

The Infrastructure Road to Recovery— Let's Build Our Way Out of the Depression!

Education: Dummies Won't Develop Australia

Like all other essential national infrastructure, education has been looted and run down over the past two decades of economic rationalism. And, as in the health care crisis, it would be difficult to over-exaggerate the degree of crisis caused by the decades of savage looting. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* of July 8, 2000 noted, "all sides of the political debate agree that Australia's 37 public universities teeter on the precipice." Alan Gilbert, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, was more stark: "The very idea of a university seems fragile. The 900-year-old monopoly that traditional universities have exercised in the provision and certification of higher education is under irresistible pressure. It will not survive, and its passing will represent the greatest single revolution that has faced universities in 900 years."

In December 2000, the Group of Eight, the eight premier research universities, called for a \$13 billion dollar funding boost over the next five years for research and development, because Australia had collapsed to well behind most other Western nations in R&D.

Savage funding cuts are at the root of the crisis, with funding slashed by a staggering \$2100 per student since 1983, according to a recent federal Senate committee's report, "Universities in Crisis"; the committee also found that Australian university students were getting a poorer quality education than did their parents. Increasingly, universal public education—which is the cornerstone of the sovereign nation-state—is being done away with, in favour of the "user-pays" insanity which is typical of economic rationalism, and of the Howard Government in particular. Whereas some years ago, a typical higher education might have cost \$200 per year in union fees, today \$20,000 per year in fees is not uncommon. According to a survey of

30,000 undergraduates taken recently by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, "Paying Their Way", seven in ten students work, many facing at least 70 hours per week in combined work and study. Reported Stuart Rosewarne, an executive member of the National Tertiary Education Union, "One of the biggest changes we have noticed is how many students are working. A few years ago 20% worked full-time, and the remainder would work around 10-12 hours a week. Now, I'd say those proportions are reversed. What that then causes is further dumbing down of courses, because their teachers take account of the stresses the students are under." The President of the National Tertiary Education Union, Dr. Carolyn Allport, said that the increase in the number of fee-paying students was a worrying trend, because "It opens up a real distinction between the people who can get into the courses on the fact that they can pay fees rather than merit." Students were paying up to \$80,000 in fees, she said, and in future, "all doctors, lawyers and media people will be people who have paid for their courses rather than people who have aptitude for it." A recent Australian Institute survey of 1000 academics reported that full fee-paying students were routinely being given "preferential treatment" by universities desperate for cash, and that there was considerable pressure to pass them, even if they flunked the course.

Under financial pressure, many students are forced to drop out, while the rest get a shadow of the education which they should be receiving. The funding cuts have caused a near-disintegration of not only the universities, but of the education system as a whole, of which the following are merely some highlights:

*Large class sizes, of 27-28 pupils and even more, are becoming

the norm, which make real education almost impossible, especially when combined with increasing violence in the classrooms, and an increasing number of teachers teaching subjects for which they have not been trained.

*There is a "critical teacher shortage" looming by 2005, according to an early 2001 study commissioned by the Australian Council of Deans. For Victoria, the study forecast that the state would have only 69% of its required primary teachers and only 59% of its secondary teachers. The crisis is particularly bad in Victoria, which suffered the most savage economic rationalist onslaught of any state under the Kennett regime, where 10,000 teachers left the system from 1991-98. There, the number of students preparing to become teachers has collapsed by 50%, and nationally by 33%. The destruction of education is continuing under the Bracks government. The president of the Victorian Association of State Secondary School Principals Ted Brierley charged in June 2001 that highly experienced teachers—precisely those most urgently needed—were being forced out of the system by the Bracks government giving an average teacher salary for each teacher they employ, when teachers with higher seniority obviously "cost" more. Brierley charged, "This is a deliberate policy of getting rid of experienced teachers. Kids will be shortchanged, and I fear for the system."

*In New South Wales, education is increasingly taking on the flavour of "McEducation", as desperately cash-short schools allow McDonald's into their schools to promote their products, in return for cash payments. Meanwhile, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald* of July 30, 2001, "Parents of primary school pupils are paying millions of dollars to meet their basic educational needs, in-



Man's power in and over the universe, stems entirely from those cognitive processes by means of which discoveries of universal physical principle are transmitted, from past to present, and future. Here children discover the properties of the Platonic Solids.

cluding teachers' salaries, new school buildings, sports courts, and computers. A survey by the *Herald of Parents & Citizens Associations* at 90 schools shows that parents are even paying for basics such as gas and electricity, which are not covered by Government funding." Said the president of the NSW Primary Principals' Association, Mr. John McMillan, "Governments are getting away with the amount they are spending because parents are making up the deficit."

*Indicative of the typical economic rationalist policy of aiding the rich and penalising the poor, Howard in his most recent budget gave the nation's richest private schools, such as Caulfield, Melbourne and Geelong Grammars, almost \$1 million per year each for the next four years, while public schools were to be granted a paltry \$4000 per year, this after education budget cuts of billions of dollars in the 1996 budget. The Australian Secondary Principals Association, representing more than 2000 principals nationwide, denounced the federal government's approach to education funding as "appalling".

Said Association President Terry Woolley in September 2001, "We are deeply concerned about the deliberate shift of resources away from the public sector", where at least 70% of Australians are still educated. "We are extremely concerned about the overall funding of secondary schools," he said.

The first thing which must be done about the education crisis, as in the case of the breakdown in health care, is to "throw a wall of money at it." However, while that is a necessary start, it is not sufficient to really solve the problem. Because the real problem is to equip young Australians with actual cognitive abilities to innovate and problem-solve for the sort of rapidly developing physical economy which we have sketched elsewhere in this special report on infrastructure. The necessary approach to such a real education, and the role of universities as "science drivers" for the economy as a whole, was outlined recently by Lyndon LaRouche in an article in *Executive Intelligence Review* of October 12, 2001, "A New Guide for the Perplexed: How the Clone Prince Went Mad!"

A Science-Driver Economy

by Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr.

I have emphasized two points of policy which must be emphasized in defining a future recovery from the presently ongoing, global economic catastrophe. These are, a shift to a Classical humanist mode of education, at all levels of education, and a new quality of emphasis on universities as the focal point of science-driver policy for direction of the economy as a whole....

To that purpose, I turn now to the subject of my educational policy, and, after that, the way in which such an educational policy flows, naturally, into my conception of introducing a science-driver form of economy as a natural next step in the development of what Hamilton, the Careys, and List named "The American System of political-economy."

In earlier locations, I have used the image of a contemporary child re-experiencing an act of original discovery of a universal physical principle by the ancient Archimedes. I have emphasized, that every child should be educated in that way, and no other. The object of education must be, primarily, that the pupil should accumulate a memory of having re-experienced the actual cognitive act of original discovery of a universal physical principle made by persons who, for example, are today, chiefly, long deceased, even back many thousands of years.

In the act of re-experiencing such an original discovery of universal principle, there is a wonderful change from the effects produced by standard instruction in learning

in general and higher education today. The change makes education *human*, for a change.

The keys to understanding this difference, are, in summary, the following.

First, the act of cognition through which a successful hypothesis is generated, is a mental process which is perfectly opaque to the sense-perceptual apparatus of the external observer. Therefore, the most important of all social acts, are those transactions through which a valid hypothesis and its validation as a universal physical principle, is replicated as a cognitive act provoked in the sovereign cognitive powers of another person. It is the power to generate and transmit, so, verifiable discoveries of universal physical principle, which is the absolute difference between a human being and all other living creatures. Therefore, we should educate our children for what they are, human beings, rather than the monkeys, which programs in mere learning imply those children to be.

This cognitive form of social relationship is not limited to relations with living persons. In the case of the actual reenactment of an original discovery of a universal physical principle, originally made by a long-deceased discoverer, the student has established an active relationship with that deceased person which is of the same degree of social intimacy, and distinctively human character, as with any living person. The reenactment of a cognitive act of discovery performed by a long-deceased person, produc-



"The School of Athens" by the great Renaissance painter, Raphael, depicts great thinkers who lived as much as 2000 years apart, in living dialogue with one another. In the same way, a child must come to know the great minds of all human civilisation.

es a living memory of that reenactment within the mind of the (for example) student.

Indeed, I have reminded my readers many times, Raphael Sanzio portrays a crucial principle of the human education of human beings, in his famous *The School of Athens*. The mind of the person who has acquired knowledge through a cognitive relationship with persons both living and deceased, has the living memory of that person, as represented by the relevant cognitive act or acts of discovery, present

as a virtual living personality within his or her own mind. All even approximately competent education produces precisely that sort of effect, or a fair approximation of it in the mind of the student.

Within the conscience of the person so educated, the voices of many from among the greatest known scientists, artists, and statesmen of the past are heard as living voices in the mind. This is the jury to which the discoverer appeals, even when he disagrees with many among those authorities from the past. He is self-

obliged to present them compelling arguments, which should win them to accept the discoverer's overturning of what they had adopted and defended in their time.

For that and related reasons, a truly human relationship is based upon that quality of cognitive relationship. This point is the pervasive burden of Plato's Socratic dialogues, for example.

This cognitive quality of relationship, is also the proper definition of *sanity*, in contrast to the insanity represented by ideologies