

In this issue...

- Who watches the watchdogs? When judges create law.
- “Education, education...”
- What is seen and not seen. Statism and the fate of the hidden majority.

THE BEST OF INTENTIONS...

So packed is this issue of *The Individual*, that I've had to alter the design. But the content is worth it.

Jeremy Dunning-Davies's article arose from him ever-so-gently taking me to task about one of the SIF's stated beliefs: the “independence of the judicature” which, in its general form, means the administration of justice. Dr Dunning-Davies highlights that whilst this might be fine in theory, in reality we live in a world of “judicial activism” where politically motivated judges pursue their own agendas.

From Peter Richards, we have another in his excellent series of brief histories and biographies of movements and individuals. Frédéric Bastiat's insight of “that which is seen and that which is not seen” is a profound one. It is also one routinely ignored by politicians and mainstream-media commentators. A politician may boast of £1 million “invested”—“spent”, in other words—in this or that project and the quite possibly real benefits that will result to a limited number of identifiable individuals. What he or she will not mention—even assuming that the idea occurs to them—is that somewhere out in the wealth-creating and tax-producing private sector the diffused taxation needed to pay for this will be the final straw that drives to the wall a struggling small or medium enterprise.

Alice Coleman's in-depth analysis of the British education system, and what to do about it, speaks for itself. The more libertarian-inclined amongst this journal's readership might wish for a greater emphasis on denationalisation. However, for the moment it is

clearly “the settled will of the majority” that at least some education should be provided for out of taxation. There are better and worse ways of doing this.

I will add one comment drawn from personal experience. Professor Coleman refers to the government's extraordinary idea of “gym and swim” vouchers designed to encourage people to take more exercise. She notes that these are likely to be taken up by those who already do so. For some years in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I worked at a Further Education college collecting data and running in-house surveys. During this time the then government introduced something called the Individual Learning Account designed to boost adult education, particularly in the area of IT which at the time commanded an almost religious awe. So inefficient and riddled with fraud was the ILA, that a scheme that was launched in 2000 was abandoned in 2001. I'd collected data about how many of our adult students were using the ILA to pay for their courses and for what. As I said in a brief report to my superiors about the possible impact to the college of the closure of the ILA scheme, I was sceptical that the country would overly suffer from a decrease in the number of middle-class suburbanites who would no longer take introductory courses in counselling!

Dr Nigel Gervas Meek

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Inside this issue:

<i>On the 'Independence of the Judicature' - Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies</i>	2
<i>Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850): Passionate Exponent of Classical Liberalism - Peter Richards</i>	6
<i>A Low-Cost Rescue of Education - Professor Alice Coleman</i>	11

ON THE 'INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICATURE'

Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies

The ideals of the SIF

The Society for Individual Freedom embraces several ideals that surely any right-thinking person would both applaud and support. The idea of 'personal freedom, subject only to the equal freedom of others', must surely be something of which all approve.

However, another stated ideal is the 'independence of the judiciary' and here, I contend, concerns must arise these days although, if by 'independence' is simply meant independence from politics and political parties, those concerns would almost disappear. No-one, least of all myself, should have any problem with supporting the rule of law but support for the second part of that promoted aim is less clear cut. It is sad to have to query the independence of the judiciary but, in recent years, that body itself has raised queries, at least by implication, over the correctness of this privilege. This has resulted in people wondering to whom this august body is answerable, if indeed it is answerable to anyone.

To this genuine concern has been added the realisation that this country's judiciary gives every appearance of wanting to make the law, rather than just administer it. This tendency would seem to be taking a lead from events in the USA and also from an apparent desire to accept all rulings European. Again, fairly recently, according to newspaper reports, senior members of the judiciary have expressed the opinion that we should incorporate elements of Islamic Sharia law into our British legal system. Some reports have even claimed that, in some areas, such elements are already in place.

However, to my knowledge, no such changes have been approved by Parliament so is this a case of members of the judiciary effectively making laws in this country? If so, I would contend that is a worrying development and raises the question of where do you stop once you agree to introduce some aspects of a different régime and culture. Hence, queries arise in the minds of ordinary, non-legally trained citizens. I myself have no legal training and merely comment on things I see and observe in my everyday life, as well as noting that the entire basis of law in this country is Judeo-Christian in origin.

Who actually makes our laws?

As a legal layman, I'd always assumed that the British Parliament made our laws and our police and legal establishment were in place to enforce these laws. However, recent cases which have been highlighted in the media have called this into question. Maybe I'm being too naïve but it does appear that, in some cases at least, the legal establishment treats the law as almost a game to be played according to rules known only to them.

Concerns are being expressed too often these days about the behaviour of some police officers, of some members of the Crown Prosecution Service and, indeed, of some of our

judges. It must be stressed from the outset that, in each of these categories, reference is being made to a small minority, although the implications are quite far reaching and one of the problems is to whom does any member of the public turn for help and reassurance when affected by the actions of members of one, or all, of these categories? The answer appears to be that each is answerable to separate bodies only and the result of this is that, if someone wishes to query actions involving all three, representation will have to be made to each of these individual bodies separately; this results in a classic divide and conquer situation.

However, to illustrate these points reference will now be made to a few cases which have attracted media coverage in recent years.

The case of Lillian Ladele

One of the more recent cases to raise serious questions about the judiciary concerns that of Miss Lillian Ladele, who worked as a Registrar for Islington Council. Basically, as I understand it, this lady felt that, purely because of her Christian beliefs, she would find herself unable to perform civil partnership ceremonies between same sex couples after the law changed to allow such. This position was made known before the new law came into effect. However, after the new law did come into effect, Miss Ladele found herself in a position where she either had to perform such ceremonies or be out of a job.

After prolonged legal debate, she finally lost an appeal in front of the Master of the Rolls who, as reported at the time, found against Miss Ladele largely on the grounds that the case had nothing to do with religious beliefs.

If this reporting was accurate, then serious questions arise because, whether you agree with Miss Ladele's stance or not, it is an undeniable fact that her position was all about religious belief. The idea that her position in some way discriminated against homosexual people is a tenuous one to say the least. It is abundantly obvious that her personal freedom in this matter has been violated, while she herself was not abusing anyone else's freedom. After all, all she was doing was exercising her right to choose not to perform a ceremony; she was saying nothing about anyone else's right to perform that same ceremony. As was said at the time, Islington Council could have accommodated Miss Ladele's position very easily with no problems raised for anyone.

In the event, lengthy costly legal argument becomes involved, resulting in a totally unsatisfactory outcome where the ruling of a senior judge is left open to question. It is often said that 'not only must justice be done, it must be seen to be done'. That is certainly not obviously the case in this instance and that is worrying.

Further worrying rulings

Unfortunately, this mentioned case is by no means an isolated incident when it comes to questioning the motives of the judiciary. On several occasions in the recent past, people deemed dangerous to the safety of the realm have been saved from deportation by the intervention of members of the judiciary. European law has been cited as a cause for denying such deportation. On occasions, the future personal safety of the person to be deported has been doubted and so deportation has been halted. Again, when people had to be arrested before the authorities had completed their investigations because a senior police officer had compromised matters, the prosecution of those suspected failed understandably but, once again, spurious reasons were advanced to prevent deportation of those strongly suspected of endangering the realm.

In all these cases, lawyers have been only too eager to benefit financially by appearing for these people and senior judges have duly agreed that points of law—often European, not British, law—meant that deportation could not be allowed. The situation is now, in my view, so serious that one must wonder why we have security and immigration forces and also what morale must be like among the members of those forces who are simply doing their utmost to protect both our country and ourselves.

A scandalous waste of public money

Since the new coalition government came to power, the Rt Hon. Kenneth Clarke has called for financial savings in our legal system. Whenever such calls are made in any field, whatever people have said in the past, it becomes immediately ‘difficult’ for those who must implement such savings to see where they may be made sensibly.

However, one area where savings could be made concerns a tightening up of the procedure whereby cases actually come to trial. According to the last Director of Public Prosecutions, there are two criteria which must be satisfied before a case should come to court – at least in the Crown Court. These are that:

- it is in the public interest,
- the prosecution must stand a much better than evens chance of gaining a conviction.

These words are very definitely mine but do contain the sentiment expressed by the then DPP. However, this is quite blatantly not always the case. In fact, in one case, a Crown Court judge at a preliminary hearing said, and here I quote from the transcript of the actual court proceedings:

- “It just strikes me—one wonders immediately—is it in the public interest to prosecute this case?”
- “If you’re going to call X, you haven’t got a chance of conviction.”

Both these comments came after discussion during which it emerged that the prosecution had little, or no, evidence and the prosecuting counsel was ill-prepared. Also, the prosecuting counsel in this case raised no objections to the judge’s comments. However, the judge simply adjourned to allow the prosecution more time to prepare—even though they’d already had the best part of a year. At the second meeting, having been informed that the prosecution would be calling X as a

witness, the same judge set a trial date, notwithstanding his statement concerning X recorded above. What brought about this apparent change? It emerged months later that, in the intervening period, the judge had a private meeting with the head of the local CPS and this was admitted in a letter to the then DPP but there was no follow-up.

At the actual trial, a different judge was sitting. After a single morning, an experienced ex-CPS lawyer stated that it was all over and the judge would halt proceedings after lunch because, by that time, the prosecution’s so-called case had been torn to shreds. However, the judge let proceedings drag on for a further day and a half. In the end, a verdict of ‘Not guilty’ was returned and, after the jury had been dismissed, the judge criticised the prosecution for ever bringing the case to court. However, he effectively gagged the press over this by stating “That is not a matter, it seems to me, appropriate for reporting. I make that plain.” Why? Again, this is a direct quote from the transcript of the actual court proceedings. Incidentally, an experienced lawyer assures me it was incorrect for the judge to attempt to gag the press on this point.

Lessons to be learnt from this example

Hence, here we have a case that should never have come to court but, for reasons unknown to the layman, did so. At what cost to the taxpayer? At what cost to the lives of the innocent defendant and his family? These are serious questions but none could receive an answer because the entire legal establishment—police, CPS, judiciary—closed ranks. However, where would one go to investigate a case such as this? The police involvement would mean contacting one body, the CPS involvement contacting another body and any query concerning the judges’ conduct would mean consulting yet another separate body. As commented earlier, this is a classic ‘divide and conquer’ situation and one which does little to enhance the public perception of the present state of the British legal system. It also does little to help one accept the total independence of the judiciary.

Cases such as this must cost the taxpayer a large amount of money and, knowing the way things normally work, it is impossible to believe this example an isolated case. Incidentally, some may feel some of the queries raised might be answered by the relatively new Ministry of Justice but, in this case, those concerned did contact that Ministry but to no avail; no-one wanted to know!

One thing these people in such a ministry need to remember is that so-called ‘victims of crime’ fall into several categories and one such category comprises people who have been incorrectly persecuted by the system. In many of the cases which are covered by this remark, it is very difficult for the authorities to proceed. Here one might think of a possible rape or abuse case. However, the overriding consideration must be justice with the retention of the notion that a person is ‘innocent until proven guilty’. We must never have a situation where those prosecuting say such things as ‘I could tell he was guilty because of his body language’; real evidence must always form the bottom line; counsel must simply present the evidence and we must all do our best to ensure that no-one is found either ‘guilty’ or ‘not guilty’ purely on the basis of the performance of a glib-tongued lawyer.

The need for complete fairness in the system

It is also important to remember that making a false allegation is so serious that it is a criminal offence to do so. However, although bodies such as the Ministry of Justice blithely state this, it is not always something which is followed up. The said ministry claims that the offence of perjury ‘carries a maximum penalty of seven years’ imprisonment, and the courts have consistently held that a custodial sentence is appropriate for deliberate perjury in the face of the court.’ Such form of sentence is, in my view, not always appropriate but, when people are clearly guilty of perjury, the court should always recognise that fact. Sadly, this is simply not the case.

The same remark holds for the notion of someone or even a body being in ‘contempt of court’. This should also be deemed unacceptable and at any level from magistrates’ court upwards but there is clear evidence to make it seem that, if the prosecution simply ignores direct orders of the court, that does not count as contempt. Once again, it seems our judicial system is not acting even-handedly.

Complete fairness is, I feel, important in all legal issues. In this context, therefore, one might well question the role of the legal authorities during Mr Blair’s premiership. During those years, there were several occasions on which the Government of the day was taken to court over various matters. On the occasions to which I am referring here, the lead counsel against the Government was Mr Blair’s own wife. To the uninitiated, this would seem an inappropriate situation to say the least. I recall no objections to this situation being voiced in public by anyone but surely, in these cases, counsel for the people opposing the Government was in a privileged position and one side or the other, possibly both, could be said to be compromised? Again, to the observant layman, it seems that the operation of the law in this country is not necessarily as fair as might be hoped.

Unfortunately, this impression seems to be supported by the case of the late Lord Widgery who, according to published reports, suffered in his later years from dementia. However, for some time, he didn’t resign but continued to sit as a judge and give judgements. It is difficult to believe his fellow senior judges would have known nothing of this so the big question arising is ‘Why was he allowed to continue sitting as a judge under these circumstances?’ Again, it does seem that total independence of the judiciary is simply not working.

Answerability and intention

It is for all the reasons both stated and implied above that, while I personally believe totally in the political independence of the judicature, I also believe passionately that we cannot have a totally independent judicature—it must be a body which is directly and openly answerable to someone! Without this answerability and in the face of so many worrying judgements and pronouncements, I contend that the public cannot retain any real faith in so-called British justice.

Finding a correct and acceptable balance in this will be extremely difficult; there is obviously quite a vague line between calling on precedent and actually making a law but, while one realises that so-called case law must have a part to play, it is crucial that this only clarifies a position and doesn’t enter the realm of creating a new law. Making a new law must remain the prerogative of Parliament.

Hence, how do we proceed? It seems the overall answer to that difficult question must come from those in control of our legal system but I seem to remember the late Lord Denning seeming to imply that the intention of a law was more important than the literal interpretation of that law and, if that recollection is correct, it would seem an excellent place from which to start looking at the problem.

Incidentally, this assessment of the status and meaning of laws and the intentions of those originally enunciating those laws would, if accepted, have solved many of the issues referred to above.

About the Author

Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies was born in 1941 in Glamorgan, the son of a primary school headmaster. His mother and wife were also teachers before their respective marriages and this teaching background has given Jeremy an abiding interest in education at all levels. He was appointed to the Applied Mathematics Department of Hull University in 1966 and Senior Lecturer in 1981. In 2002, he transferred to the Physics Department at Hull.

Works include: *Mathematical Methods for Mathematicians, Physical Scientists and Engineers* (Ellis Horwood, 1982); *Concise Thermodynamics* (Albion Publishing, 1996); *Exploding a Myth* (Horwood Publishing, 2007); and about 75 articles mainly on thermodynamics and its applications, particularly in astrophysics but including previous articles that appeared in the November 1996 and January 2010 issues of *The Individual*.

On the need to retain our military forces...

“Governments may think and say as they like, but force cannot be eliminated, and it is the only real and unanswerable power. We are told that the pen is mightier than the sword, but I know which of these weapons I would choose.”

Lieutenant-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart VC, KBE, CB, CMG, DSO (1880-1963), *Happy Odyssey*, 1950.

FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT (1801-1850): PASSIONATE EXPONENT OF CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

Peter Richards

Introduction

Frédéric Bastiat was an outstanding 19th century French economist, who deserves our attention now, at the end of the 1st decade of the 21st century, not only because his ideas are still powerful and valid, but also because they are of particular relevance today, as we are look for the causes and for the cures of the present global economic crisis.

Bastiat was a passionate and exuberant exponent of classical liberal theory and a leading populariser of free market economics. He was an original theorist, who believed in a natural harmonious order. He was a persuasive and eloquent communicator with remarkable insight, who used clarity, humour and wit to get his message across. He was opposed to protectionism and government interventions of every kind, believing that these were counterproductive and that they led to unintended negative consequences. He believed in a limited role for government restricted to its essential functions of protecting the life, liberty and property of its citizens from malicious destruction or plunder; a role committed to the cause of universal justice.

In his introduction to the recently published *Bastiat Collection*, Mark Thornton declares:

If we were to take the greatest economists from all ages and judge them on the basis of their theoretical rigor, their influence on economic education, and their impact in support of the free-market economy, then Frédéric Bastiat would be at the top of the list.¹

Henry Hazlitt, who wrote a best selling book entitled *Economics in One Lesson* (1946), acknowledged his debt to Bastiat's essay, *That Which is Seen and That Which is Not Seen*, written almost 100 years earlier.

In an essay entitled, *Bastiat the Great*, Hazlitt dubbed him 'the master of the reductio ad absurdum'.² As one becomes familiar with Bastiat's work, the truth of this phrase becomes self-evident. A good example of this is his 'negative railway'. There had been a suggestion that there should be a break in the tracks at Bordeaux on the proposed railroad from Paris to Madrid, in order to increase the city's profits, as passengers and goods would be forced to stop thus providing work for the likes of 'bargemen, porters, commissionaires, hotel-keepers, etc.'³ In response Bastiat revealed the fallacy of this suggestion by extending the argument further and proposing breaks in the tracks at every town along the way so that they could all profit—hence the 'negative railway'.

Even commentators, who have been critical of Bastiat as an economic theorist, find words of praise for him: F.A. Hayek, the joint recipient of the 1974 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics, called him a 'publicist of genius'⁴ and the distin-

guished economist Joseph Schumpeter referred to him as 'the most brilliant economic journalist who ever lived'.⁵

Oscar B. Johannsen, who wrote a piece about Bastiat appropriately named *The Wittiest Antistatist*, describes Bastiat as 'amusingly brilliant'.⁶ He goes on to say:

His two masterpieces, Sophismes Economiques and Harmonies Economiques, are being read with new appreciation, not only because of his wit but because of the profundity of his thought.

In contrast to the usual treatises on economics, Bastiat illustrates his arguments with subtle humor. Sophisms "pulls down," that is, destroys the arguments of protectionists and governmental interventionists. Harmonies, on the other hand, "builds up," that is, demonstrates "the beauty, order and progressive principles of the natural and providential harmonies." It was Bastiat's attempt to develop a sound system of economic principles predicated on the harmonious relationships existing among men.⁷

Johannsen concludes his essay by saying:

Present-day libertarians are well justified in looking to Bastiat for substantial backing for their cause since he is easily one of the great libertarian thinkers of western society.⁸

Biography

Claude Frédéric Bastiat was born in the port of Bayonne, in Aquitaine, France in June 1801. When Bastiat was just a young boy, his father wondered what would become of him:

He is as good as he is lazy. If he is going to do something in life, he is going to have to change radically. Frédéric is always pleasant and good natured; but he has a lazy streak that is without equal.

Frédéric is an angel, with such gaiety, such spirit, and a sweetness beyond compare. What a shame that I don't have the means to give him the education that he deserves. He is a charming child, always happy and singing; I've never seen him to be capricious. I hope he will live up to my expectations.⁹

His mother died in 1808 and his father's death followed in 1810, so that by the time of his tenth birthday Bastiat was already an orphan; thereafter he was raised by his paternal grandfather and a maiden aunt. He left school and started working in the counting house of his uncle's exporting business in Bayonne at the age of 17 and continued there until 1824, when he moved back to live with his grandfather. The

following year, when his grandfather died, Bastiat inherited the family estate at Mugron, which allowed him to become financially independent.

At the age of 19 he had decided that his ambition was, "... nothing less than to become acquainted with politics, history, geography, mathematics, mechanics, natural history, botany, and four or five languages."¹⁰ At Mugron, Bastiat had the opportunity to follow his ambition and applied himself to study; in particular, he became interested in political economy and the works of French economist Jean-Baptiste Say and the Scottish moral philosopher and political economist Adam Smith, the celebrated author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

Bastiat had been brought up during the Napoleonic era and had witnessed the negative effects of the authoritarian rule of Napoleon Bonaparte first hand. As a teenager, he would have been aware of the restoration of the monarchy in 1815 when Louis XVIII acceded to the throne of France. When this monarch died in 1824, Bastiat would also have been aware of the succession of Charles X and of the repressive regime that followed. When just a young man Bastiat supported the revolution of 1830, when Charles X was deposed and the bourgeoisie gained power under the "Citizen King" Louis Philippe.

Around this time, Bastiat decided to take a wife and married Marie Hiard but inexplicably left her immediately after the wedding and continued to live as a bachelor.

At this point in his life Bastiat decided to become more involved in public affairs; he became a Justice of the Peace (*juge de paix*) for the canton of Mugron in 1831 and a member of the local General Council (*conseil general*) of the Landes in 1832. His first published article, in which he argued for the abolition of all tariffs, came out in 1834.

Bastiat became aware of the Manchester textile entrepreneurs Richard Cobden and John Bright of the English Anti-Corn Law League from reading London Newspapers and became interested in the League's campaign for free trade. He started corresponding with Cobden and went on to write a book entitled *Cobden et la Ligue* (1845). He later visited Cobden in England and they became personal friends.

Inspired by Cobden, Bastiat launched the free trade movement in France in 1846 and became a leading member of the French Free Trade Association. Bastiat was also the founder of *Le Libre Echange* (Free Exchange), the weekly newspaper published by the Association, the first edition of which was launched on November 29, 1846.

Bastiat was a political economist, who was elected to the National Assembly of France following the February Revolution of 1848, when the regime of Louis Philippe had been overthrown and subsequently replaced by the Second French Republic. There was another uprising later that year, known as the June Revolution of 1848, but the Assembly survived and Bastiat continued to stand up for freedom and speak out against the advance of socialism.

Bastiat was anti-collectivist and had criticised socialism even before the *Communist Manifesto*, by Marx and Engels, was published in 1848.

The origin of the terms 'left' and 'right' as used in political discourse comes from a reference to which side members sat in the French Legislative Assembly after the 1789 Revolution. Those on the right supported the deposed monarchy and the aristocracy, i.e. the ancien regime, and those on the left were made up of radicals, socialists and classical liberals who were opposed to the reinstatement of this regime. Interestingly Bastiat, who served on the Assembly from 1848-1850, and who by modern classification would be described as a right-libertarian, sat on the left.

Bastiat advocated free trade as an antidote to war and campaigned for world peace. With Victor Hugo, Bastiat was an organiser of an international peace organisation. Together they arranged the First International Peace Congress in August 1848.

Between 1849 and 1850 Bastiat conducted a famous debate with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (the influential French anarcho-socialist who is now often referred to as 'the father of anarchism'): Bastiat put the case for the justification of the perpetual interest of capital whilst Proudhon took a contrary position.

Bastiat's career as a political economist had begun in 1844 with the publication of his article, 'The Influence of English and French Tariffs' in the *Journal des Economistes*, and continued until 1850, the year of his death. He died from TB (tuberculosis) in Rome on Christmas Eve; he was only 49 years old.

Bastiat's writings

During the last 6 years of Bastiat's life his output was prolific; he not only wrote the two books for which he is most famous, that is *Economic Sophisms* and *Economic Harmonies*, but also numerous essays and articles, many of which were published in newspapers, magazines or journals, and read throughout France. A few extracts from his writings will demonstrate his supreme eloquence, his sharp wit and his profound wisdom.

Division of Labour: Voluntarily Arranged

Bastiat wrote about the division of labour and the subsequent harmony created by voluntary cooperation:

For a man, when he gets up in the morning, to be able to put on a suit of clothes, a piece of land has had to be enclosed, fertilized, drained, cultivated, planted with a certain kind of vegetation; flocks of sheep have had to feed on it; they have had to give their wool; this wool has had to be spun, woven, dyed, and converted into cloth; this cloth has had to be cut, sewn, and fashioned into a garment. And this series of operations implies a host of others; for it presupposes the use of farming implements, of sheepfolds, of factories, of coal, of machines, of carriages, etc.

If society were not a real association, anyone who wanted a suit of clothes would be reduced to working in isolation, that is, to performing himself the innumerable operations in the series, from the first blow of the pick-axe that initiates it right down to the last thrust of the needle that terminates it.

But thanks to that readiness to associate which is the distinctive characteristic of our species, these operations have been distributed among a multitude of workers, and they keep subdividing themselves more and more for the common good to the point where, as consumption increases, a single specialized operation can support a new industry. Then comes the distribution of the proceeds, according to the portion of value each one has contributed to the total work. If this is not association, I should like to know what is.

Do not this division of labor and these arrangements, decided upon in full liberty, serve the common good? Do we, then, need a socialist, under the pretext of planning, to come and despotically destroy our voluntary arrangements, put an end to the division of labor, substitute isolated efforts for co-operative efforts, and reverse the progress of civilization?¹¹

That Which is Seen and That Which is Not Seen

One of his most famous and influential essays, *That Which is Seen and That Which is Not Seen*, begins with 'The Parable of the Broken Window'. Its message is clear from this extract:

Have you ever been witness to the fury of that solid citizen, James Goodfellow, when his incorrigible son has happened to break a pane of glass? If you have been present at this spectacle, certainly you must also have observed that the onlookers, even if there are as many as thirty of them, seem with one accord to offer the unfortunate the selfsame consolation: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody some good. Such accidents keep industry going. Everybody has to make a living. What would become of the glaziers if no one ever broke a window?"

Now, this formula of condolence contains a whole theory that it is a good idea for us to expose, flagrante delicto, in this very simple case, since it is exactly the same as that which, unfortunately, underlies most of our economic institutions.

Suppose that it will cost six francs to repair the damage. If you mean that the accident gives six francs' worth of encouragement to the aforesaid industry, I agree. I do not contest it in any way; your reasoning is correct. The glazier will come, do his job, receive six francs, congratulate himself, and bless in his heart the careless child. That is what is seen.

But if, by way of deduction, you conclude, as happens only too often, that it is good to break windows, that it helps to circulate money, that it results in encouraging industry in general, I am obliged to cry out: That will never do! Your theory stops at what is seen. It does not take account of what is not seen.

It is not seen that, since our citizen has spent six francs for one thing, he will not be able to spend them for another. It is not seen that if he had not had a windowpane to replace, he would have replaced, for example, his worn-out shoes or added another book to his library. In brief, he would have put his six francs to some use or other for which he will not now have them.¹²

There is no doubt that this simple and yet profound proverb can be used to discredit any economic benefits claimed in the aftermath of natural disasters or wars; it can also be used to encourage thinking about opportunity costs and the law of unintended consequences.

The Law

Probably his most well known publication is entitled *The Law*, and in it he offers the following definitions.

Firstly the law is defined explicitly:

Law is the organization of the natural right to legitimate self-defense; it is the substitution of collective force for individual forces, to act in the sphere in which they have the right to act, to do what they have the right to do: to guarantee security of person, liberty, and property rights, to cause justice to reign over all.¹³

Later this is summarised as:

The law is collective force organised to oppose injustice.¹⁴

And then put briefly as:

Law is justice.¹⁵

Plunder is also defined:

When property is transferred without the consent of its owner and without compensation, whether by force or by fraud, from the one who possesses it to anyone who has not created it, I say that property rights have been violated, that plunder has been committed. I say that this is precisely what the law is supposed to suppress always and everywhere. If the law itself commits the act that it is supposed to suppress, I say that this is still plunder and, as far as society is concerned, plunder of an even graver kind. In this case, however, it is not the one that profits from the act of plunder who is responsible for it; it is the law, the legislator, society itself, and it is in this that the political danger consists.¹⁶

Bastiat clearly recognised the fact that the law is often perverted and carries out the very thing it is intended to prevent—plunder. He called it 'legal plunder' and included under this heading any form of wealth redistribution by means of taxation or government subsidy. He tackled this issue head on:

This question of legal plunder must be decided once and for all, and there are only three solutions:

*That the few plunder the many.
That everybody plunders everybody else.
That nobody plunders anybody.*

Partial plunder, universal plunder, absence of plunder—one must choose. The law can follow only one of these three possible courses.

Partial plunder is the system that prevailed as long as the electorate was partial, the system to which some wish to return in order to avoid the invasion of socialism.

Universal plunder is the system with which we have been threatened since the suffrage became universal, the masses having conceived the idea of legislating on the same principle as the legislators who preceded them.

Absence of plunder is the principle of justice, of peace, of order, of stability, of harmony, of good sense, which I shall proclaim with all the power (alas! so inadequate) of my lungs, until my last breath.¹⁷

Plunder and Law

Bastiat wrote an essay called *Plunder and Law* in which he simplified the issue further by spelling out two alternative functions of the law and contrasting the outcomes of their application.

If you make the law the palladium of the freedom and the property rights of all citizens, and if it is nothing but the organisation of their individual rights to legitimate self-defense, you will establish on a just foundation a rational, simple, economical government, understood by all, loved by all, useful to all, supported by all, entrusted with a perfectly definite and very limited responsibility, and endowed with an unshakable solidity.

If, on the contrary, you make of the law an instrument of plunder for the benefit of particular individuals or classes, first everyone will try to make the law; then everyone will try to make it for his own profit. There will be tumult at the door of the legislative chamber; there will be an implacable struggle within it, intellectual confusion, the end of all morality, violence among the proponents of special interests, fierce electoral struggles, accusations, recriminations, jealousies, and inextinguishable hatreds; the public police force will be put at the service of unjust rapacity instead of restraining it; the distinction between the true and the false will be effaced from all minds, as the distinction between the just and the unjust will be effaced from all consciences; government will be held responsible for everyone's existence and will bend under the weight of such a responsibility; there will be political convulsions, fruitless revolutions, and ruins upon which all the forms of socialism and communism will be tried out. Such are the plagues that the perversion of the law cannot fail to let loose.¹⁸

Property and Law

In another essay, Bastiat expresses his view on the relationship between property and law:

In my opinion, society, persons, and property exist prior to the law, and—to restrict myself specifically to the last of these—I would say: Property does not exist because there are laws, but laws exist because there is property.¹⁹

He is using the term property here in its general sense and not in its limited sense of meaning land or real estate.

The State

In another essay, entitled *The State*, Bastiat gives his own memorable definition:

The state is the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else.²⁰

What is Money?

Bastiat uses dialogue to express his views on money. He makes the point that money is not true wealth, but just a means of exchange. He also expresses the view that an increase in the supply of money does not increase wealth.

As Thornton comments:

Bastiat is adamant that any increase in the supply of money does not benefit society and does not increase satisfaction.²¹

With this in mind, it is doubtful that the measure of quantitative easing (the electronic creation of new money—as employed by the UK during the current economic crisis) would have met with Bastiat's approval.

Interest of Capital

This is how Bastiat, with his characteristically engaging style, explained the nature of credit and interest, and justified its use:

Suppose, for example, a house and a vessel of a value so perfectly equal that their proprietors are disposed to exchange them even-handed, without excess or abatement. In fact let the bargain be settled by a lawyer. At the moment of each taking possession, the ship-owner says to the house owner, "Very well; the transaction is completed, and nothing can prove its perfect equity better than our free and voluntary consent. Our conditions thus fixed, I will propose to you a little practical modification. You shall let me have your house today, but I will not put you in possession of my ship for a year; and the reason I make this demand of you is that during this year of delay, I wish to use the vessel." That we may not be embarrassed by considerations relative to the deterioration of the thing lent, I will suppose the ship-owner to add, "I will engage, at the end of the year, to hand over to you the vessel in the state in which it is today." I ask of every candid man, if the house-owner has the right to answer, "The new clause that you propose entirely alters the proportion or the equal value of the exchanged services. By it I shall be deprived for the space of a year, both at once of my house and of your vessel. By it you will make use of both. If in the absence of this clause the bargain was just, for the same reason the clause is injurious to me. It stipulates a loss to me, and a gain to you. You are requiring of me a new service; I have a right to refuse, or to require of you, as a compensation, an equivalent service." If the parties are agreed upon this compensation, the principle of which is incontestable, we can easily distinguish two transactions in one, two exchanges of service in one. First, there is the exchange of the house for the vessel; after this, there is the delay granted by one of the parties, and the compensation corresponding to this delay yielded by the other. These two new services take the generic and abstract names of credit and interest. But names do not change the nature of things; and I defy any one to disprove that there exists here, when all is done, a service

for a service, or a reciprocity of services. To say that one of these services does not challenge the other, to say that the first ought to be rendered gratuitously, without injustice, is to say that injustice consists in the reciprocity of service - that justice consists in one of the parties giving and not receiving, which is a contradiction in terms.²²

The subject of the interest of capital is less contentious now than it was in France's early post revolutionary era but Islam's continued opposition to usury means the issue is not dead and buried.

Economic Sophisms: First Series

Bastiat's first book, entitled *Economic Sophisms* contains the satirical document *The Candlemaker's Petition*, which ridicules protectionism.

The petition expresses a grievance:

We are suffering from the intolerable competition of a foreign rival, placed, it would seem, in a condition so far superior to ours for the production of light that he absolutely inundates our national market with it at a price fabulously reduced. The moment he shows himself our trade leaves us—all consumers apply to him; and a branch of native industry, having countless ramifications, is all at once rendered completely stagnant. This rival, who is no other than the sun, wages war mercilessly against us, and we suspect that he has been raised up by perfidious Albion (good policy nowadays); inasmuch as he displays toward that haughty island a circumspection with which he dispenses in our case.²³

It suggests a remedy:

What we pray for is that it may please you to pass a law ordering the shutting up of all windows, skylights, dormer-windows, outside and inside shutters, curtains, blinds, bull's-eyes; in a word, of all openings, holes, chinks, clefts and fissures, by or through which the light of the sun has been in use to enter houses, to the prejudice of the meritorious manufacturers with which we flatter ourselves we have accommodated our country—a country that, in gratitude, ought not to abandon us now to a strife so unequal.²⁴

It predicts a beneficial outcome:

And, first, if you shut up as much as possible all access to natural light, and create a demand for artificial light, which of our French manufacturer will not be encouraged by it?²⁵

It then proceeds to list all the industries and businesses that would benefit from such a law. Those who would benefit most of course would be the petitioners themselves who are revealed in the petition's full name:

Petition of the manufacturers of candles, waxlights, lamps, candlelights, street lights, snuffers, extinguishers, and the producers of oil, tallow, resin, alcohol, and, generally, of everything connected with lighting.²⁶

This is probably the most powerful satire against protectionism ever written.

Economic Sophisms: Second Series

In the second series of *Economic Sophisms*, Bastiat identifies the problem of spoliation. This is how he defines spoliation:

The true and equitable law of humanity is the free exchange of service for service. Spoliation consists in destroying by force or trickery the freedom of exchange, in order to receive a service without rendering one.²⁷

Bastiat lists the four best-defined forms of spoliation.

First comes war. Among savages the conqueror kills the conquered to obtain an uncontested, if not incontestable, right to game.

Next slavery. When man learns that he can make the earth fruitful by labor, he makes this division with his brother: "You work and I eat."

Then comes superstition. "According as you give or refuse me that which is yours, I will open to you the gates of heaven or of hell."

Finally, monopoly appears. Its distinguishing characteristic is to allow the existence of the grand social law—service for service—while it brings the element of force into the discussion, and alters the just proportion between service received and service rendered.²⁸

Governments and rulers have perverted justice and perpetrated vast acts of spoliation throughout history using force and deception to achieve their ends. Political economy identifies these aberrations as Bastiat observed:

I have said enough to indicate that political economy has a manifest practical use. It is the torch that, unveiling deceit and dissipating error, destroys that social disorder called spoliation. Someone, a woman I believe, has correctly defined it as "the safety-lock upon the property of the people."²⁹

Economic Harmonies

His *magnum opus* was *Economic Harmonies*, the first edition of which was published in 1850 (the year of his death). In it he declares that, 'the predominant idea of my work' is that, 'all legitimate interests are in harmony.'³⁰

Bastiat noted that Socialists fail to recognise this natural harmony of interests and erroneously see antagonisms everywhere. As he says:

It is evident that the Socialists have set out in quest of an artificial organization only because they judge the natural organization of society bad or insufficient; and they have judged the latter bad and insufficient only because they think they see in men's interests a radical antagonism, for otherwise they would not have had recourse to Constraint. It is not necessary to constrain into harmony what is in itself harmonious.³¹

He goes on to say in his typically concise way:

Men's interests are harmonious—the solution then lies entirely in this one word—LIBERTY.³²

The Current Economic Crisis

It is interesting to speculate on what Bastiat's view of the current global economic crisis would have been. As he was strongly opposed to government intervention, I think it is reasonable to assume that he would not have backed bank bailouts at huge cost to the public purse and ultimately the taxpayer. I believe that government guarantees, fiscal stimuli and excessive financial regulation would all have been considered by Bastiat to be government interventions too far. He believed that true harmony could only be achieved in the economy by allowing laissez-faire conditions to exist so that market forces could operate without distortion and there is every reason to think that he would apply this approach to our current situation.

Legacy

Bastiat is considered to be an historical antecedent and precursor of the Austrian School economists of the 20th and 21st centuries by whom he has been, and still is highly regarded.

He is also considered to be a link between the earlier French laissez-faire economists such as Jean-Baptiste Say and Francois Quesnay and the modern Austrian School of free-market economists.

I believe that Bastiat's words of wisdom about political economy have much to teach us now, in the 21st century, especially during the current economic recession and we would do well to heed them

Finally...

In conclusion I have chosen to quote two distinguished writers who between them sum up Bastiat perfectly.

Murray N. Rothbard, the celebrated economist and social philosopher, observed:

*Bastiat was indeed a lucid and superb writer, whose brilliant and witty essays and fables to this day are remarkable and devastating demolitions of protectionism and of all forms of government subsidy and control. He was a truly scintillating advocate of an untrammelled free market.*³³

Jim Powell, the editor of Laissez Faire Books and a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote an article entitled 'Frédéric Bastiat, Ingenious Champion for Liberty and Peace' (June 1997), in which he states:

*Frédéric Bastiat ranks among the most spirited defenders of economic freedom and international peace.*³⁴

Notes

(1) Frédéric Bastiat, *The Bastiat Collection*, Ludwig von Mises

Institute, Alabama, 2007, Vol 1. p. x.

(2) Henry Hazlitt, *Bastiat the Great*, Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2006, <http://mises.org/story/2024>.

(3) Bastiat, op. cit., Vol. 1., p. 269.

(4) Frédéric Bastiat, *Selected Essays on Political Economy*, The Foundation for Economic Education, New York, 1995, p. ix.

(5) Ibid, p. ix.

(6) Oscar B. Johannsen, 'The Wittiest Antistatist', The School of Cooperative Individualism, reprinted from *Fragments*, 1982, <http://tinyurl.com/39b6n8y>.

(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid.

(9) George Charles Roche III, *Frédéric Bastiat: A Man Alone*, Arlington House, New York, 1971, p. 18.

(10) Ibid, p. 20.

(11) Ibid, pp. 45-46.

(12) Bastiat (1995), op. cit., pp. 2-3.

(13) Ibid, p. 52.

(14) Ibid, p. 91.

(15) Ibid, p. 91.

(16) Ibid, p. 64.

(17) Ibid, pp. 62-63.

(18) Ibid, pp. 238-239.

(19) Ibid, p. 97.

(20) Ibid, p. 144.

(21) Mark Thornton, 'Frédéric Bastiat's Views on the Nature of Money', Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2003. www.mises.org/article.aspx?Id=1251.

(22) Bastiat (2007), op cit., Vol. 1 pp. 145-146.

(23) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 228.

(24) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 228.

(25) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 228.

(26) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 227.

(27) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 310.

(28) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 308.

(29) Ibid, Vol. 1, p.310.

(30) Ibid, Vol. 2, p.4.

(31) Ibid, Vol. 2, p.6.

(32) Ibid, Vol. 2, p.20.

(33) Ibid, Vol. 1, p. x.

(34) Jim Powell, 'Frédéric Bastiat, Ingenious Champion for Liberty and Peace', *The Freeman*, 1997, <http://tinyurl.com/2w76leb>.

About the author

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A LOW-COST RESCUE OF EDUCATION

Professor Alice Coleman

Introduction

Today's economic turmoil combines vast public revenue from taxes, charges, fines and borrowing with inadequate funding of vital needs, such as the armed forces. Voters look to Conservatives to reduce the burden but the priority must be to clear Labour's vast debt with its profitless toll of interest payments. So it is essential to cut waste, especially where thrift can both improve standards and minimize unemployment, as it can in education. Michael Gove's plan to reduce spending by 10% is minuscule compared with the 70% or more that could be cut if the problem were analyzed properly.

In 2008-9 Labour's Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) had a budget of £78.5 billion,¹ and there are also substantial local levies, in some cases half the Council Tax. But all this expenditure is laid out so misguidedly that standards continue to worsen. An MP's committee has estimated that there are now 23 million adult illiterates² who cannot fill many normal employment posts and necessitate a flood of immigrants to offset their deficiencies. And immigrants add to the cost of benefits such as the child allowance.

Labour admits that 42% of school-leavers are still illiterate, despite 11 years of education, and earlier research showed that half as many again have such a poor grasp of reading that they soon lose it and at age 20 have not read a single book in a year.³

Contrast this with 1939, when only 1% were illiterate and UK education led the world. Now we lag sadly behind. Ever since World War II, funding has risen and class sizes have been reduced in order to raise standards but the decline has continued. There is enormous scope for both real improvement and cost-cutting, if we stop just throwing money at the problem and analyze how teaching and management methods are leading state education astray.

Independence For All Schools

The present Minister for Education, Michael Gove, said he wants all schools to be free—a useful step forward. But instead of freeing them, he is merely substituting Coalition chains for those imposed by Labour. Any school that wishes to be free must run the gauntlet of preparing a case for scrutineers, who are probably the civil servants that support Labour's progressive education methods. They are having to be paid, which does not help the economy, and they tend to be very slow, which makes the prospect of freedom for all very remote indeed.

Freedom would not be sufficient in itself. Unless existing and new state schools use their freedom in the same constructive ways as independent schools, they will still fall short of the latter's excellence. A first vital difference is the independents' freedom from Local Education Authorities (LEAs), some of which deduct up to 44% of the schools' budget for adminis-

tering up to 40 functions.⁴ Closing the LEAs could bring huge savings by eliminating the needless roles and passing the others to the schools themselves or to central government.

LEA advisers duplicate the work of the national inspectorate. Teacher training has increased from two years to three, and often four, so why is all this extra advice thought necessary? And why must teachers annually attend five days In-Service Training days (INSET)? Both advisers and INSET are candidates for discontinuance.

Schools can decide their own curricula, methods, staff appointments, pupil selection, school meals and building maintenance. Parents' choice of school should be restored and the preposterous lottery system banned, though heads should be free to refuse unsuitable applicants. Schools should stand or fall on their merits, seen in league tables, inspectors' reports and parents' views. They should be free to develop their own character. For example, if there is a demand for grammar places, some schools could adapt to meet it, or new ones could step in. This would benefit bright pupils, who do less well in comprehensives, and also the less academic who do better in schools attuned to their ability than when floundering at the bottom of large all-in institutions.² Some compassionate teachers might develop special schools. Freedom could gradually create a diversity suited to local wishes.

Heads should not be shackled by over-powerful governors, so both the role and cost of the latter could be cut. Parents should not dictate a school's policy but they should be free to remove their children if they disapprove of it and even educate them at home.

Mention of LEA closure evokes the spectre of redundancy payments but these can be minimized. Many LEA staff formerly taught and can be offered school posts to relieve the shortage of teachers and heads, while others could become bursars, caretakers, groundsmen or kitchen staff—all welcome jobs in today's growing unemployment. Though they would still be salaried, the cost of their premises and management would cease and buildings could be sold.

The whole educational cost could be transferred from central government, as an important strand in a move to make councils financially self-sufficient, with any profligacy wholly at local taxpayers' expense, thus pointing to the need to vote the offenders out.

Central Government

Closing LEAs should not add power to the grossly interfering Whitehall Department, which has inundated heads with initiatives to be implemented in incessant changes. This paper flood in 2008-9 totalled 1.3 million words—50% more than in the Bible.⁵ The Department seems excessively pen-pushing and it, too, could be closed.

With the small 1870 Board of Education, 95% of children could read.⁶ Board Schools, built for the other 5%, undercut private schools' modest fees and forced most of them to close, creating an unintended state near-monopoly. The Board became a Ministry, then a Department, at a vastly increasing cost and a steady drop in standards. A Treasury voucher system could cut the need for a costly Department and its civil servants could be offered school posts.

Vouchers

Today's lengthy funding deliberations can be eliminated by issuing vouchers, valid at any state school or for the whole or part of independent school fees. This would rectify a great injustice. Fee-paying families have long paid twice, once in the taxes that cover the state schooling they forgo and again for the independents' fees. Labour imposed a third levy, making independents accept non-payers, so those who do pay must finance them as well. Many cannot afford this triple impost, so some of our excellent independents are closing—another example of how Labour blocks people's aspirations. Vouchers would ensure no-one is paid more than once.

Conservatives have suggested annual vouchers of £5,000 but Civitas's New Model Schools charge only £4000 to finance classes of 17 and the cost of premises. However, high standards do not depend on small classes but on effective teaching methods, and classes twice as large would still be much smaller than those that produced the former illiteracy rate of only 1%. Larger classes reduce the number and cost of teachers so I suggest that vouchers have a lower, but still generous, annual value of £4,200 for primary schools and £4,800 for secondaries. Parents would pay them termly and schools would claim from the Treasury.

Profit would increase with school size so there might be a drive to increase it. But large schools encourage crime. Andrew Smith's study of 763 Kent schools⁷ showed that all crime-free primaries had under 400 pupils and all crime-free secondaries under 700. In larger ones the incidence and cost of theft, burglary, criminal damage and arson all rose proportionately faster than the number on roll, so 400 and 700 could well be upper limits. Any extra vouchers should have only half the redemption value to discourage over-large schools. And without all the government paperwork, heads would be easier to recruit than at present.

Home Education

Even thriftier is a system recently introduced by Essex. Two families educating their six children together have received a one-off sum of £10,000—under £1,700 per child. Of course, they have no building costs. It might be sensible to introduce a small annual sum for home-educated children, which would cease if they failed the tests recommended below.

Eliminating Illiteracy

Freedom and funding do not automatically create high standards, and we need to end illiteracy. For thousands of years, ever since the alphabet was invented, reading has been successfully taught by the traditional *phonics* method, which is still used in independent schools. It began being scrapped in state schools during Labour's 1945 administration. As the 1944

Education Act was just being implemented, Labour did not legislate for change but engineered it by stealth with progressive education, posing as a spontaneous trend. It boasted of twenty virtues corresponding to 20 defects in the old methods, but all have now been proved false.³ However, they are being seductively sheltered from public opinion.

Progressivists sneered at phonics and alleged that eye movements proved adults do not read letters but jump to overall word-shapes, which are what children should be taught. The *whole-word* method gives spurious initial progress, as pupils identify the distinctive shapes of "aeroplane" and "elephant", but after about 30 words, reading slows to a halt, as sheer memorizing falters. And shapes do not distinguish similar words such as "cat" and "cot".

Modern eye-movement measurements show that we do read individual letters.⁸ Anyone can prove it by reading at dusk until the light fades enough to blur the letters while still leaving the word-shapes visible. Can you go on reading or do you switch on the light to see the letters?

Progressivists gain kudos from having created new education and are determined to keep it. When Margaret Thatcher introduced the National Curriculum reform, Baroness Cox intercepted a progressivist circular, which said, "*We have people in place at every level of education to subvert the National Curriculum.*" Baroness Blatch called them "the progressive mafia" and until government understands their mafia-like stranglehold, it will not effect the improvement and savings inherent in traditional phonics.

The mafia has confused the picture with the names: "analytic phonics" and "phonemic awareness". One variant of true phonics has been called "synthetic", meaning "building up letters", in contrast with "analytic", meaning "breaking down words". But the synthetic version is not the best modern scheme, so I prefer the broader term, "systematic phonics".

Systematic phonics shows single *letters* surrounded by plenty of space to identify them clearly. It adds each letter's sound and, from the first few, blends both letters and sounds into words, thus giving learners a strategy for tackling new ones.

Analytic phonics begins with words. Children must look at them and say what the teacher tells them it is—look-say. Words are broken into syllables or "onset and rhyme", the beginning and end. Vital *letter-sounds* are omitted and "onset" may be just "first letter and guess". This is sheer memorizing with no strategy for new words.

Phonemic awareness begins with *sounds*, arguing that as children speak before they read, sounds are a logical start. They must pick sounds out of spoken words but find it hard to do so. Babies babble sounds without labelling them so once they master words, the component sounds are not natural to them, and this, too, offers no useful strategy.

These three approaches were tested in Clackmannan.⁹ In seven months, analytic phonics and phonemic awareness each advanced the average reading age by only five months, but synthetic phonics advanced it by 13 months and was even ahead on sound-recognition. After seven years, the synthetic phonics classes were three years ahead educationally.

All children should be taught with systematic phonics. Of the 13 phonics schemes I have studied, the two best (and cheapest) are Mona McNee's *Step by Step*¹⁰ (£5 post-free from Mrs McNee, MBE, 2 Keats Avenue, Whiston, Merseyside, L35 2XR) and Irina Tyk's *Butterfly Project*¹¹ (£9.99 from Civitas, 77 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2EZ). Their high success obviates all the huge remedial costs generated by the whole word method.

Labour's response to the Clackmannan research was to ignore excellent existing schemes and spend £2.4 million on a devising a new one of its own, misleadingly called *Letters and Sounds*.¹³ Totally untested, it claims to take three years instead of true phonics' maximum of two. The whole first year glorifies ineffective phonemic awareness, bombarding children's ears with seven kinds of noises, each with three "strands", plus 72 subdivisions and seven activities. It then saps confidence by mixing analytic and systematic phonics. *Step by Step* and *Butterfly* keep to regular spellings as long as possible, so that pupils can read quite well before meeting alternatives such as "pane/pain", which they can then absorb more easily, but *Letters and Sounds* has "tricky words" from the start, muddling the logic. It delays writing skill by having child groups move magnetic letters about, instead of sitting down to practice and progress with pencil and paper, and it involves the cost of unnecessary equipment.

One sad defect of this scheme avoids magic "e" for long vowels. Magic "e" is the same rule for all five vowels, e.g. "fad/fade", "pet/Pete", "pin/pine", "hop/hope", "tub/tube", but *Letters and Sounds* has five different rules: "ai", "ee", "igh", "oa" and "oo", all with far fewer words than magic "e", so learners are constantly discouraged by finding they do not apply. Using "igh" is pernicious, as some critics regard silent "gh" as our worst spelling defect and "igh" is not sounded long "i" in "weigh", etc. Magic "e" comes later, after the damage is done.

Look-say misuses the brain. The left hemisphere's language centre works sequentially, so systematic phonics' letter sequences address it directly. Word shapes, by contrast, need pattern-recognition—the province of the right brain. Thus, look-say input has to be passed across the brain to the language centre on the left, which dyslexics cannot do. Over 50 years ago Harvard neurologists, studying bodies bequeathed for research, found that dyslexic brains have few links across the corpus callosum between the two sides and cannot pass information over. So although dyslexia is genetic, it does not cause illiteracy in those taught by true phonics, and we who learned to read before progressivism did not even realize we were dyslexic.

The male corpus callosum also has fewer cross-links,¹² which explains why there are four times as many dyslexic boys as girls, and why they lag in the league-tables. This stems from the whole-word method and does not happen with true systematic phonics. Nor does the social-class lag, which arises simply because middle-class parents can rectify the schools' defects by coaching their own children, while poor ones, often left illiterate themselves, cannot.

Dictionaries formerly defined dyslexia as adults' inability to read after head injuries damaged the language centre. With look-say it broke out as a childhood epidemic in 1950 and

gradually increased, with much reluctance to recognize it. Even the Tizard Inquiry¹⁴ dismissed it as just a middle-class excuse for dim or lazy children. Ironically, Tizard's adviser was a primary head who used systematic phonics and had not met dyslexic illiteracy.

Dyslexic illiteracy can be banished by true phonics. As a remedial tutor, Mona McNee has rescued 360 strugglers, mostly individually but some in small groups, and usually in under three months. She researched dyslexia³ and tried to convince Norfolk LEA that teaching phonics at the start would prevent illiteracy altogether. Alas, the progressive mafia was out to silence her, and she received scornful letters from Councillor Gillian Shepherd who, later, as Education Secretary of State, did nothing to restore systematic phonics.

Colleges leave students-in-training ignorant of phonics but teachers could all be retrained in a single year at no extra cost, using the five INSET days. Current progressivist INSET speakers must be replaced by phonics experts, preferably suggested by the Campaign for Real Education. Even the Reading Reform Foundation can no longer be trusted as its chairman has a "synthetic" reading scheme that barely gets beyond short vowels before saying that the rest is opaque and complex. It is not. Mona McNee's DVD of the entire teaching process should be shown in INSET courses and kept in schools for reference.

All teachers should attend the INSET days. Those in secondary schools need it to give their non-readers a one-term crash course to ensure they become literate before they leave. Staff from the LEAs and the DCSF should also attend, to prepare for going back into teaching.

True phonics would create huge savings, including an end to INSET and remedial staff. Huge numbers of teaching aides now give many state schools a more generous staff-pupil ratio than independent schools, and aides wishing to be teachers should attend this last INSET year.

Teacher Training

Teachers deliver illiteracy but the real blame lies with training staff, who fervently preach progressivism and brainwash students into unshakable faith in it. They deny them knowledge of phonics and train them to despise it. When headmaster Kevin Cassidy spoke on phonics' success in his school, half his audience stalked out rather than listen to such "tripe".

College lecturers pose as gurus, to be heeded implicitly. When Mrs Thatcher launched educational reform, teachers flocked to hear guru Frank Smith repeat his same old flawed advice but a real expert, Mona McNee, drew only seven people. Guru status attracts those motivated for personal power. They revel in adulation and profit from their textbooks and celebrity talks, which is why INSET has seen only further decline. Margaret Meek wrote that children must not be taught the letters of the alphabet,¹⁵ and was obeyed with all seriousness.

Another backfiring college recommendation concerns classroom layout. It was declared old hat for children face the teacher and absorb knowledge, cultural traditions and behavioural norms. Instead, small groups should face each other

for democratic interaction.¹⁶ Children should decide what interested them and teachers were demoted to being mere facilitators of their decisions. This fitted progressivism's boast of being child-centred.

Education is not a mini-democracy but a learning process. If uneducated children decide its content, it is the blind leading the blind. Stimulation purely through interest robs pupils of the self-esteem that comes from mastering useful work. And teachers are overloaded by having to repeat their work with different groups, as well as contriving to make children think that appropriate topics are their own choice. Yet these "aspirations" so deceived Lady Plowden¹⁷ that she gave them the official seal of approval in her 1967 primary school report.

Psychological research shows that children's intelligence is enhanced by adult mentors and not by other children. Teachers formerly had this mentor role but were robbed of it when progressivism maximized child interaction. Nor is the interaction truly democratic, as dominant children, not necessarily the wisest or kindest, impose their views without consultation. Such groups waste over half their time not actually working—another aspect of progressivism's penchant for dumbing down.

Progressivism is such a tight power-structure that it would be a Herculean task to convert all the gurus in nearly a hundred training centres, so again closure seems the solution. Fortunately, a better form of training, "learning on the job", had a successful pilot study when Damien Green was an Education Minister. Good schools initiated student-teachers into lesson presentation, class control and school administration. One head told me that this immersion in responsibility soon lets students realize whether teaching is for them, and if it is not, they leave after just a few weeks, at a small cost compared with grants for three or four college years.

The college sector is vastly wasteful. Its longer courses produce many less competent teachers than the two years of yore when the illiteracy rate was 1%. And this is only the tip of the iceberg. Some time ago it emerged that 85,000 trainees had never taken up school posts and the figure has now probably reached 100,000. At today's grant level, this is a fruitless investment of £2 billion, plus the cost of extra college staff and premises, etc. And 58% of those who did go on to teach, did not repay their training time by staying for three years in the profession. This figure, too, is escalating. A recent news report tells that one third opt out during the first year. This casts two spotlights. The colleges do not equip students for teaching success and their progressivist theory makes many schools too repulsive for young teachers to stay there. College training is clearly counterproductive—and there is even worse.

Some colleges wilfully select poor students. Annis Garfield¹⁸ responded to a drive to recruit mature students. She had all the desiderata—a first-class degree, work experience, O- and A-Level marking and teaching illiterates to read. For three years she applied to various training institutions but was rejected by them all. One did call her for interview but scruffy interviewers sneered at her views on literature, preferring mere trash to keep pupils amused. She phoned one college to ask why she was failing and was advised to have a year in a school first. When she said she needed their training to get a school post, she was told the experience could be as a dinner lady.

So, posing as a 41-year-old dinner lady named Sharon Shrill, she submitted an application littered with spelling errors and was immediately accepted. Chris Woodhead, as Chief Inspector, found 15,000 Sharon-Shrill teachers wholly unsuited to the profession and his successor found 17,000. A recent press report cited 17,500 teachers in protest against a proposal to check teachers' ability and one suspects that these are the Sharon Shrills who have good reason to fear failure if vetted.

So some colleges may not even try to produce good teachers. Some seem more concerned with dumbing down and cannot rival learning on the job. They should be closed forthwith and their staff offered teaching posts. They should attend a true phonics course in INSET'S final year and even keep their higher salaries if they go into one of the 20% of schools with ongoing discipline problems. This would be an eye-opener as to what they have been creating and if they cannot stand it, they would leave voluntarily, without redundancy pay.

College closure would put a stop to Labour's inept imitation of learning on the job. It gives a grounding in progressivism, followed by snail-like progress in a progressivist school. My own first training year enabled me to take full charge of a class in a vacation school practice, but Labour's system kept a young neighbour on only one lesson a day by the year's end.

Students passed by the training head could move to another school, as a probationary teacher on full pay. That head's approval, too, and an inspector's blessing, would earn them their diplomas, or an interim document if they still need evening courses in special subjects.

Could this produce enough teachers? Trainees could be taken by grammars, church schools, secondary moderns, independents and primaries profiting from systematic phonics. There would be little wastage, as schools would not foul their own nests by selecting Sharon Shrills. Posts in poorer schools might be filled by LEA, DCSF, and College staff, and classroom aides. Many might soon leave but would give a breathing space pending phonics improvement.

Besides filling vacancies, we need to replace some 17,500 Sharon Shrills. A one-year training on the job could do so quickly, and also cut the cost of student grants by two-thirds or three-quarters as compared with the longer college courses. In addition the schools' selection of suitable students would save virtually the whole cost of college trainees who do not go on to teach at all. The training schools would receive some recompense but far less than needed for the colleges' salaries, building upkeep and other expenses. And college premises, grounds, equipment, etc., could be sold to produce revenue.

This solution is also a cheaper way to implement the Conservative aim of securing better teachers. It would be expensive to vet 98 College's selection procedures but selection by schools for in-house training attends to applicant quality without extra cost.

The Length of Compulsory Schooling

The 1944 Education Act raised the leaving age to 15, making ten compulsory years and generally proving beneficial. But the 1972 rise to 16 began to create doubts. Many illiterate 15-year-olds, reacted badly to another humiliating year, and when the

cane was banned in 1986,¹⁹ discipline took a nose-dive in half our schools.

Labour's reception year at age four and proposed leaving age of 18 makes 14 compulsory years and 17 for the 50% it wanted at university. Yet many slip back after age 11 and in 2006, with only 35% at university, some 71,000 students dropped out before finals. A longer compulsory period probably means only prolonged dumbing-down. And would schooling till 18 be possible? Thousands of teachers are now assaulted by pupils and the increased danger from two more years of older and tougher thugs might cause many to opt out of teaching.

Synthetic phonics adds three years educational value by age 11, and the best true phonics probably even more, so well taught 15-year-olds would have advanced further than Labour's expensive plan for compulsory education till 18. This means that the leaving age could be lowered. At present truancy is rife, and we should not be treating the later-teens as children to be incarcerated in classrooms. Many would learn far more effectively from working life. Leaving at 15 would reduce the teachers' salary bill by up to 8% and also save the multi-billions squandered as £30 a week to lure the non-academic into staying on after 16 and disrupting the dedicated ones' continued schooling. More Sharon Shrills could be weeded out and teachers convicted of crimes should not be kept in post, as they may be now.

There is no evidence that starting at four has led to improvement at age seven, so at best it seems a needless cost and at worst may have an ulterior motive. Children's basic characters are formed during the first five years and Labour snatched away parental influence by forcing all into progressivist schools at four and advocating a "nappy curriculum" for even younger ones. Steering them towards left-wing politics seems to run consistently through much state schooling, so there is a moral case for abolishing politically skewed early-years.

Restoring a starting age of five seems in tune with the recent report that 80% of mothers would prefer to stay at home with their children instead of being hustled into jobs. Ten years of good education would be far better than Labour's proposed 14 years of leftist social engineering.

Class Sizes

The 1944 Education Act reduced class sizes to 30 in secondary schools and 40 in primaries. Previously, many classes had up to 50 pupils and still had 99% reading properly.

The Father of Progressivism was America's left-wing modernizer, John Dewey.¹⁹ Anthony O'Hear's biography tells how Dewey, funded to run a school according to his theories, reduced class sizes until there were only four children to each teacher or aide. His university then found the cost so exorbitant that it terminated his experiment. Even Rousseau's one-to-one ideal would have problems with Dewey's ineffective methods. Yet his lead has inspired progressive pruning of British class sizes, bringing decline, not improvement. In fact, larger classes do better. The best-scoring London boroughs had the most classes of over 30 and the worst-scoring had the most smaller ones. Could this be because larger classes necessitate the traditional classroom layout with children facing the

teacher for restoration of the mentor role and good order? They certainly let schools manage with fewer teachers—another cost saving.

Traditional teaching also relieves stress. We can dissipate the stigma of big classes by emphasizing that excellent teachers can manage more pupils and only poorer ones need fewer.

School Safeguards

Some safeguards are needed. School size, not class size, should have been reduced. The anti-crime limit⁷ is 400 primary and 700 secondary pupils, so giant comprehensives should be shrunk. As schools would have to pay their own crime insurance premiums, they should see the benefit of a smaller size.

A lower leaving age would empty some classrooms and let pupils be concentrated in the main building. Extra buildings might be walled off as new primaries, accessed from other roads and giving a denser school network, so that little ones need not travel far. Re-opening rural schools would help revive village life and if their buildings have gone, some could rent church halls. Schools could be founded without costly planning procedures, except fire vetting, so setting up would be quicker, without today's counterproductive ban on "wrong" methods. Why not make all schools independent after the INSET retraining year, without imposing a bureaucratic application system? New schools would identify areas with enough pupil potential, and thereafter depend on their reputations.

Cox and Marks⁴ proved that division into grammar schools and secondary moderns produces better league-table results for both sets of pupils than comprehensives. Smith⁷ found that comprehensives had 44% more crimes per 100 pupils than selective schools. Coeducation also produced higher crime rates, 40% more than in boys' schools and 51% more than in girls' schools. And as co-educated girls are becoming more gang-minded, parents may find girls' schools more protective.

Some think co-education gives each sex a more realistic view of the other but the facts deny this. If mixed classes really provide better assessment of life partners, stable relationships would have increased but we see just the opposite—a huge boom in divorces and an even greater rift among unhallowed unions. Moreover, early sex education has led to greater sexual activity at school age, with multiplying rapes and abortions. The unstable years of adolescence are not the best time to be thrown into close company of the opposite sex, and single sex schools have the virtue of postponing assessment of possible spouses until a more mature age.

Complaints of too few male teachers are combined with the idea that girls' greater reading success leads boys to regard education as a girls' thing, and so they play up rather than learn. We might do well to revert to having separate boys' and girls' schools from age seven, which would also help the smaller-school campaign.

Traditional class layout is also a safeguard. Children have short attention spans and need changes of focus but these should be teacher-organized and learning-oriented. The best

systematic phonics scheme, *Step by Step*, exemplifies this. Unlike those advocating 20-minute lessons, it has diverse activities and games that occupy an hour and promote faster learning.

Improved Testing

Progressivists condemn testing as it reveals their low standards. They abolished the 11+ and allowed grade inflation to make GCSE and A-Levels so worthless that Cambridge launched its own Pre-U. Since the need for testing was accepted, Labour tried to sicken people of it by multiplying it inordinately and there have been serious marking scandals. Yet proper testing remains vital for informing parents, employers and higher education selectors.

Some tests include assessment by teachers, who know low grades reflect on themselves. Some actually cheat. One dictated a spelling test with the words on the board for the class to copy. Even honest teachers cannot be truly objective as they do not experience the full ability range and may rate mediocre pupils as excellent in bad schools or near-failures in good ones.

So-called “objective/multiple choice” tests are grossly unfair. Their questions have three or four suggested answers for testees to underline the right one, but a total ignoramus can underline randomly, with a statistical chance of getting one-third right out of three choices or one-quarter out of four. We need genuine objectivity.

Another bogus test is hearing children read from a familiar book. Look-say has children rote-learn small story books to read with apparent fluency, even with their eyes or the book shut, while unable to decipher the same words in isolation. A genuine test would use individual words and not a rote-learned context.

School starters. It seems 20% of school starters can already read to some extent and should go into a faster stream. We should also stop disadvantaging those born late in the school year by “kindly” sparing them competition with older ones, and deferring their entry to the spring or summer term. This means that when they reach a whole-year class, they are not only younger but have also had fewer terms at school. All should begin in the autumn and be classified on reading ability, not age.

End of Term 1. The greatest essential is to ensure a good start. The first term at age five should have taught children to read simple three-letter words and inspectors should check. Whatever their special subject, they should all visit schools during the last weeks of this term to test a proportion of school starters. They should not be fobbed off by teachers’ choice of the

best ones but select testees at equal intervals in the alphabetical name list in the register.

A suitable test uses five sheets of three-letter words, one for each short vowel and all with regular consonants. An example is seen in Table 1. The examiner points to one word on each sheet for the child to build up its letters, with a mark for each success, up to five. Five should be scored by all and if it is not, schools should be alerted and reassessed after a few weeks in the spring term.

Infant-school leavers should all be readers-for-life as many unable to read then never catch up. Today’s test has 117 assessments, more social engineering than education. Knowsley LEA ignores being the nation’s second worst for reading, because it has received eight glowing social-engineering accolades. Many teachers are already rebelling against this stupidity.

Tests need impartial outside examiners, objective knowledge and quick marking. They should be low-cost and stress-free. Local results should be validly comparable with a national

mean and free from grade inflation. See more detail in *The Great Reading Disaster*.³

In outline, the test at age 7 would be 25 dictated words, for listening, writing, spelling and, indirectly,

reading, as non-readers cannot spell. Successive words would be graded in order of 25 spelling rules, working up from the simplest. Those in each grade would have the same number of letters, so that a different selection each year would maintain the same standard of difficulty. Suggested word-lists are set out in my book, *Streamlined Spelling*.²¹

Spelling and arithmetic tests should be given everywhere in the same week in July and pupils can be told not to worry if they can spell only a few words as many are meant for older pupils. With traditional teaching they would do far better than now and the harder words give high-fliers a chance to shine, while also allowing room to show overall improvement up to age 11.

Teachers could mark script photocopies and check on official marking, which would itself be delivered promptly if examiners foregathered for it the next week. A computer file could convert raw scores into reading quotients taking account of pupils’ ages, and averages could be found for classes, schools and, later, for the whole nation. There should be no score-faking to “compensate” for social class.

A context sentence would be needed for each word but could be devised much more quickly than today’s lengthy deliberations. Postage costs would be saved as examiners would bring question papers and take scripts away. They would be paid for just two weeks, with light local travel costs, and would include inspectors not needing extra pay. However, entering names and ages in the computer would need more preparatory time.

Table 1: Test words for the end of Term 1: The letter 'a'

cab	bad	had	sad	bag
pal	ham	jam	can	fan
man	pan	ran	cap	tap
bat	cat	sat	vat	wax

Word lists for other vowels appear below:

'e': web bed fed red ref beg leg hem den fen hen pen ten yes bet jet let met net yet

'i': did hid rid big dig pig dim him rim bin din tin win dip lip nip tip bit fix mix

'o': job rob yob cod nod rod bog dog fog log don cop hop top cot dot hot lot not pot

'u': cub rub bud mud bug hug mug rug tug hum sum bun fun run sun cup bus cut hut lux

Some schools are said to keep poor pupils absent from tests because their low marks would reduce the average score. To prevent this, absentees should score zero but, to avoid the opposite unfairness, averages should be the median mark and not an arithmetic percentage.

Later examinations. The non-progressivist Campaign for Real Education is the best body to advise on tests at ages 11, to inform secondary schools about their intake, and also at age 14 before leaving at 15. New Examination Boards would be separate for each age with a smaller marking task and hence less prone to delays and fiascos. It is important to avoid appointing members of the ubiquitous progressive mafia to these Boards.

I urge abolishing academic coursework at all school stages, as it is notorious for cheating and difficult to mark rapidly or fairly. There should be a written essay in exam conditions at age 11. A word limit would shorten marking time and let pupils concentrate on quality, conciseness and a diverse vocabulary—skills to be taught. I have found the value of this approach in my own work. On the other hand, practical coursework products, e.g. woodwork, are more appropriate for submission, as they would be the pupils' own work.

The Inspectorate

Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) was founded to test standards but later supervised methods, enforcing look-say, group work and lapsed discipline, and debarring teachers from promotion unless they adopted modern ways. Some were actually sacked for using phonics to prevent illiteracy, while orderly behaviour might be interpreted as "cowed pupils".

Margaret Thatcher authorized a clean sweep of the Inspectorate, with redundancy payments of up to £150,000. Alas! She did not recognize the "*people in place... to subvert...*", so these were entrusted with recruitment and reappointed many, who still pocketed their payoff. The Inspectorate split into groups for schools to choose which, perhaps for their leniency.

There are still subverters in place so a new untainted leader is needed, possibly Professor Anthony O'Hear or Baroness Cox. The excellent former Chief Inspector, Chris Woodhead, was opposed by the Education Secretary of State, David Blunkett, and forced to resign. He found the current inspectorate, OFSTED, a waste of money.

OFSTED should be re-unified with no redundancy payments. Those reluctant to change can be offered jobs in the poor schools they have helped create. All should attend phonics-based INSET days but no longer advise on methods, leaving that to heads, and resume their original role of testing. They should no longer threaten teachers' career prospects on methodological grounds but lest any retain such attitudes there could be an ombudsman to investigate complaints. Inspection reports should include each school's median test marks.

Discipline

What drives teachers out of bad schools is indiscipline, which also stems from progressivism. In its mini-democracies children freely chat and walk about, establishing a disorderliness that worsens with age. Progressivism says that self-discipline

is better than imposed discipline, but the former does not develop without experience of the latter.

The ban on traditional phonics also causes indiscipline. The intense humiliation of not learning to read makes introverts turn their misery inward in emotional distress while extraverts find more outgoing solutions. Those without satisfactory alternatives, such as sporting prowess, artistic talent or usefulness in a family business, may try to feel superior by getting the better of others through bullying, insubordination and crime.

Bullying has increased enormously, from being very rare. A colleague born in 1916 was so bright that he went up the school with classmates up to two years older. Today both his clever brain and younger age would make him a typical bullies' victim but he never met any suspicion of it. But as illiteracy spread, bullying grew and became more vicious. During Blair's premiership, terrified victims taking their own lives doubled from 10 to 20 each year.

Bullies have become more ferocious. The boy who killed Luke Warmesley protested his innocence, as he had meant only to frighten, but he stabbed so fiercely that his knife went right through Luke's breastbone and pierced his heart. Progressive education had not taught him that frightening with a knife was itself deplorable. Knives have now been joined by guns and by the "fun" element of shooting others on the street. The incidence of stabbing and shooting deaths had reached five per week by the end of 2008.

Teaching all to read would cut the urge for vicious "superiority". The worst would be lagging less and can be praised for other things, though no longer for bad work.

Restricting school size also aids discipline. Small schools may have just one anti-social pupil but larger ones have more, inciting each other to rowdiness. In small schools, every member of staff knows every child, and being identifiable is something of a deterrent. Bad schools should be made significantly smaller than the cited limits. With fewer children, more staff can take an interest in each one, which helps create feelings of fairness and loyalty.

Schools facilitate bullying if there are unseen places for trapping victims, e.g. between buildings, so walling some off as separate institutions would help here too. Single buildings can also be culpable. Andrew Smith counted their external directional changes in crime-free and crime-ridden schools and found that some of the latter had 100 exterior corners. Once, when a head brought along a plan of his school, I pointed out that the worst bullying would probably take place in a complex re-entrant bay. He did not know, but said it certainly had the most graffiti. It seems that new schools should be a single block with a simple outline.

Insubordination goes beyond bullying smaller or weaker victims and is aggression to teachers. From still chatting when told to attend, it has worsened to verbal abuse and since the caning ban,¹⁹ includes physical attacks, some severe enough to handicap teachers for life. Many schools are dangerous but if people know a single good one they tend to disbelieve that 50% have at least one gang-related atrocity per term, including 20% with ongoing violence.

An article,²¹ 'Drugs, Violence, Intimidation: A Day in the Life of an Ordinary School', listed a multitude of offences, all of which would once have caused astonishment but now seem commonplace. Many pupils offend repeatedly. One boy was logged for 27 aggressive incidents, including an attack that ended a teacher's career and cost the LEA £250,000 in compensation.

Schools exclude thousands of pupils each year but may be forced to take back those who put both children and staff in jeopardy. Teachers can leave and pupils escape if their parents can afford independents' fees but others are locked into a perilous daily life. This has led to a trend in home education but not all parents are equipped for it. If state schools become independent they should be allowed to exclude irredeemable pupils.

Criminal behaviour often stems from feeling a failure. In USA 80% of convicts cannot read, as also in Strangeways jail here and probably others. Some children are vicious early but others take to crime only when realizing their illiteracy will always deny them a job. Some retaliate against schools and cost multi-millions for replacing stolen equipment, repairing criminal damage and rebuilding schools burnt down. These sums plus injury compensation are only part of the scope for saving, as non-school crime may be bred in schools. For example, there were nearly 57,000 assaults on NHS staff in the year 2009-2010.

Total crime has constantly increased ever since the advent of progressive education. If 80% of criminals are illiterate, the elimination of illiteracy would reduce the crime rate enormously. Serious offences per 10,000 people are now about fifty times as great as a century ago, with vast costs for police, courts, prisons and probation officers. Traditional teaching would create achievement and employability, and cause crime to plummet.

Another heavy cost is addiction. Children find ways to alleviate their distress and cock a snook at adults—smoking, drinking, gambling, drug-taking and irresponsible sexual activity leading to serial abortions. There are also crimes committed to pay for the addictions and for ongoing remedial treatment. Judge Peter Moss has deplored the fact that fewer than half the offenders ordered to register for drug rehabilitation actually complete their courses. The majority continue to need benefits and methadone. There is also the scandal of criminals being paid up to £11,000 to compensate for cold-turkey cures in prison. This is a handsome reward for being addicts, without having to recompense the victims they have robbed. But dealing with pupils already ruined is outside the scope of this paper.

Other Causes

Junk food triggers indiscipline. Better school meals help and water-fountains reduce reliance on harmful fizzy drinks. Fish-oil transforms conduct and improves concentration.

Housing design in problem estates makes it hard for parents to prevent their children sliding down the slippery antisocial slope. My own research²³ on over 4000 blocks of flats led Mrs Thatcher to fund me by £50 million to modify estate design. Inserting houses on greens, giving ground-floor flats their own

front and back gardens, and splitting upper floors into small self-contained sections eliminated crime rapidly and one headmistress wrote to say that my redesign of her catchment area had made the children much calmer and easier to teach.

But Labour increased the annual number of new flats fivefold and encouraged monster undivided blocks likely to increase children's delinquency. David Bell found that as many as 40% of pupils in some reception classes were already disruptive and in 2007-2008, 1540 under-fives were suspended, mostly for physical assaults.

It was Labour that first urged criminals should be pitied and rewarded, not punished, especially the young, thought to be unable to tell right from wrong before age 16. But many are criminal beyond recall by that age and it is kinder to punish them gently for small offences, to prevent them becoming hardened felons, ruined for life. The crime rate has multiplied but STOPP¹⁸ now wants to outlaw even the mild smacking that helps to socialize young extraverts who do not respond well to reasoning alone. So the rot may begin earlier. USA's zero tolerance of first offences deters recidivism and has created a falling crime rate over 13 years. We need this here, but Labour released 42,000 convicts early and Conservative Kenneth Clarke's concept of money saving is to leave burglars, and worse, free to prey on the public.

Health

Apart from the influence of food upon behaviour, there is also a large and increasing problem of obesity among the young. The schools have not responded by providing enough dietary teaching or physical activity to help counteract it; and recent news items suggest that government Ministers are being ill-advised on how to go about it.

The Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, wants restaurateurs to state the calorie count in every meal—an onerous and pointless task. A calorie was the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one gram of water by 1°C and different types of food were burnt to find their calorific value. This led to abstemious low-calorie diets that left slimmers hungry and caused them to slip back.

But our bodies do not *burn* food. They process it quite differently and modern research identifies the range of foods that are nutritive but do not put on weight, so that slimmers can eat as much of them as they wish, with no hunger pangs and no loss of motivation. It also identifies other foods that are essential for a balanced diet and prescribes daily limits for those, below the weight-gain level. This system means that body fat is lost at a safe rate and when the ideal weight is reached, the quantities are switched to steady maintenance amounts.

Lansley's White Paper²⁴ proposes spending £250 million on "gym and swim" vouchers to be given away in order to "nudge" people to frequent exercise venues. They may well be taken up by those who already do so. Giveaway film tickets and shopping vouchers are suggested for children who walk to school. This expenditure will not help debt-reduction and could be avoided by urging the obese to join Weight-Watchers, where they would receive effective individual treatment. Competitive sport could also be restored in schools.

Universities

More university places were initially beneficial but Labour far exceeded the optimum. There should be no dumbing down by hordes of unsuitable students, who not only damage the universities but also forgo their own opportunity to become elite in non-academic employment, as well as being burdened by large sums to repay without having profited from them. Suitable undergraduates should be few enough to allow partial grants. Meeting part of the cost themselves might help create responsibility, but they should not be loaded with the present crushing level of debt.

Taxation would be spread more widely if there were more young earners leaving school at 15. Labour's policy of funding longer school years increased expenditure and concentrated a larger tax take on fewer earners. Reducing student numbers would also release university lecturers to become excellent school-teachers, replacing the Sharon Shrills. At present they dumb down the colleges as they do not fully appreciate what "first-class" means and some even award first-class honours on a proportional basis, instead of keeping it for rare high quality.

Conclusion

Besides the waste mentioned above, *The Great Reading Disaster* listed 15 other ways in which millions or billions have been poured down the drain in fruitless tinkering with progressivist problems. Instead of tinkering with what is wrong, we need to eliminate the fundamental causes, which is what I propose here. I believe this could cut educational cost by 70% or even more.

Notes

- (1) Nick Seaton has carried out impressive probes into incredibly obscure government statements of educational expenditure. Constant changes in disguising figures and even different amounts cited for the same item in the same year show that more is kept from the schools themselves than is admitted. Among his publications see: 2002, *The True Cost of State Education*, Centre for Policy Studies, London, UK.
- (2) The Basic Skills Agency revealed a 300,000 annual increase in adult illiterates between 1987 and 1997 and as school-leaver illiteracy has since increased the total has grown more rapidly
- (3) McNee, Mona and Alice Coleman, 2007, *The Great Reading Disaster*, Imprint Academic, Exeter, UK.
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- (7) Smith, Andrew Ewart, 1997, *Educational Land Use in Kent*, University of London PhD thesis.
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- (22) Anon., 5th January 2009, 'Drugs, Violence, Intimidation; A Day in the Life of an Ordinary School', *Sunday Telegraph*.
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About the author

While teaching on Thameside, Alice Coleman studied for a London University degree at Birkbeck College and her First Class Honours in Geography led to an academic appointment at King's College London.

Her higher degree thesis, which was awarded a mark of distinction, was the first step in landform research in areas of earth movement in four countries. She launched and directed the Second Land Utilisation Survey of Britain and researched individual use-types, including serious planning blunders. Her book, *Utopia on Trial*, analyzed why problem estates are crime ridden and led Margaret Thatcher to give her a £50 million scheme to redesign them. This virtually eliminated their crime, quite rapidly.

She devised new teaching methods and on sabbaticals taught in American, Canadian and Japanese universities. She recently co-authored *The Great Reading Disaster* and is now seeking a publisher for her book *Streamlined Spelling*.

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- ✓ Free enterprise.

SIF Activities

The SIF organises public meetings featuring speakers of note, holds occasional luncheons at the Houses of Parliament, publishes this journal to which contributions are welcome, and has its own website. The SIF also has two associated campaigns: Tell-IT, that seeks to make information on outcomes of drugs and medical treatments more widely known and available to doctors and patients alike, and Choice in Personal Safety (CIPS), that opposes seatbelt compulsion and similar measures.

Joining the SIF

If you broadly share our objectives and wish to support our work, then please write to us at the address on this page, enclosing a cheque for £15 (minimum) made payable to the Society for Individual Freedom.

The Law of Equal Freedom

*"Every man has freedom to do all that he wills,
provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man."*

Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, 1851