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# THE BETRAYAL OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

An Open Letter to the Officers of the National Education Association  
Protesting Against Their Action in Ruling OUT of the  
Schools the Propaganda of the Radical, Liberal and  
Reform Organizations While Admitting INTO  
the Schools the Propaganda of the "Power  
Trust" and Other Special Interests

By EMIL O. JORGENSEN

(Secretary, Education Protective Association of America)

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# THE BETRAYAL OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE OFFICERS  
OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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EDUCATION PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.  
1344 Altgeld Street  
CHICAGO

## **To the Officers of the National Education Association:**

Some time ago we were informed that the National Education Association is taking steps to *rule out* of the schools the propaganda of the liberal, radical and reform groups—the socialists, single taxers, labor unionists, farm co-operatives, drugless healers, free traders, public ownership advocates, etc.,—while making at the same time, a distinct attempt to *keep in* the schools the concealed propaganda of the “power trust” and other profit-seeking corporations.

We have carefully examined the records of the National Education Association to determine whether or not this information is based on facts. To our great astonishment and dismay we find that it is! The records of your Association distinctly show that, under the guidance of certain leaders it is making, on the one hand, a systematic effort to *exclude* from the schools the “theories, convictions and courses of action” of outside groups and organizations, while, on the other hand, it is making no effort to exclude, but, on the contrary, is doing all it can to *retain* in the schools the secret propaganda of the public utility corporations, the National Association of Real Estate Boards and other large monopoly interests.

We, therefore, wish to protest against this unfair and discriminatory action. It is an action that is contrary to every principle of equity, opposed to every principle of justice and absolutely dangerous to the peace and prosperity of the whole nation. We disagree with you that propaganda “in support of the theories, convictions and courses of action of outside groups and organizations” has no place in the schools but whether we be right in this or not we strenuously object to any attempt to shut out *some* propaganda and not the rest. If the propaganda of the radical and reform groups is to be excluded from the schools, the propaganda of the selfish interests must also be excluded; if the propaganda of the selfish interests is to be

admitted, then the propaganda of the opposing groups must likewise be admitted. Justice can tolerate no other course.

As many of you are no doubt unaware of the fact that the National Education Association has embarked upon such a policy of discrimination—discrimination against the reform movements and in favor of huge monopoly interests—and furthermore, inasmuch as this charge of discrimination is certain to be vigorously denied in certain quarters, we ask permission here to lay the whole case fully and frankly before you.

## I

In the early months of 1928 as you know the Federal Trade Commission began its investigation of the so-called "power trust." The facts disclosed in this investigation, as you also know, have been so astounding as to shock the sensibilities of all honest people. As Dr. Charles A. Beard in the September, 1928, issue of the "National Municipal Review" well said:

"Not in many a year have we had an investigation in Washington as important as the inquiry into the so-called 'power trust,' which is being conducted under the auspices of the Federal Trade Commission. In comparison the various senatorial investigations that have 'rocked the country' sink into trivial insignificance. . . .

"The inquiry has revealed many things, according to the recently published preliminary report. It shows utility concerns hiring professors to carry on campaigns of agitation against municipal ownership, ostensibly under high university authority, subsidizing newspapers under the guise of advertising, deluging the public school with biased propaganda, assailing municipal ownership advocates as Bolsheviks and resorting to back-stair tactics to discredit them, and granting money to universities and research institutions with an eye to 'proper' results. In short, the propaganda of the utility interests stands fully revealed in all its nakedness, and a powerful light is thrown on the nature of the 'public opinion' made by newspapers, distinguished speakers and controlled school books."

Or as Gifford Pinchot in his recent book "The Power Monopoly—Its Make-up and Its Menace" (p. 13) has well put it:

"The Federal Trade Commission has already proved that the power monopolists have resorted to unprecedented uses of corruption funds to poison the fountains of all public information—not only our newspapers, our public lecture platforms, and our periodical publications but even our universities and grammar schools.

"Testimony before the Federal Trade Commission has disclosed subsidized reporters, subsidized editors, subsidized professors, subsidized governors, subsidized ex-governors and ex-senators, even a subsidized ambassador.

"The testimony also shows how the corruption funds of the power monopolists paid for propaganda in magazines, in the movies, on the radio, in school textbooks, and even in government publications.

"Never in the history of America has there been another so wide-spread, so bold, and so unscrupulous plot to corrupt all sources of public information and public education."

So appalling, indeed, were the disclosures of the Federal Trade Commission with regard to the corruption of the schools by the util-



ity corporations and so stirred were the people at such an abuse of their institutions that the National Education Association itself felt obliged to do something about it. On June 5, 1928, therefore (see "Proceedings," 1928, p. 1152) your Secretary J. W. Crabtree wrote to the officers of the National Electric Light Association (the so-called "power trust") and urged them to "clean house." Secretary Crabtree closed his letter to them, however, in this puzzling manner:

"There are other propagandists worse than yours who try to use the schools. If you do a thorough job of housecleaning it will help to rid the schools of other pests."

Just who these "pests" and "other propagandists" are that are "worse" than the utilities Secretary Crabtree did not explain. In his annual report for 1928, however, which he read a month later (July) before the Minneapolis Convention of the National Education Association there is a clear indication as to whom he meant. In this report (see "Proceedings," 1928, pp. 1149-1153) Mr. Crabtree urged the appointment of a committee to investigate "the whole propaganda question in the schools" and he quoted very approvingly a letter to him from Superintendent Threlkeld of Denver in which Mr. Threlkeld says (bold-face ours):

"Propaganda by the public utilities is only one phase of the propaganda problem as it faces the schools. **It might be taken as a point of departure dealing with the entire problem.** My point is that every teacher, every supervisor, every administrator in the public schools should clearly think out the distinction between propaganda and education, **and no propaganda of any kind should be allowed in the schools.** . . . Why not seize upon this situation as an opportunity to clarify the thinking of our profession generally with regard to the distinction between real education and propaganda. . . . Our research department has recently made a survey of our schools with regard to our relationships to the public utilities and nothing significant was discovered with regard to propaganda from that source. . . . **On the whole, our contact with the public utilities in Denver has not been troublesome. I have had much more difficulty in opposing propaganda from other sources.** May I say in this connection that I think the official staff of the N. E. A. could do much good if it were to take up the problem of keeping advertising materials and movements out of the public schools."

Let us examine these statements for just a moment.

You will notice that Superintendent Threlkeld says he has not been bothered with the propaganda of the public utilities. Maybe not! But at the very hour he was writing this letter to Secretary Crabtree the Federal Trade Commission was bringing to light evidence showing that the schools of Colorado are very much under the influence of the private power corporations—the officials of these corporations having boasted in their correspondence that "we now have 24 public utility company executives as members of the university faculty"\* while one young professor on the pay roll of the utilities—Hubert T. Wolfe—

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\* "We now have 24 public utility company executives as members of the university faculty, and Mr. Wolfe is collaborating with each in the preparation of the nine major subjects covering the subjects treated, each having 12 to 18 les-

had just made a "survey" of all the social science textbooks used in the public schools of Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico!†

You will notice again that Superintendent Threlkeld states, "I have had much more difficulty in opposing propaganda from other sources." This quite agrees, does it not, with Secretary Crabtree's statement to the utility officials that "there are other propagandists worse than yours who try to use the schools"?

Finally, you will observe, Superintendent Threlkeld urges that the publicity now being given to the utilities be "seized upon" as an opportunity . . . to "keep advertising materials and movements out of the public schools." Are we not justified in assuming from this that socialism, trades unionism, anti-vaccination, drugless healing, free trade, old age pensions, single tax, co-operative marketing, public ownership and other like movements are the sources of propaganda which are proving more "troublesome" to Superintendent Threlkeld than the public utility corporations and that these are the very influences Secretary Crabtree had in mind when he wrote to the officials of the National Electric Light Association that there are "other pests" and "other propagandists worse than yours" who try to use the schools?

That this assumption is correct will become still more evident as we proceed.

No sooner had Secretary Crabtree delivered his annual report containing Superintendent Threlkeld's letter to the Minneapolis Convention of the National Education Association and had recommended that a committee be appointed to investigate "the whole propaganda question in the schools" than the Board of Directors of the Association (see "Proceedings," 1928, p. 1087) passed the following resolution (bold-face ours):

**"Resolved, that the Board of Directors condemn the policy and efforts of agencies to put propaganda into the schools, and hereby authorize the President of the Association to appoint a committee of ten to prepare a report for the meeting of the Association in 1929 on the following points:**

(1) What principles of school administration should guide school authorities, and what principles of school procedure should guide teachers in handling material which might be classed as propaganda; and

(2) What machinery, if any, needs to be set up on a local, state, or national basis to serve as a protection to individual school officers and teachers."

Is not this resolution in perfect harmony with the preceding events? It does not, you will observe, attempt to condemn specifically

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sons on elements of public utilities, valuation, rate making, regulation, taxation, financing management, engineering problems, and accounting."

—From a letter of George E. Lewis, Director of the Rocky Mountain Committee on Public Utility Information, dated Feb. 25, 1926, to John C. Parker, Chairman of the Committee on Co-operation with Educational Institutions of the N. E. L. A. See Senate Document 92 (70th Congress) Part 4, p. 351.

† See testimony before the Federal Trade Commission, 70th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Document 92, Part 4, p. 338-360.

the utility companies for their corruption of the schools—much less the various subsidized teachers, professors, textbook writers and “research” institutes for participating in this corruption—but condemns the policy and efforts of *agencies* to put propaganda into the schools. What does this mean? It simply means that the *honest* propaganda activities are tabooed, while the *dishonest* ones are sanctioned. It means that any special interest that is rich enough and foxy enough to hire a teacher, principal, text-book author or “research” institute to inject its propaganda into the schools in a secret and underhanded way is scheduled *to be let alone* while any agency, organization or movement that is frank enough to carry its propaganda into the schools in an open and above-board fashion is scheduled *to be kicked out!*

Let us go on with our analysis and see if this is not perfectly true.

In November, 1928—just four months after the above resolution had been passed by the Board of Directors—the committee it provided for was appointed by President Uel W. Lamkin. This committee consisted of the following ten members:

EDWIN C. BROOME, Chairman, Superintendent of Schools, Philadelphia, Pa.  
FRANK W. BALLOU, Superintendent of Schools, Washington, D. C.  
CORNELIA S. ADAIR, 2121 Park Ave., Richmond, Va.  
EVA G. PINKSTON, Principal, Sam Houston School, Dallas, Texas.  
J. STEVENS KADESCH, Headmaster, Medford High School, Medford, Mass.  
C. E. PARTCH, Dean, School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.  
L. A. PITTENGER, President, Ball Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana.  
A. T. ALLEN, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N. C.  
DAVID A. WARD, Superintendent of Schools, Wilmington, Del.  
PAUL C. STETSON, Superintendent of Schools, Dayton, Ohio.

The announcement that this Committee on Propaganda had been appointed by the N. E. A. received wide publicity—much wider publicity than the resolution which gave it birth. The resolution itself for some reason had secured very little publicity and few people were aware of its real significance. But the announcement that a Committee on Propaganda had been appointed by the National Education Association was published all through the land—together with an explanation that the purpose of the Committee was to inquire, not merely into the unethical practices of the utility companies but into the unethical practices of other special interests which were subsidizing teachers and text-book writers for the purpose of molding the minds of our boys and girls in the “right” direction. To quote, for instance, the language of the Chicago Evening American:

“WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—Appointment of nine educators [besides Dr. Edwin C. Broome, Chairman] to investigate power trust propaganda in schools and colleges and frame defensive measures, is announced by the National Education Association. . . . The committee will hold its first meeting shortly to plan its check-up of the nature and extent of public utility influences in the schools and an inquiry into other kinds of school propaganda to which attention was drawn by the Federal Trade Commission’s power trust disclosures.”



This explanation about the Propaganda Committee and its supposed purpose is made here for the following reason.

For a long time our own Association (which had been organized in 1926 "to guard our educational system from corrupting influences") had been tracing down the activities of a certain large "research" institute in the United States and had made some startling discoveries in regard to it. Consequently when the Propaganda Committee of the National Education Association was appointed, and the announcement was broadcast that its purpose was to investigate "the whole propaganda question in the schools," we naturally felt that we could aid the committee in no better way than to lay the facts about this "research" institute before it. In February of 1929, therefore, we wrote to Dr. Edwin C. Broome, Chairman of the Propaganda Committee, the following letter:

EDUCATION PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.,  
1344 Altgeld Street  
CHICAGO

Dr. Edwin C. Broome,  
Superintendent of Schools,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

February 27, 1929.

My dear Dr. Broome:

Some time ago we read with pleasure that the N. E. A. had appointed a committee of ten to investigate the matter of propaganda in the schools and that you fortunately had been made the Chairman of this committee.

For some time we have been checking up on the personnel and activities of the privately-financed Ely Institute in Northwestern University and we now have on the press and in preparation some printed matter pertaining to it.

If you and the members of your committee care to have a copy of this printed matter when it appears we shall take great pleasure in sending it to you.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) EMIL O. JORGENSEN,  
Secretary.

Dr. Broome promptly answered the above letter as follows:

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA  
The Board of Public Education  
Nineteenth Street above Chestnut

EDWIN C. BROOME,  
Superintendent of Schools.

March 1, 1929.

Mr. Emil O. Jorgensen,  
Education Protective Association,  
1344 Altgeld Street, Chicago, Ill.

My dear Mr. Jorgensen:

In accordance with your request, let me say that we should be very glad indeed to have a copy of the printed matter in reference to the Ely Institute which you so kindly offered to send us.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) E. C. BROOME,  
Superintendent of Schools.

To which we replied to Dr. Broome (sending a copy to each member of the Propaganda Committee) as follows:

EDUCATION PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.,  
1344 Altgeld Street  
CHICAGO

Dr. Edwin C. Broome,  
Superintendent of Schools,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

March 6, 1929.

My dear Dr. Broome:

Your good letter of March 1 is at hand.

I enclose herewith a copy of our 4-page circular just off the press regarding the Ely Institute. Am also having a copy of this circular forwarded to the other members of your committee.

I may add that we are now preparing a more detailed report regarding the adulterated character of the "Elementary Principles of Economics" by Ely and Wicker which will be laid before Superintendent Bogan of this city. As soon as this report is completed we shall see that you are furnished with copies.

Assuring you of our very best wishes, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) EMIL O. JORGENSEN,  
Secretary.

A month later we again wrote to Dr. Broome—copying the letter, of course, to all members of the Propaganda Committee—as follows:

EDUCATION PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.,  
1344 Altgeld Street  
CHICAGO

Dr. Edwin C. Broome,  
Superintendent of Schools,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

April 18, 1929.

My dear Dr. Broome:

In accordance with your letter of March 1 and my reply of the 6th I am sending to you and to the members of your Committee under separate cover a copy of our "Open Letter" to Supt. William J. Bogan of Chicago relative to the "Elementary Principles of Economics" by Ely and Wicker which is one of the standard high school texts used all over the country.

Superintendent Bogan is a high-minded and courageous man and will unquestionably agree with us that the Ely and Wicker text should be crossed off the approved list in Chicago but the pressure that the public utility and real estate interests may be expected to exert to prevent him from doing this very thing is so great [\*] that, should he take the bull by the horns, there is danger that serious harm will be done to him. We hope therefore that your committee will

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[\*] Our fears in this respect have been abundantly borne out. See *Exhibit D in this pamphlet.*—E. O. J.

study the matter carefully and report in no uncertain terms whether or not this textbook is a proper one to be used in the public schools of the United States.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) EMIL O. JORGENSEN,

Secretary.

P. S.—I see in today's papers that a pamphlet entitled "The Challenge of the Power Investigation to American Educators" has just been published by Judson King, Director of the National Popular Government League in the Munsey Building at Washington, D. C. (25c). According to the press this pamphlet contains astonishing information relative to the manner in which the power interests are subsidizing professors and seeking to control education.

E. O. J.

Now what was the character of the information regarding the Ely Institute which was thus laid before Chairman Broome and the members of his Propaganda Committee? The character of this information will be found in Exhibits A, B, C and D of this letter. If you will glance at these exhibits you will see that Prof. Ely's "Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities," which is located in Northwestern University, is subsidized by the real estate boards, the public utility corporations, the railroads and other like "vested interests"—interests which represent over one-half of the total property values of the United States. If you will look closer you will note that Ely's "research" institute—which, by the way, started out by laying down its conclusions in *advance* of its investigations—purposes, not merely to train teachers for our schools and colleges, but to prepare some fifty text and reference books dealing with the subjects of land economics, public utilities and taxation. If you will examine still closer you will observe that Prof. Ely's old high school text, the "Elementary Principles of Economics"—a text which formerly opposed the private ownership of public utilities, indirect methods of taxation, etc., and which at the present time is in use in approximately 1,700 American high schools—has recently been changed by Ely to fit the views of the "power trust" and land speculation interests whose contributions he is now receiving, that numerous bulletins and reports (besides the fifty text and reference books) are in preparation by his subordinates and that his institute has definitely established connections, via the corporations back of him, with educational institutions in all parts of the country—one of the most striking examples of how propaganda is being carried on in our schools for the benefit of organized wealth and privilege of which our history probably has any record!

Now what effect did this information regarding Prof. Ely and his subsidized "research" institute have upon Dr. Broome and the members of his Propaganda Committee? It had no effect at all! No request for additional information about the matter was ever received by the Education Protective Association either from Dr. Broome or from any of his colleagues—in fact, the literature sent to them was not even acknowledged!

But there are more serious criticisms than these.

In July of 1929 Dr. Broome submitted to the National Education Association—which was then holding its annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia—a 47-page report of the findings of his Propaganda Committee.

If you will now go through this report you will find nothing at all in regard to the subject we have just discussed. You will find no reference to the fact that Ely's "investigational" bureau is bound hand and foot with the National Association of Real Estate Boards, that his new textbooks are being written and his old ones revised to conform to the taxation program of these Boards, that to advance this taxation program he has established connections with schools, colleges and universities all through the nation—indeed, you will find in the Committee's report that the names of the Ely Institute and the National Association of Real Estate Boards are not even mentioned!

So, too, with the Institute and the public utilities. Notwithstanding the fact that the Institute is being heavily subsidized by the utility corporations (\$100,000 having so far been given to it by the National Electric Light Association alone), notwithstanding that Prof. Ely is now pulling out of his old textbooks the statements in favor of public ownership and putting into the new books statements in favor of private ownership, notwithstanding that he is endeavoring through the preparation of special literature and the training of teachers to inject into the school system the propaganda desired by the power interests back of him—notwithstanding all this not a single word about this matter is to be found anywhere in the Committee's report!

"An unfortunate oversight," it may be said. But there is good evidence to indicate that it was not an oversight. If you will examine the report closely you will find that out of its 47 pages only five lines have been devoted to the findings of the Federal Trade Commission. These five lines (p. 12) read as follows:

"The hearings of the Federal Trade Commission on the activities of certain public service corporations offer an illustration of another attempt to influence textbooks in a partisan direction. The facts thus far revealed by this hearing show that the efforts made to influence textbooks were seldom successful, either with the publishers or with the authors."

Do not these few words—which are all that the elaborate report contains regarding the investigation of the Federal Trade Commission—show that the Committee has endeavored to shield the propaganda of the private power corporations?\*

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\* The following editorial from the "American School Board Journal" of August, 1929—written just one month after the Propaganda Committee had submitted its report—affords another illustration of the attempt that is being made in educational circles to discredit the disclosures of the Federal Trade Commission:

"The announcement in the public press made some months ago, to the effect that prominent educators had been employed to do propaganda work for the public utilities corporations, startled the country. Coupled with the announce-

At the very time these two sentences were written the Federal Trade Commission had been holding hearings almost continuously for a whole year, ten volumes of astounding testimony had been taken and over 4,000 exhibits—most of them from the private files of the utility bureaus—had been introduced into the government record! And what does this whole government record show? It shows that a condition exists which is just contrary to the condition described by the Propaganda Committee! It shows that the efforts of the public service corporations to influence textbooks were not, as the Committee says, "seldom successful, either with the publishers or with the authors," but, on the contrary, were *often* successful *both* with the publishers and with the authors! And even if it were true that the efforts of the utility corporations to influence textbooks had been "seldom successful" should not the Propaganda Committee in all justice to the schools have revealed those cases that were successful?

Here is the unpalatable truth of the whole matter: In spite of the shocking mass of corruption disclosed by the Federal Trade Commission and the specific instances laid directly before it, the Propaganda

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ment came the alarming statement that some of the school textbooks were tainted with the propaganda germ. Educators everywhere began to examine their school books to see whether any objectionable matter had crept in.

Now that the hubbub has subsided it is found that so far as the elementary and secondary schools of the land are concerned, there was no cause for alarm. It was not likely that a wide-awake school administration would permit a series of textbooks to go into the schools that were designed to make propaganda for any particular cause."

Again in February, 1930, the same Journal said:

**"School Textbooks and Power Propaganda.**

"A veritable flood of sensational newspaper and magazine articles, decrying the propaganda entered upon by the power interests, greeted the nation during the past year. It was charged that college professors had been hired to write articles and deliver lectures in defense of the power interests, that newspapers had been subsidized by utilities corporations, and that tons of power propaganda literature had been distributed in the public schools of the land.

\* \* \* \* \*

"We have not, however, been so much concerned with the indictment hurled against college professors and the newspapers as we have with the sensational charge that tons of public utilities literature had gone into the schools of the country and that the textbooks used in the schools had been contaminated with harmful propaganda. We calmly awaited the evidence. No doubt, if the charges were true, the proof would come to the surface. An alert public press would be certain to locate school books that contained objectionable material, and at the same time would denounce the school officials that permitted their use in the schools.

"Well, there has been plenty of hue and cry, and startling revelations were predicted. But nothing happened, simply because the suspicion that something was wrong finally proved groundless. School text books were not contaminated with propaganda of any kind. They were and still are clean, wholesome and utilitarian."

Committee, in its report, has not denounced a single special interest, has not criticized a single publisher, has not censured a single author or listed as undesirable a single text-book—in short, has not expressed one word either in condemnation or in disapproval of the practice of corporate interests to subsidize teachers, professors, school book writers or “research” institutes for propaganda purposes!

But the poor radicals and reformers have not been so fortunate! If you will again turn to the report and examine it you will observe that the guns of the committee have been leveled, not at any secret or crooked activities on the part of privileged interests but at the openly-espoused “theories,” “opinions,” “doctrines,” “convictions,” and “courses of action” of groups and organizations *outside* of the schools—in other words, the socialists, trade unionists, anti-vivisectionists, drugless healers, free traders, municipal ownership advocates, Henry Georgeists and other insurgents of their kind. Read, for example, (pp. 4-7, 29-30) just what the Committee says (bold-face ours):

“The propagandist is knocking at the school door. In some instances he has already been admitted. There is nothing to indicate that he will overlook the schools in the future. How should he be received?

\* \* \* \* \*

“The propagandist’s mind is made up on a particular subject. **He seeks to inculcate one viewpoint.** The teacher’s mind is open on all subjects. **He seeks to present all viewpoints.** The function of propaganda is to gain acceptance of a particular opinion, doctrine, or course of action, under circumstances designed to curb the individual’s freedom of thought and action. The function of education, on the other hand, is to acquaint the individual with a variety of opinions, doctrines, or courses of actions, so as to equip him intelligently to do his own thinking and to select his own courses of action. The main purpose of propaganda, therefore, is to teach **WHAT TO THINK**, while the guiding purpose of education is to teach **HOW TO THINK**.

“This is a fundamental distinction, essential to clear thinking on this whole problem. . . . The so-called ‘educational’ campaigns whereby commercial or altruistic agencies seek to secure the sale of a commodity or the more or less uncritical acceptance of a particular idea, doctrine, or course of action **should not be confused with the legitimate educational activities of a public school.**

“In emphasizing the fundamental distinction, as to attitude, method, and purpose, between propaganda and education the committee does not imply that the ultimate effects of propaganda are always evil, and that those of the school are always good. There are doubtless situations, particularly in dealing with adults, when propaganda methods are economical and effective in securing some desirable result. The propagandist is frequently inspired by the highest motives, and many illustrations might be cited of the benefits to civilization which have resulted from his activities. We also recognize the fact that all the activities which go on in some schools do not deserve to be called educational. Many schools still have far to go before they can be sure that all their work deserves to be called education in its finest sense. **But these practical facts must not cause us to forsake our standards. The ideal must be kept untarnished. Education and propaganda are basically antagonistic.**

\* \* \* \* \*

“This function of the school will be hopelessly hindered if its doors are left



open to the unrestricted access of persons whose attitude, method of work, and purpose are even partly that of the propagandist. In most instances the ultimate purpose of the propagandist is to sell a product, advance a special interest or prejudice, or propagate an idea or theory. **Immature children should be protected from such influences.** To hand over the child, still lacking in selfreliance and having little choice as to what he shall do in school, to the restricted influence of outside agencies would be the height of educational folly and the violation of a sacred trust. . . . **Nothing would more quickly destroy confidence in public education than to allow it to become an agency for purveying commercial products, or an instrument for the propagation of the social, economic, or religious convictions of factional groups.**

\* \* \* \* \*

"In determining policies to govern the schools in relation to propaganda activities, the committee recommends for the consideration of boards of education and their executives the following fundamental principles: Schools exist primarily for the education of children, and not in the slightest degree for the purpose of selling the commodities or services of particular concerns, or for the circulation of propaganda in support of the theories, courses of action, or convictions of groups or organizations."

There you have it! The above distinctly shows, not merely that the propaganda of the minority factions—or "movements" to use the language of Supt. Threlkeld—has been subtly *ruled out* of the schools but that the propaganda of great financial and monopoly interests has been as subtly *ruled in*. And how has it been done? By the simple expedient of following a process of false reasoning.

Let there be no mistake about it. You will notice in the above that the Committee has taken two principles—one right and the other wrong—upon which to build its argument.

The first principle is that education and propaganda are basically antagonistic. To quote the language of the Committee itself: "The main purpose of propaganda, therefore, is to teach **WHAT TO THINK** while the guiding purpose of education is to teach **HOW TO THINK**."

Now this principle is certainly correct. Schools do indeed exist for the purpose of education and the guiding purpose of education, as the Committee well says, is to teach, not **WHAT** to think but **HOW** to think.

The second principle which the Committee has taken for a foundation is this: Anything originating within the school—in other words, any idea taught by a teacher, principal, text-book writer, professor or other educator—that is *synonymous with education*. On the other hand, anything originating outside of the school—in other words, any idea advanced or advocated by one who is not a teacher, principal, text-book writer, professor or other educator—that is *synonymous with propaganda*.

Now this principle is certainly not correct. It may sound logical, but it is not logical. It is ridiculous and absurd! Much of what emanates *within* the school is not education in any sense but is the veriest propaganda, while much of what emanates from sources *out-*

side of the school is demonstrably not propaganda but the profoundest education. The "American Teacher" in its issue of January, 1930, for example, says:

"Replies from nearly 3,000 American educators to Professor Manly H. Harper's questions designed to show what teachers think about make depressing reading. Overwhelmingly our teachers are determined to make religion safe for the young. Fifty-one per cent believe that 'for the improvement of patriotism our laws should forbid much of the radical criticism that we often hear and read concerning the injustice of our country and government.' Fifty-four per cent believe that 'histories written for elementary or high school use should omit any facts likely to cause students radically to question or doubt the justice of our social order and government.' Fifty-six per cent are sure that if every other nation was as good as the United States there would be no more wars. Eighty-one per cent are for unlimited support of the flag 'for whatsoever cause it may be unfurled'....Evidently we have an enormous job on hand to educate the educators."

This passage shows very plainly that the classifying of all intellectual activities within the school as education is a grave and dangerous error. On the other hand the classifying of all intellectual activities outside of the schools as propaganda—something against which students should be protected—is an equally grave and dangerous error. Many of the profoundest thinkers and educators of all time have been men who have lived and worked outside of scholastic walls. Dr. John Dewey of Columbia University who is himself recognized throughout America as the foremost philosopher of the twentieth century says, for example, of Henry George, the humble printer but famous exponent of the single tax theory:\*

"It would require less than the fingers of the two hands to enumerate those who from Plato down rank with Henry George. His clear intellectual insight into social conditions, his passionate feeling for the remediable ills from which humanity suffers, find their logical conclusion in his plan for liberating labor and capital from the shackles which now bind them. . . . No man, no graduate of a higher educational institution, has a right to regard himself as an educated man in social thought unless he has some first-hand acquaintance with the theoretical contribution of this great American thinker. . . . It is the thorough fusion of insight into actual facts and forces, with recognition of their bearing upon what makes human life worth living, that constitutes Henry George one of the world's great social philosophers."

Do not the above quotations sufficiently show that the line of demarcation between education and propaganda, as fixed by the Committee, is an erroneous one? Clearly, they do! Many so-called educators teach, not how, but WHAT to think; many so-called 'propagandists' teach, not what, but HOW to think!

But the classification of all information diffused by those *within* the school as "education" and the classification of all information

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\* Introduction to "Significant Paragraphs from Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*," compiled by Prof. Harry Gunnison Brown and published by the Schalkenbach Foundation, 11 Park Place, New York, N. Y.

diffused by those *outside* of the school as "propaganda" is hopelessly unsound for still another reason. Such a classification simply means that any group or organization that has any theory, doctrine, conviction or course of action for the betterment of mankind and that is honest enough to carry on its educational work in an open and above-board manner is going to be excluded from the schools, while any corporation that is wealthy enough and dishonest enough to subsidize a teacher, text-book writer, professor or "research" institute, can get its propaganda slipped over as "education"—WHICH, OF COURSE, IS EXACTLY WHAT THE "POWER TRUST," THE REAL ESTATE BOARDS AND OTHER PRIVILEGED INTERESTS ARE NOW DOING!\*

That a committee report such as the above with its greivous sins of omission as well as commission, should have received the endorse-

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\* A shocking illustration of the attempt that is being made to control education for the benefit of organized wealth and privilege is now being furnished in the state of Wisconsin.

For a generation or more the progressive citizens of Wisconsin have been fighting—and quite successfully—to free their public school system from the baneful influence of monopoly. In this fight their greatest victory was won on August 5, 1925. On that day the Board of Regents of the State University passed the following resolution:

"That no gifts, donations, or subsidies shall in future be accepted by or in behalf of the University of Wisconsin from any incorporated educational endowments or organizations of like character."

The passage of this resolution, of course, resulted in a drastic house-cleaning within the university. Many agencies that were accepting the favors and subsidies of special interests were "froze out" while others—such as Prof. Ely's Institute, organized in 1920—which had been "tipped off" that such a resolution was coming, hastily removed to other quarters. Since its adoption, however, the public school system of Wisconsin has been much freer from academic corruption probably than it has in any other state.

Unfortunately, however, this whole situation is now being reversed. Since the above resolution was passed a new governor—Walter J. Kohler—has been inaugurated and as a consequence old members of the Board of Regents have been dropped and new members added. The new Board met for the first time on March 5 of this year (1930) and significantly enough **the first act of the Board was to repeal the resolution.** Referring to this repeal "The Progressive" of Madison, Wisconsin, in its issue of March 15, 1930, said in part:

"One of the big issues which will be fought out in the next 25 years is the attempt of monopoly to gain control of education. Through the subsidies and endowments of its incorporated foundations monopoly is today seeking to dominate education through the same methods that it controls the press, the movies, the radio, and other instrumentalities for the creation of a favorable public opinion.

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"In the closing years of his life that great champion of the liberties of the people, Robert M. LaFollette, saw the dangers centering around the invasion of the field of education by these powerful interests. In an editorial

ment, not merely of Secretary Crabtree\* but of the leading officials of the "power trust" itself† is not strange, but how it could have been approved by all of the ten members on this Committee without causing any dissension or the least sign of a disturbance is something that passes all understanding!

But the whole story has not yet been told. No sooner had this illogical report of the Propaganda Committee been submitted to the Atlanta meeting of the National Education Association (July, 1929)

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in his magazine only four months before his death Senator LaFollette said:

'The time is at hand when the American people must meet this issue of monopoly control over higher education.

'More particularly the University of Wisconsin with its old traditions of academic freedom must take the lead in restoring that fearless winnowing and sifting of truth which is paralyzed by the subsidies, direct and indirect, of the monopoly system.'

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"In 1925 the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin adopted a policy against the acceptance of funds from foundations whose sources of income were monopoly interests.....On August 5, 1925, the Board passed the following resolution:

'Resolved, that no gifts, donations, or subsidies shall in future be accepted by or on behalf of the University of Wisconsin from any incorporated educational endowments or organizations of like character.'

"No sooner had this declaration of educational independence been given to the public than instruments of privilege and monopoly let loose a torrent of abuse and misrepresentation against the Board of Regents and the people of Wisconsin for exercising their right to maintain a publicly supported educational system rather than one supported by private subsidy.

"Since his inauguration, Governor Kohler has been naming new regents on the Board. Last week the Board met for the first time with control in the hands of corporation lawyers, manufacturers and millionaires named by the Governor. The first important business transacted by the new Kohler Board was to rescind the resolution adopted in 1925 against the acceptance of money from monopoly."

While the University of Wisconsin is once more being opened up to organized wealth and monopoly the State Teachers' Association, following out the Report of the Propaganda Committee of the National Education Association, is taking steps to exclude from the schools the essay contests and other open propaganda of the minority groups. Thus again the road is being cleared in Wisconsin, not merely for keeping out of the public schools the ideas of the "reformers" but for injecting into them through colored textbooks and other sources the ideas desired by the special interests!

\* "The Association's Committee has made a careful investigation and has prepared a valuable report."—*Secretary J. W. Crabtree in his annual message to the National Education Association. See Proceedings, 1929, p. 1177.*

† See testimony of Bernard F. Weadock, Chief Counsel for the public utilities, in their defense before the Federal Trade Commission, January 8, 1930. Printed in the *United States Daily*, Jan. 18-20, 1930.

than the Association adopted a "Code of Ethics," the first two sections of which read as follows:

"ARTICLE ONE—Relations with Pupils and to the Community—Section 1. The school room is not the proper theater for religious, political, or personal propaganda. The teacher should exercise his full rights as a citizen but he should avoid controversies which may tend to decrease his value as a teacher.

"Section 2. The teacher should not permit his educational work to be used for partisan politics, personal gain, or selfish propaganda of any kind."

There you have it again! These two sections, which are the only sections in the Code that deal with the matter of propaganda, possess the same defects and characteristics that are to be found in the report of the Propaganda Committee itself. They not only urge teachers to "avoid controversies" and to disallow all propaganda (presumably, of course, from the outside) but they specifically fail to condemn the subsidizing of educators by special interests or the use in the schools of textbooks prepared by such subsidized educators. The result can only be to exclude from the schools that propaganda which is carried on *openly*—and practically all of the propaganda of the reform groups is carried on openly—and to admit that propaganda, such as the Federal Trade Commission has recently exposed, which is carried on *secretly*!

That this will be the only effect of the Code the following incident very conclusively shows.

In the early part of 1929 the Manufacturers and Merchants Federal Tax League—a national organization advocating that taxes be shifted from the products of human labor to the socially-created values of lands and natural resources as proposed by Henry George—laid plans for the holding of essay contests in the high schools of the United States. The holding of these essay contests was deemed necessary, not merely to arouse a greater interest among high school students in Henry George's reform but because the opponents of the Henry George idea—the real estate boards, mining interests and large "land speculators" in particular—were secretly subsidizing educators and "research" institutes, such as Prof. Ely's, *to mold the mind of the American youth in the opposite direction!*

In November, 1929, however—just as its plans for the contests were reaching maturity—the Manufacturers and Merchants Federal Tax League was astonished to read in the newspapers that the Wisconsin State Teachers' Association had before it a report in which it was specifically recommended "that schools form a definite policy against participation in essay contests sponsored by outside organizations or individuals"; moreover, that this report of the Wisconsin State Teachers' Association was a direct result of the Report of the Propaganda Committee and the Code of Ethics adopted some four months previously by the National Education Association.\*

Knowing nothing about either the Propaganda Committee's Report

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\* See "Foreword" of the Report of the Committee on Propaganda of the Wisconsin Teachers' Association.

or the Code of Ethics of the N. E. A., but feeling very anxious about the whole matter, the League's president. Mr. Otto Cullman, promptly wrote to Secretary Crabtree the following letter:

MANUFACTURERS AND MERCHANTS FEDERAL TAX LEAGUE  
1346 Altgeld Street  
CHICAGO

Mr. James W. Crabtree,  
Secretary, National Education Association,  
1201 Sixteenth St., Washington, D. C.

November 12, 1929.

Dear Mr. Crabtree:

For some time this organization has been planning to start essay contests in the high schools of the United States for the purpose of stimulating interest in the economics of Henry George. Our purpose in doing this is to offset the secret and underhanded propaganda that is now being injected into the schools against George's ideas by professors subsidized by the real estate and public utility interests. Unlike our opponents, however, we would be perfectly open and above-board. Each state, according to our plan, would be allotted a certain sum each year for prizes and the schools participating in the contest would receive gratis various books and pamphlets expounding the Henry George philosophy.

We have just been informed, however, that the Wisconsin State Teachers' Association last week adopted a report in which it is recommended "that schools form a definite policy against participation in essay contests sponsored by outside organizations or individuals"; moreover, that this report is an outgrowth of the "code of ethics" laid down by the National Education Association at its annual convention this summer.

We are not familiar with the code of ethics laid down by the National Education Association and write to ask if our information is correct. Is there anything in this code that would not permit our plans for these essay contests to be carried out?

We enclose a stamped envelope and would greatly appreciate the courtesy of an early reply.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) OTTO CULLMAN.

President.

Secretary Crabtree replied to President Cullman as follows:

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES  
1201 Sixteenth Street  
Washington, D. C.

Mr. Otto Cullman, President,  
Manufacturers and Merchants Federal Tax League,  
1346 Altgeld Street, Chicago, Ill.

November 29, 1929.

Dear Mr. Cullman:

I do not think your plan would have been objectionable except for the deprivations of the utility people and some others. Am sending under separate cover the propaganda report. A case can hardly be decided on its merits following the condition which has existed and the cleaning up process which is now on.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. CRABTREE,

Secretary.



Secretary Crabtree, you will notice, has not given Mr. Cullman a direct answer as to whether or not there is anything in the Code that would prevent the essay contests from being carried out.

Nevertheless, does his letter not confirm all that has been said before? Does it not demonstrate conclusively that the only effect of the Code will be to put *out* of the schools that propaganda which is conducted honestly and to let *in* that propaganda which is conducted dishonestly? Consider. When the case of Prof. Ely's Institute—an Institute, bear in mind, that is subsidized by the land speculation interests and that is carrying on in the schools propaganda against the Henry George reform under the cloak of "research"—was laid before the National Education Association not a single objection was voiced against it! But now that an organization advocating the reform of Henry George wishes to conduct in a frank and open manner essay contests for the main purpose of counteracting the concealed propaganda of the subsidized Ely Institute—behold! these essay contests are "objectionable"!

Mr. Crabtree speaks incidentally of the "depravations of the utility people" and the "cleaning up process which is now on." The inference here is that the utility people, in particular, are being "cleaned up." Very interesting! But in June, 1928, it will be recalled, this same Mr. Crabtree wrote to the officials of the National Electric Light Association that "There are other propagandists worse than yours who try to use the schools"; moreover, in his 1928 report to the National Education Association he endorsed Supt. Threlkeld's suggestion that the publicity being given to the propaganda of the "non-troublesome" public utilities be "seized upon" as an opportunity to get "movements" out of the public schools! One might be pardoned for assuming from this that, not the utilities but something else, was being "cleaned up." And such precisely is the case! So far from being "cleaned up" the utility people have been very thoroughly whitewashed; their insidious and covert propaganda has been shielded in the schools at every turn, and the "cleaning up process" is being confined to the "theories, convictions and courses of action" of outside organizations—in other words, to the movements of the minority groups!

But it may here be urged, "The opinion of Secretary Crabtree or any other official of the N. E. A. on this subject is not final. The individual teachers, principals and school superintendents of the United States will, in the last analysis, interpret the Code themselves and they are perfectly free to follow their own judgments in the matter."

But the individual teachers, principals and school superintendents of the United States will *not* be free to follow their own judgments in the matter. They will be obliged to follow the judgments of others. The National Education Association, with its great and growing power, is bound to use its full influence to see that the Code is enforced—in fact, it has already taken steps to do this very thing. At the Atlanta meeting of the N. E. A. in July—the very meeting at

which the Code of Ethics was born—the following plan to interpret and enforce the Code (see “Proceedings,” July, 1929, p. 181) was adopted:

“The committee on ethics of the profession recommends that the following steps be taken by the National Education Association and by state and local associations in order to make known, to interpret and to enforce this code of ethics:

1. In order that the code may be made known to all teachers, particularly those who are entering the profession, each institution for the training of teachers should give every student the opportunity of becoming familiar with its provisions. Other practical means for making the code known are by publishing it from time to time in pedagogical magazines and by discussing it at teachers institutes and similar meetings.

2. Each state teachers organization should establish a committee in professional ethics. This committee should be given the duty of interpreting the code, of investigating reported violations of the code, and of securing the co-operation of all members of the profession in abiding by the code.”

Now when we consider the difficulty that the radical, liberal and progressive movements have had in the past to get a hearing in the schools what chance, in view of the above steps, will these movements have in the years to come? Clearly, they will have no chance at all!

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not mean to say that the teachers themselves are personally hostile to these movements. On the contrary most teachers in the past have been willing—many of them, in fact, have been eager—to have new “theories, convictions and courses of action” laid before their pupils but where they have allowed this to be done they have frequently had to suffer for it. For reforms, as you know, are not popular. Often they are cordially hated, especially by those who have something to lose through their adoption. Those teachers, therefore, who have permitted speakers for an unpopular cause to appear before their students or who have encouraged debates or essay contests in behalf of this cause—those teachers have not merely received small thanks from the community for their trouble but they have often been roundly criticised, if not discharged, by their superiors for permitting such “alien” activities in the schools. As a result the teaching body has grown “conservative.” It has become reluctant—and quite naturally so—to admit the speakers, debates and prize essay contests of outside organizations.

But if the reform groups have found it difficult in the past to get a hearing in the schools how much *more* difficult will they not find it from now on? Make no mistake about it! With a Code of Ethics adopted by the National Education Association distinctly forbidding propaganda in the schools—a Code of Ethics backed up by an elaborate propaganda report—with this Code to be published “from time to time in pedagogical magazines,” discussed at every teachers’ college and hung up in every classroom, with a committee to be established in each state to “interpret” the Code, to “secure the co-operation of all members of the profession in abiding by the Code,” and to “investigate reported violations of the Code”—with all these steps to be taken to enforce the Code the eventual exclusion from the schools

of all "theories, convictions and courses of action" of minority groups and organizations is a foregone conclusion!

## II

Let us recapitulate.

We have now examined the records of the National Education Association and some of its officers for the past two years and have fully substantiated, we believe, the charges made in the opening of this letter.

We have seen that in the spring of 1928 the Federal Trade Commission, in its investigation of the public service corporations, disclosed the startling fact that teachers were being hired, text-book writers subsidized and "research" bureaus financed for the purpose of carrying on in the schools propaganda for the benefit of these corporations. We have seen that the National Education Association, responding to the demand of the public to put an end to such a prostitution of our educational institutions promptly took steps to "clean the situation up." We have, however, carefully examined the various steps taken by the Association—Secretary Crabtree's letters and annual address, the resolution of the Board of Directors, the investigation and report of the Propaganda Committee and last but not least the Code of Ethics adopted by the Association—and have seen that their effect will be, not to "clean up" the public utilities or any other gigantic monopoly interest, but to "clean up" the opponents of these interests! In other words, we have seen that by failing to call a halt on the subsidizing of teachers, text-book writers or "research" bureaus by profit-seeking corporations—or to forbid in the schools the use of any text-books or class-room material prepared by such subsidized agencies—the secret propaganda of these corporations may still *enter* the schools while by ruling out all "theories, convictions and courses of action" of outside organizations the open propaganda of the liberal, radical and reform groups will be *barred* from the schools!

The extreme shortsightedness of embarking upon such a policy—not to mention the injustice of it—is beyond all calculation.

Think of it! There are around us today many great social and economic problems loudly crying for solution. Wealth is rapidly concentrating, landlordism is spreading, commerce and industry—from chain banks to chain farms—are falling under the control of fewer and fewer men, unemployment is growing more common for millions, poverty, in spite of the enormous increase of wealth-producing power, is deepening while vice and crime are sweeping through society like a virulent disease. These momentous problems must be solved—and solved *soon*—if our present civilization is to escape the fate of those that have gone before. But how can these momentous problems be solved? They can be solved in one way only and that is first by **STRAIGHT AND LOGICAL THINKING**. As a famous philosopher has truly said, "Until there be correct thought there cannot be right action; and when there is correct thought, right action *will* follow."

Now it is the business of our educational institutions, as your Propaganda Committee has well stated, to teach children, not WHAT to think, but HOW to think. But can our children be taught to think, and to think STRAIGHT on these problems, when the overwhelming majority of teachers themselves are hopelessly at sea regarding their solution and when all of the intellectual power of outside groups and organizations—some of whom certainly have ideas that contain veritable oceans of precious truth—is deliberately excluded from the schools? Clearly, they can't be so taught. As the "American Teacher" of January, 1930 (p. 8) has profoundly said, "Ideally it is the business of schools to teach children to think rather than what to think, but you cannot teach them to think in a vacuum from which vital issues are excluded."

But this is only half of the picture. How in the name of common sense are children to be taught to think—and to think CORRECTLY—on vital issues when on the one hand the enlightenment of outside groups and organizations is deliberately *excluded* from the schools and when, on the other hand, the secret propaganda of profit-seeking interests—propaganda purposely intended to garble thought and to confuse the mind—is deliberately permitted to *enter* the schools? Again the answer is, it can't be done! Such a procedure is about as helpful to a child as depriving its lungs of oxygen and filling them with poison gas!

Let us not deceive ourselves. The new policy of the National Education Association regarding propaganda in the schools cannot lead our boys and girls into the path of truth; it can only lead them into the paths of error. It will not aid in any way in solving the great social and economic problems that today are staring us in the face; it will only aid the evil forces that in times past have engendered revolutions, destroyed empires and brought mighty civilizations crumbling to the dust!

### III

But, it may now be asked, "What, then, would you do? If the distinction between education and propaganda, as made by the National Education Association, is wrong how should this distinction be made? How would you separate in the schools the true from the false?"

The purpose of this letter, of course, is not to advise the National Education Association how to solve its problems but merely to protest against the unjust policy that the Association has just adopted.

It seems to us, however, that the principles embodied in the Pure Food Law of the United States are principles which might well be followed by the N. E. A. in dealing with the matter of propaganda in the schools. We say this because information is food for the mind just as sustenance is food for the body. And information is the most important kind of "food." It is the material out of which thought is fashioned and just as the people's thoughts are right or wrong so will

their public actions be right or wrong. It is therefore as necessary—indeed, it is far more necessary—to keep harmful ingredients out of the “food” for the intellect than it is to keep harmful ingredients out of the food for the physical body.

Let us now see how the federal government keeps injurious ingredients and other impurities out of the food that we eat.

Some years ago the government enacted a Pure Food Law which contains two fundamental provisions as follows—

(1) Food products “shall not be adulterated”; and

(2) Any adulteration of food products must “be declared”—in other words, the use of any benzoate of soda, citric acid, certified colors, or other harmful ingredients in food products *must be properly printed on the label*.

These provisions are not contradictory but complementary to each other. While the purpose of the Pure Food Law is, of course, to obtain purity in food yet the law generously and wisely permits some adulteration of it—but this adulteration is permitted only *on condition* that it be made known to the consumer. Any violation of the Pure Food Law constitutes fraud—the penalty for which is confiscation of the adulterated goods or the payment of a fine, or both.

How does the law work? It works very satisfactorily. It renders perfect justice both to the producer of the food and the consumer of it. The producer, of course, usually charges more for the pure product than he does for that which is adulterated. On the other hand, the consumer is perfectly free to choose between the adulterated and the unadulterated product and he knows at all times exactly what he is buying.

Now in our opinion the National Education Association might well pursue in the field of education a similar plan. We do not mean by this that the N. E. A. should resort to any legislation to enforce its decrees. That would be neither wise nor necessary. The N. E. A. has at its elbow a power which is quite as effective as law—namely, the power of publicity—and it should use that to secure obedience to its commands.

But how could the principles of the Pure Food Law be applied so as to give our boys and girls *genuine* education? That could be done by laying down and enforcing the two following rules:

(1) No teacher, principal, superintendent, text-book writer, professor or other educator shall conduct, either secretly or openly, any propaganda in the schools, and

(2) Propaganda—or outside material—may be admitted into the schools but in all cases where admitted its source must be disclosed.

The first rule that no educator shall carry on, either secretly or openly, any propaganda in the schools is, of course, simply another way of stating that “Education shall not be adulterated.” It means, in other words, that all “food” for the intellect—namely, all facts and information—that is served to our boys and girls by the teaching

body itself must be of the purest variety—free from all biases, prejudices or poisonous elements of any kind.

But it may be said, "This will work all right so far as the *open* propaganda of teachers is concerned but how about the *secret* propaganda—how are you going to prevent that?" The secret propaganda could be prevented by forbidding any teacher, principal, superintendent, text-book writer, professor or "research" institute in any school, college or university to accept any gift, donation or subsidy from any individual, group, organization or incorporated interest.

But it may be asked again, How could you enforce such a far-reaching rule? It could be enforced in this simple manner: (1) By publishing the names of those educators who had been charged with and found guilty of violating the rule, and (2) by listing as undesirable all text-books and class-room material prepared by the guilty parties.

Such penalties imposed upon the adulterators of education in our public school system would soon prove effective. Moreover, they would be just and proper penalties. For no teacher or text-book writer who enjoys the confidence of the people and to whom our boys and girls innocently look for guidance and light has any right to place himself under moral obligations to any interest with a special "ax to grind." It is as unethical for such a teacher or text-book writer to accept a contribution from a questionable source as it is for a "dry" legislator to accept a contribution from a brewer, for a policeman to accept a contribution from a gang-leader or for a judge to accept a contribution from a contestant in a suit at law. As Dr. John Dewey has truly said: "The schools ought even more than Caesar's wife to be above all suspicion, and everything proceeding from sources subsidized by special interests is entitled to be looked upon with suspicion.\*"

Now as to the second rule, that "Propaganda—or outside material—may be admitted into the school but in all cases where admitted its source must be disclosed." This, of course, is merely another way of saying that all *adulterated* education must be properly labeled.

But it may be asked again, why should propaganda—or outside material—be admitted into the schools anyhow? For the simple reason, as we have already seen, that propaganda is education—some of it bad, of course, but much of it of the highest possible value. Propaganda in most instances bears upon the weightiest social and economic problems that we have; it contains truths which frequently can be found nowhere else and without which society cannot survive; and it is therefore rightly entitled to an important place in the schools.

But though propaganda often contains truths of the most vital significance to civilization yet there is always a danger that it be mixed with prejudice, biases and other elements derogatory to straight thinking. This, of course, is just as true of the propaganda put out

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\* From a letter to the author dated Nov. 13, 1929.



by the opponents as it is of that put out by the proponents of any particular cause. It is therefore always wisest to look upon propaganda as "adulterated education." But this is not a serious matter so long as there is no secrecy involved and the source of the propaganda is fully revealed. For by having both sides of any vital issue presented the dross may readily be separated from the gold. The errors can in time be weeded out and the precious truth will remain.

In addressing the convention of Illinois high school teachers at Urbana in 1929, Dean Charles H. Judd of the University of Chicago is quoted (Chicago "Tribune," Nov. 23, 1929) as saying:

"Modern educators fear propaganda. But sooner or later the administrators are going to learn that the purpose of the modern, medieval and ancient schools was and is propaganda. We must teach why there is a state and why there is taxation. We're in the business to see that the young people are prepared for the future."

If Dean Judd meant, as we presume he did, that no secrecy should be tolerated but that all propaganda in the schools should be open and above-board, he is perfectly right. Propaganda—or outside material—should therefore (with judgment, of course) be admitted into the schools but no propaganda should be permitted to enter the source of which is not definitely disclosed.

We repeat, then, that the principles embraced in the Pure Food Law of the United States are principles which the National Education Association might well employ in dealing with the matter of propaganda. Certainly these principles come closer—ininitely closer—to being a true solution of the problem than the principles the Association has just adopted.

Once more, now, what are the principles that the N. E. A. has just adopted? First, it has drawn an arbitrary line between what goes on inside of the school and what goes on outside of it—classifying all ideas, theories, convictions and courses of action presented on the *inside* as education and all ideas, theories, convictions and courses of action presented on the *outside* as propaganda. Second, it has excluded from the schools the open propaganda of radical, liberal and progressive groups and organizations but has made no attempt to exclude that propaganda which is being secretly injected into the schools by privileged corporations through the medium of subsidized teachers, text-book writers, professors and other educators!

Is there anyone who is unable to see what this means? It means that much of the best knowledge is destined to be kept out of the classroom and much of the worst knowledge is destined to come in. It means that honesty in teaching is going to be penalized and dishonesty encouraged. It means that academic freedom will be restricted on the one hand and free speech curtailed on the other. It means, in short, that children will be taught WHAT to think rather than HOW to think, that error instead of truth will be spread and that the great social and economic riddles which the Sphinx of Fate has put to our civilization may never be answered!

But how different the results would be if the principles incorporated in the Pure Food Law were adopted. Then the secret propaganda of special interests which is now being injected like poison into the minds of our boys and girls by subsidized teachers, text-book writers and other educators, would soon be stopped. Then the truths uttered by thoughtful groups and organizations on the outside—truths which have now been barred from the schools—would be permitted to enter. Then honesty rather than dishonesty in teaching would be encouraged; freedom of thought and speech would be given full play. Then much of the best instead of the worst information would be let into the classroom and much of the worst instead of the best information would be kept out; our children would be taught HOW to think rather than WHAT to think and the momentous social and economic questions of our time—questions involving, not merely the lives and liberties of the people but the very preservation of society itself—would be safely on the road to a final solution.

#### IV

But it is not the purpose of this letter to advise the National Education Association how to solve its problems. That is its own affair. The purpose of this letter, as before said, is simply to protest against a great wrong the Association has committed and to appeal to the Association to right that wrong. What wrong has the National Education Association committed? It has ruled *out* of the schools the propaganda of the socialists, the free traders, labor unionists, tenant farmers, single taxers, drugless healers, public ownership advocates and other liberals, radicals and reformers while at the same time it has made no attempt to rule out but, on the contrary, *is shielding in the schools* the secret propaganda of the "power trust" the National Association of Real Estate Boards and other monopoly interests!

This is something that equity cannot countenance. If the propaganda of monopoly interests is to be admitted into the schools then the propaganda of the opponents of these interests must also be admitted; if the propaganda of the opponents is to be excluded, then the propaganda of the monopoly interests must also be excluded. Justice can tolerate no other course!

Yours very sincerely,

EDUCATION PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.

EMIL O. JORGENSEN,

Secretary.