixes, and confuses two distinct issues of morality and law. On the first issue, a minor can not be a "full citizen," because children and adolescents lack the combination of cognitive and emotional maturity to form part of the body politic. On the second issue, "rights of minors," minors do have rights as persons, under natural law, which must not be intruded upon without just due process.

To wit: In the particular case of adolescents, the typical adolescent develops behavioral traits, which, if they appeared in an adult, would be regarded as probable manifestation of mental illness. Within certain bounds, such "emotional disturbances" are to be considered as part of the process of maturity within the adolescent; it is considered "part of growing up." (When an adult shows such adolescent traits, we say that that adult has either failed "to grow up," or has reverted to a caricature of his, or her, former childishness, or infantilism.) Hence, for example, even in the extreme case, natural law prescribes that the standards of the adult criminal code must not be applied to minors, even as serious or major offenders.

There are, of course, adolescent manifestations of

outright criminality which exceed the tolerable limits of “growing up.” However, for the adolescent and other minors, a just society provides special codes applicable, in all cases, to law-breaking by minors. The minors have a moral right to protection by such special codes.

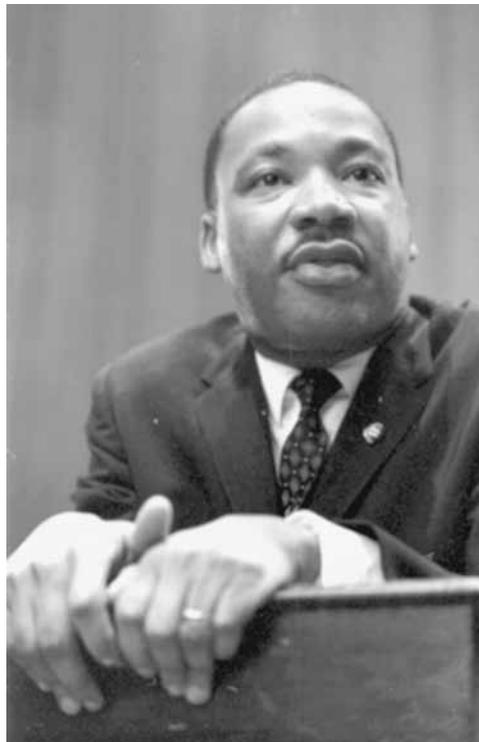
The one thing which neither a parent, nor society, should ever do to an adolescent, is to treat a child in a manner which that child, as a later adult, would rightly consider a willful injustice.

QUERY 3: “Who should young people look at as contemporary heroes?”

The only outstanding national hero of the U.S.A.’s past thirty years, is the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. A young, Alabama Baptist minister, called from relative obscurity, emerged during the several following years, as a moral giant. His importance was underscored by the change which came with his passing; the great Civil Rights movement, for which he had so quickly emerged as leader, shrank, and fragmented after it was deprived of his unifying, upward-leading role of personal leadership.

QUERY 4: “What does it mean to be ‘an American,’ and how does one become one?”

The creation of the United States as the foe of the British imperial power, emerged from an age-old conflict to liberate the peoples of the world from that status of virtual “human cattle,” to which more than the proverbial 95% of all persons, of all cultures, had been subjected, in every society which existed, in every part of this planet, through all human history, and pre-history, prior to the founding of the first modern nation-state, that of Louis XI’s France, in 1461-1483. The struggle to defend and develop the post-feudal European nation-state institutions, is the source of the great improvement in the demographic characteristics of humanity, taken as a whole, world wide, under the influence of the post-1461 spread of modern European civi-



LoC/U.S. News & World Report Collection/Marion S. Trikosko
“The only outstanding national hero of the U.S.A.’s past 30 years, is the Rev. Martin Luther King.”

lization throughout the planet.

When, the last fight to defend freedom was lost, in England, with the defeat of the English patriots by the so-called “Venetian Party” faction of the First Duke of Marlborough, the patriots of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, and elsewhere looked with new interest toward the strengthening of the emerging commonwealths of North America. As the grip of the British imperial faction was consolidated in the United Kingdom, and our former ally France was corrupted into its disgusting, successive states of internal affairs, during the 1789-1871 interval, this brave little Federal constitutional republic of ours stood out as the sole “beacon of hope” for all mankind.

In our best periods, the U.S.A. showed that the constitutional principles for which we had repeatedly fought war (1776-1783,

1812-1815, 1861-1865) against our principal adversary, the British monarchy and its surrogates, provided the best form of government available to man on this planet. Whenever followed, what U.S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton named the anti-Adam Smith, “American System of political-economy,” proved, repeatedly, to be the most powerful model of economy on this planet. Under Presidents such as Washington, Adams, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln, William McKinley, and Franklin Roosevelt, we were, as the poet’s image provides, “the cynosure of neighboring eyes,” the beloved wonder and hope of most of the oppressed peoples of this planet.

As the repeated experience was brought upon us from without, has demonstrated, there is no security for our nation, or for our citizens, until such time as the planet has been brought into a better order than has been the case up until now. We have no right to decree, to impose such an order; but, we do have the duty and responsibility, of morals and self-interest, to understand the implications of our role among the community of nations, whenever injustice or unreason might, once

again, imperil world peace and our own existence. In this respect, it were better to take a suitable role of leadership among nations, in advance, than to wait until a new war is the only remaining alternative.

Presently, we are caught, most ill-prepared, in the worst global crisis of this century, perhaps of the recent several centuries. Our United States can make a decisive difference; we have potential collaborators, among nations and others throughout this planet. We have but to summon the will and wisdom to use our power as the leading power of this planet, to bring together the forces of good will, and make the common effort which puts the presently looming peril safely behind us.

To know that, and to be part of that, is, in summary, what it is to be “an American.” To become such an American, the kind of education I have identified, provides the most efficient route.

QUERY 5: “Do you include ‘Under God’ when you say the Pledge of Allegiance?”

In my personal practice, I am not much inclined to ceremonial formalities; I would not wish to say anything which would overrate such formalities. However, I do say “Under God.”

The direct origins of the best in modern European civilization are in the Augustinian, Judeo-Christian heritage. Essentially, the passage which I have referenced from Genesis, and Plato’s principle of *agapē*, as that is represented by the Christian Gospel of John and Epistles of Paul. That all men and women are made “in the image of God,” to share “dominion,” and bound together by love of truth, love of justice, and love of God, is the source of the energy by means of which the fight to free the great majority of mankind from the status of virtual human cattle—as slaves, serfs, or worse, gave birth to the struggle for a Classical humanist education, extended to all, and, out of that struggle, the 15th-century birth of the modern nation-state.

Anyone who does not know, and honor that plain historical fact, is either an illiterate, or a fool.

QUERY 6: “How should today’s youth feel about the Vietnam War?”

He, or she, should hate that war, but honor those



Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Gen. William Westmoreland, Commander of U.S. military forces during the Vietnam War, speak with Gen. Tee, Corps Commander in the Danang area, August 1965.

who performed military service for their country. Our hope should be, that, by identifying the specific evil which prompted Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, and others, to plunge us into such a monstrous, and protracted violation of all principles of justified warfare, we can reconcile both those U.S. citizens who fought the war, and those who opposed its immorality.

To understand that war, how it came about, is a long story, which but a few understand today. I have documented that long story elsewhere; it is too long to be presented to the audience, in this setting. The truth must be known, and it must be told, with precision and cognitive clarity, in every secondary school today.

QUERY 8: “What is the most prevalent slavery?”

The “conditionalities” doctrines of the United Nations Organization’s International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

QUERY 9: “What children’s book should all parents read to their children?”

I do not feel strongly about such a choice of titles. (One might say: “Anything to keep the kiddies free of the brutish sado-masochism of TV cartoon hours.”) Perhaps Aesop’s fables, or, fairy tales, designed for children, modelled upon Aesop.