

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

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EDITOR: Samuel L. Blumenfeld

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

Who is Marc Tucker? His Letter to Hillary Reveals the Elitists' Educational Plans

Marc S. Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., is the quintessential liberal change agent: left-wing Democrat, if not socialist, in his political views, apparently convinced that new life can be breathed into the brain-dead dinosaur of public education by pumping billions of federal dollars into the carcass, which will be "restructured." He is a typical statist who believes that there isn't a problem in education that a committee, or commission, or alliance, or think tank, or appropriate legislation can't solve.

He is a member of the liberal elite establishment who can deal easily and effectively with presidents, governors, legislators, foundation heads, corporate leaders and other members of the liberal power elite. And he is convinced that all of his bad ideas can work because he can convince all of his liberal friends that they can work, for they all passionately share the belief that these ideas *must* work because they are liberal.

Tucker's curriculum vitae proves that the American liberal elite is a meritocracy that draws like-minded lovers of big govern-

ment together. Nurtured by the same liberal illusions about the efficacy of government programs, their main motive is to prove that liberal ideas are "good" even though they don't work and that conservative ideas are "bad" even though they do work. And so they remain mired in the horrible consequences of their implemented ideas because they can't believe that such good liberal ideas can produce such dismal results. In fact, the dismal results simply provide new opportunities to come up with new liberal ideas that produce more bad results.

Unfortunately they do not learn from their experience because that is not the goal of all their efforts. Their only true goal is to stay in power, no matter what it takes, and enjoy the benefits and life style of the self-anointed elite.

Marc Tucker was born in 1940 in Newton, Massachusetts, an affluent suburb of Boston, where he attended public schools. He and his brother shared a painful childhood because their mother developed mental problems and their parents eventually divorced. Tucker went to Brown University on a scholarship where he majored in Ameri-

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can literature and philosophy. After his graduation in 1961 he went to work for Boston's public TV station, WGBH. There he worked as a cameraman and did some educational research for the president of the station. Apparently, he enjoyed the research so much that he left WGBH in 1970 to become assistant executive director of the Northwest Regional Educational Lab in Portland, Oregon. The lab was one of several regional labs authorized and funded by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 signed by LBJ.

From N.I.E. to Carnegie

In 1972 Tucker became associate director of the National Institute of Education created under Pres. Nixon. It later became part of the U.S. Dept. of Education. He left the N.I.E. in 1981 because he did not want to work under the Reagan administration. He got a grant from the Carnegie Corp. to do research on the use of computers and telecommunications in education. The Carnegie people were so impressed by his work that in 1985 he was appointed executive director of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy where he became chief author of the famous report on teaching, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, released in 1986. The report recommended the creation of a National Board of Teaching Standards which would establish national standards for teachers. Also, according to the NCEE: "The report recommended radical restructuring of the organization and management of America's schools as the only feasible means of producing the high skill levels among American workers that are required to maintain the nation's standard of living in a greatly altered world economy."

In 1987, the leaders of Rochester, N.Y., decided to embark on a radical reform of that

city's education system. They conferred with Marc Tucker in the hope of getting foundation money to help finance the plan. Out of these discussions came the idea of setting up the National Center on Education and the Economy with Tucker as its head. At the invitation of Governor Mario Cuomo and the Rochester leaders, the NCEE moved to Rochester in 1988 to assist the Rochester City School District in becoming a laboratory for the state and nation in system restructuring which would, theoretically, produce higher levels of student performance. The Center presently occupies the entire 5th floor of the Ellwanger-Barry Building in downtown Rochester with 23 staffers and a yearly budget of about \$5.4 million. In October 1990, the NCEE also opened a satellite office in Washington, D.C. to facilitate its policy efforts at the state and national levels.

The Rochester Experiment

With the move to Rochester, it would now be possible for Tucker to implement all of these wonderful restructuring ideas on real children, real teachers, and real schools.

For his board of trustees, Tucker chose carefully among members of the liberal power elite: Mario Cuomo (Honorary Chairman), John Sculley (former CEO of Apple Computer, Chairman), James B. Hunt Jr. (former Governor of North Carolina, Vice Chairman), Hillary R. Clinton (Partner in the Rose Law Firm), Louis Harris (of polling fame), Vera Katz (ultra liberal Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives), Ira C. Magaziner (Rhodes Scholar buddy of Bill Clinton), David Rockefeller, Jr. (Vice Chairman of Rockefeller Family & Associates), Adam Urbanski (President of the Rochester Teachers Association), Kay R. Whitmore (CEO, Eastman Kodak), Lauren B. Resnick (Dir., Learning Research and Development Center, Univ. of Pittsburgh), and others.

The Left-Wing Source of Goals 2000

The Center's first important report, *To Secure Our Future: The Federal Role in Education*, issued in 1989, proposed the basic agenda that was to lead to Goals 2000. The report helped frame the issues and shape the agreements that were made at the famous Education Summit at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, in the fall of 1989. After the summit, the National Governors' Association asked the NCEE to assist in the development of national goals for education. These were the goals which were subsequently spelled out by President Bush in his 1990 State of the Union address. Thus it was that out of the mouth of a Republican President came an education agenda concocted in Marc Tucker's ultra-liberal think tank.

Also in 1989, the Center's Board of Trustees created the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce which compiled a report entitled *America's Choice: high skills or low wages!* The report, issued in June 1990, proposed the following five-point plan to prepare American youth for the future workforce:

Create a new educational performance standard, benchmarked to the highest in the world, to be met by all American students at age 16; create new alternative learning environments to recover virtually all of our dropouts and take responsibility for helping them meet this new educational standard; establish comprehensive job-specific training and certification programs to 'professionalize' non-college occupations; provide all employers with incentives to invest in further training and education of their front-line workers and with assistance to reorganize work to make use of new worker skills; and develop local employment and training boards to pull together the pieces of this new high performance education and training system.

In short, what the report recommends is that we move away from traditional general education in which everyone learns basic

academic skills and acquires a body of significant knowledge to Soviet-style job-specific training and certification. The report recommends the creation of a Certificate of Initial Mastery to replace the traditional diploma which would signify that the student had undergone specific training and had passed the required assessments.

In 1990, the Center created the National Alliance for Restructuring Education. The Alliance has focused on strategic planning management and organizational change, student performance assessment, and accountability and incentives. The Center states:

There is wide agreement on the need to place a high priority on the search for and development of measures of student performance that more accurately reflect the new goals for students than do current standardized norm-referenced tests of basic skills. Alliance members are especially interested in coming up with good assessments of higher order thinking skills — including portfolios and exhibitions — and in techniques for assessing a whole range of non-cognitive outcomes.

The Alliance is also interested in developing data banks and communications' systems "that students can use to convey their qualifications to employers and employers can use to evaluate those qualifications."

A National Examination System

In 1991, the NCEE joined forces with the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh to create the New Standards Project, the goal of which is to create a national examination system, not a single exam. A National Examination Board would be set up to judge whether any given examination meets the national standard. This would make it possible for the nation to have a unified examination system without requiring everyone to use the same exam. It was expected to have the initial pilot

tests ready by the summer of 1993 and to have examinations for the core subjects — reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics — completed by the winter of 1995. The Center states:

By Winter of 1999 a full examination system can be in place. We estimate that it will take three years beyond that before students can be examined and their performance used as the basis of entry to jobs or further education.

Following the recommendations made by the New Standards Project, the State of New York established a Task Force on Creating Career Pathways for Youth. The Task Force recommends (1) "establishing world-class standards for what students must know and be able to do as they enter the workplace or continue their education; (2) establishing a Career Pathways Certificate (CPC) to be awarded to students — generally by age 16 — upon attainment of these world-class standards; (3) establishing a system of Professional and Technical Certificates (PTC) to certify attainment of world-class standards in a variety of programs."

The SCANS Scam

If you want to know what the reformers mean by "world-class standards," you can hunt high and low through their literature and come up empty. But if you're familiar with SCANS, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, you may get an inkling of what their world-class standards are about. For example, in a SCANS Report for America 2000 entitled *Learning A Living: A Blueprint for High Performance*, published by the U.S. Labor Department in April 1992, there is a section on The Foundation Skills. Under the heading of "Reading" we read:

Locates, understands, and interprets written

information in prose and documents—including manuals, graphs, and schedules—to perform tasks; learn from text by determining the main idea or essential message; identifies relevant details, facts, and specifications; infers or locates the meaning of unknown or technical vocabulary; and judges the accuracy, appropriateness, style, and plausibility of reports, proposals, or theories of other writers.

The above sounds a lot like proletarian literacy, workforce literacy, not traditional literacy. Under the heading "Creative Thinking" we read:

Generates new ideas by making nonlinear or unusual connections, changing or reshaping goals, and imagining new possibilities; and uses imagination freely, combining ideas or information in new ways, making connections between seemingly unrelated ideas, and reshaping goals in ways that reveal new possibilities.

That sounds like a bureaucrat's idea of creative thinking. Note the reference to "nonlinear" connections. Linear refers to alphabetic literacy, to logic. Apparently, to this bureaucratic numskull neither alphabetic literacy nor logic can contribute to creative thinking, when in fact they are the bases of all creative thinking. So much for SCANS' phony baloney.

The Famous Letter

And now we come to the famous 18-page letter from Marc Tucker to Hillary Clinton. You can imagine the joy that filled Tucker's heart when his pal Bill was elected President. And so he wrote on November 11, 1992:

Dear Hillary:

I still cannot believe you won. But utter delight that you did pervades all the circles in which I move. I met last Wednesday in David Rockefeller's office with him, John Sculley, Dave Barram and David Haselkorn. It was a great celebration. Both John and David R. were more expansive than I have ever seen

them — literally radiating happiness. My own view and theirs is that this country has seized its last chance. I am fond of quoting Winston Churchill to the effect that "America always does the right thing — after it has exhausted all the alternatives." This election, more than anything else in my experience, proves his point.

The subject we were discussing was what you and Bill should do now about education, training and labor market policy. Following that meeting, I chaired another in Washington on the same topic. Those present at the second meeting included Tim Barnicle, Dave Barram, Mike Cohen, David Hornbeck, Hillary Pennington, Andy Plattner, Lauren Resnick, Betsy Brown Ruzzi, Bob Schwarz, Mike Smith and Bill Spring. Shirley Malcom, Ray Marshall and Susan McGuire were also invited. Though these three were not able to be present at last week's meeting, they have all contributed by telephone to the ideas that follow. Ira Magaziner was also invited to this meeting.

Our purpose in these meetings was to propose concrete actions that the Clinton administration could take — between now and the inauguration, in the first 100 days and beyond. The result, from where I sit, was really exciting. We took a very large leap forward in terms of how to advance the agenda on which you and we have all been working — a practical plan for putting all of the major components of the system in place within four years, by the time Bill has to run again. . . .

We think the great opportunity you have is to remold the entire American system for human resources development, almost all of the current components of which were put in place before World War II. The danger is that each of the ideas that Bill advanced in the campaign in the area of education and training could be translated individually in the ordinary course of governing into a legislative proposal and enacted as a program. This is the path of least resistance. But it will lead to these programs being grafted onto the present system, not to a new system, and the opportunity will have been lost. If this sense of time and place is correct, it is essential that the administration's efforts be guided by a consistent vision of what it wants to accomplish in the field of human resource development, with respect both to choice of key officials and the program.

What follows comes in three pieces:

First, a vision of the kind of national — not

federal — human resources development system the nation could have. This is interwoven with a new approach to governing that should inform that vision. What is essential is that we create a seamless web of opportunities to develop one's skills that literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone — young and old, poor and rich, worker and full-time student. It needs to be a system *driven by client needs* (not agency regulations or the needs of the organizations providing the services), *guided by clear standards* that define the stages of the system for the people who progress through it, and *regulated on the basis of outcomes* that providers produce for their clients, not inputs into the system.

Second, a proposed legislative agenda you can use to implement this vision. We propose *four high priority packages* that will enable you to move quickly on the campaign promises:

1. The *first* would use your proposal for an *apprenticeship* system as the keystone of a strategy for putting a whole new postsecondary training system in place. That system would incorporate your proposal for reforming *postsecondary education finance*. It contains what we think is a powerful idea for rolling out and scaling up the whole new human resources system nationwide over the next four years, using the (renamed) apprenticeship idea as the entering wedge.

2. The *second* would combine initiatives on dislocated workers, a rebuilt employment service and a new system of labor market boards to offer the Clinton administration's *employment security* program, built on the best practices anywhere in the world. This is the backbone of a system for assuring adult workers of our society that they need never again watch with dismay as their jobs disappear and their chances of ever getting a good job again go with them.

3. The *third* would concentrate on the overwhelming problems of our *inner cities*, combining elements of the first and second packages into a special program to greatly raise the work-related skills of the people trapped in the core of our great cities.

4. The *fourth* would enable you to take advantage of legislation on which Congress has already been working to advance the elementary and secondary reform agenda.

The other major proposal we offer has to do with *government organization* for the human resources agenda. While we share your reservations about the

hazards involved in bringing reorganization proposals to the Congress, we believe that the one we have come up with minimizes those drawbacks while creating an opportunity for the new administration to move like lightning to implement its human resources development proposals. We hope you can consider the merits of this idea quickly, because, if you decide to go with it or something like it, it will greatly affect the nature of the offers you make to prospective cabinet members.

The Vision

We take the proposals Bill put before the country in the campaign to be utterly consistent with the ideas advanced in *America's Choice*, the school restructuring agenda first stated in *A Nation Prepared*, and later incorporated in the work of the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, and the elaboration of this view that Ray and I tried to capture in our book, *Thinking for a Living*. Taken together, we think these ideas constitute a consistent vision for a new human resources development system for the United States.

Note the great emphasis placed on a "human resources development system," as if the American people are like cattle, to be trained as a resource for industry. As if the purpose of life for the American people is to fulfill their government's economic plan. That's a pure, unadulterated Soviet-style system which was used by Lenin, Stalin, and other Soviet leaders to fulfill their various 5-year economic plans. Tucker wants "a seamless web of opportunities to develop one's skills that literally extends from cradle to grave and is the same system for everyone — young and old, poor and rich, worker and full-time student." That's totalitarianism, and that's why the American people will in time give up on public education rather than accept the kind of restructured system that relegates them to the status of animals. But apparently it's a system that Hillary and Bill would love to see replace traditional education.

When Tucker talks of remolding "the entire American system for human resource

development," he is talking of socializing America in which economic planning becomes the guide for an education system geared to job training and career development. In his letter to Hillary he talks of a national system of skills standards that "establishes the basis for the development of a coherent, unified training system." The system is for everyone: high school students, employed adults, and unemployed adults. And everyone must achieve the required standard.

The federal government will also get into the employment agency business. Tucker writes:

The Employment Service is greatly upgraded and separated from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. All available front-line jobs — whether public or private — must be listed in it by law. . . . All trainees in the system looking for work are entitled to be listed in it without a fee. So it is no longer a system just for the poor and unskilled, but for everyone. The system is fully computerized. . . .

A system of labor market boards is established at the local, state and federal levels to coordinate the systems for job training, postsecondary professional and technical education, adult basic education, job matching and counseling.

Tucker also calls for the creation of a National Board for Professional and Technical Standards chartered by Congress which would set broad performance standards "(not time-in-the-seat standards) for college-level Professional and Technical certificates and degrees in not more than 20 areas and develops performance examinations for each." Tucker also proposes creating a Collaborative Design and Development Program. He writes:

The object is to create a single comprehensive system for professional and technical education that meets the requirements of everyone from high school students to skilled dislocated workers, from the hard core unemployed to employed adults who want to improve their prospects. Creating such a system

means sweeping aside countless programs, building new ones, combining funding authorities, changing deeply embedded institutional structures, and so on. The question is how to get from where we are to where we want to be. Trying to ram it down everyone's throat would engender overwhelming opposition. Our idea is to draft legislation that would offer an opportunity for those states — and selected large cities — that are excited about this set of ideas to come forward and join with each other and with the federal government in an alliance to do the necessary design work and actually deliver the needed services on a fast track. The legislation would require the executive branch to establish a competitive grant program for those states and cities and to engage a group of organizations to offer technical assistance to the expanding set of states and cities engaged in designing and implementing the new system.

So the enticement to the states and cities to advance the socialist revolution in education would be the grant money! Tucker writes further:

As you know very well, the High Skills; Competitive Workforce Act sponsored by Senators Kennedy and Hatfield and Congressmen Gephardt and Regula provides a ready-made vehicle for advancing many of the ideas we have outlined. To foster a good working relationship with the Congress, we suggest that, to the extent possible, the framework of these companion bills be used to frame the President's proposals. You may not know that we have put together a large group of representatives of Washington-based organizations to come to a consensus around the ideas in America's Choice. They are full of energy and very committed to this joint effort.

On the last page of the letter, Tucker writes:

Radical changes in attitudes, values and beliefs are required to move any combination of these agendas. . . . At the narrowest level, the agenda cannot be moved unless there is agreement among the governors, the President and the Congress. Bill's role at the Charlottesville summit leads naturally to a reconvening of that group, perhaps with the addition of key members of Congress and others.

But we think that having an early summit on the subject of the whole human resources agenda would

be risky, for many reasons. Better to build on Bill's enormous success during the campaign with national talk shows, in school gymnasiums and the bus trips. . . . This way, Bill can be sure that the agenda is his, and he can go into it with a groundswell of support behind him.

Did Bill and Hillary follow Tucker's advice? To the extent that the Clintonistas advanced the Goals 2000 and SCANS agendas, they did. But as we all know, during that first year Hillary and her friends got bogged down in their plan for socialized medicine, and the election of 1994 brought a whole new breed of Republicans into the Congress ready to stage a counter-revolution. And so, as of December 1995, the Tucker agenda is stalled, with many states taking a second hard look at Goals 2000, Outcome-Based Education, and the rest of the education restructuring agenda.

Meanwhile, Marc Tucker has not produced the improvements in Rochester's schools that he was brought there to bring about. When he arrived in Rochester in 1988, he was hailed as a modern-day savior. A reporter for the *Rochester Times Union* wrote (Aug. 1, 1988):

An aura of the prophet surrounds Marc Tucker when he walks through the oversized walnut doors of his new education research center. There is his full beard, his long, dark hair streaked gray. There is the sound of his upbeat voice in the immaculate white-walled room lined with century-old fireplaces and towering wood-framed windows.

This, the National Center on Education and the Economy . . . will be Marc Tucker's pulpit beginning today. It will fill with eager research assistants and influential educators. And the waiting and the watching will begin. Both national and local educators, other researchers, school administrators and politicians will be watching to see if the center becomes the spiritual headquarters of education reform, creating policy for presidential candidates and the nation's workforce.

They will want to see if Tucker can bring to life theories he helped develop in one of the most influential educational reports recently published, the Carnegie Forum's *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st*

Century. They want to see if Tucker can deliver from his own pulpit.

That was 1988. And now fast-forward to May 7, 1995, a long article in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. The headline reads: "Rochester's dream of better schools remain unfulfilled." The reporter writes:

[R]eform leaders agree the widespread improvement in academic achievement they hoped to see hasn't happened. Forty percent of ninth-graders don't make it through high school. Fewer graduates attain the state's more stringent Regents diploma. Most middle and high school test scores remained flat or declined.

Teams of administrators, teachers and parents formed to improve schools often didn't work well together. Other important initiatives, never happened on a wide scale. Middle schools, created to cater to the needs of early adolescents, are large, chaotic and, occasionally, violent.

"We have failed," said Mayor William A. Johnson Jr.

And so, the bloom is off the Tucker rose. No more references to Tucker as a "prophet" of education reform. Apparently, the only beneficiaries of the "reform" were teachers whose salaries were almost doubled. They were supposed to produce results. But they haven't. Meanwhile, Rochester's schools are worse today than they were before Tucker came to town in a blaze of glory.

What is perhaps most disturbing in all of this is that a Republican President and Republican governors have been advancing an education reform agenda crafted by far-left revolutionaries like Marc Tucker. This has got to stop. The Republican education agenda should be one of advancing educational freedom and getting the government out of the education business. This means rejecting government voucher programs in favor of private voucher plans. This means abolishing the U.S. Dept. of Education, dismantling the massive data-collection systems prepared by the National Center for

Education Statistics, defunding Goals 2000, and phasing out the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. If there must be government-run education, it should be limited to state and local jurisdictions. But the conservative agenda must favor all forms of non-government education.

The chief purpose of government is to secure the unalienable rights of the citizenry. Human beings are not "human resources" to be used by the state for the state's purposes. Government derives its powers from the consent of the governed. It is to serve the people, and not vice-versa.

The Dangers of Patient Illiteracy

A disturbingly high number of patients are unable to read and understand basic written medical instructions in hospitals, a new study has found, prompting researchers to urge more thorough patient education programs.

Researchers studied 2,659 predominantly poor and minority patients at two large public hospitals in Georgia and California. They found 42 percent were unable to comprehend directions for taking medication on an empty stomach; 26 percent were unable to understand information about their next appointment; and 60 percent could not understand a standard informed-consent document.

"Adults with illiteracy face formidable problems" gaining access to health care, concluded Dr. Steven Miles of the University of Minnesota and Terry Davis of Louisiana State University in an editorial accompanying the study in this week's issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. "Clinicians, hospitals and clinics must become more sensitive" to the problem. (*Boston Globe*, 12/7/95)