

I have been watching the Karen Lewis lead Chicago Teacher's Union strike and thought I should add my two cents. The writing here has been done and complete for months, but -due to its length, and complexity for liberal readers- I was hesitating to post. I wish my readers used this blog to answer two simple questions: "Does Karen Lewis or anyone in the Chicago school system deserve a dollar pay raise?" and "Should we fire Karen Lewis, and eliminate the Chicago Teacher's Union?" So, let's see what we have here.

The roots

From the early 1960s, progressives have been targeting the American education to dismantle the American system. As an example, Bill Ayers (he later became known as an America hater domestic terrorist) became the director of a Summerhill method school in 1965. This particular school was developed based upon Alexander S. Neill (1883-1973), a Scottish progressive educator's method where students had no grades or report cards. The teachers had students address them by their first names. The school Ayers ran was part of the nationwide free school system. It is an extremely important point to understand that the roots of the progressive liberal "just do your best" education philosophy (more accurately: delusion) goes back almost a hundred years. One of the most important elements of the Summerhill model was the encouragement of students not to compete, but to cooperate. This lunacy is obviously the diagonal opposite of the "thriving for excellence" and the "shining city on the hill" philosophies. Tragically, since 1960, all these elements have become the bedrock of the US education system and indeed the fabric of US society. This is one of the fundamental reasons why Barack Hussein Obama was voted into the White House.

The First Sign

In April, 1983 President Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education" task force wrote a white paper on current status titled "A Nation At Risk"..

"Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world.the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur-others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

.....If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.....

.....Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them.

- *Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.*
- *About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent.*
- *Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.*
- **Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested**

ability with comparable achievement in school.

- *The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points.*
- *Both the number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement on the SATs (i.e., those with scores of 650 or higher) have also dramatically declined.*
- *Many 17-year-olds do not possess the "higher order" intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40 percent cannot draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps.*
- *Between 1975 and 1980, remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72 percent and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.*
- *Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation. The Department of the Navy, for example, reported to the Commission that one-quarter of its recent recruits cannot read at the ninth grade level, the minimum needed simply to understand written safety instructions. Without remedial work they cannot even begin, much less complete, the sophisticated training essential in much of the modern military.....*

....Another analyst, Paul Copperman, has drawn a sobering conclusion. Until now, he has noted:

Each generation of Americans has outstripped its parents in education, in literacy, and in economic attainment. For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents..... It is our conviction that the essential raw materials needed to reform our educational system are waiting to be mobilized through effective leadership:the natural abilities of the young that cry out to be developed and the undiminished concern of parents for the well-being of their children"...

Just let us all remember: this material was written in April 1983. The time we now remember as "the level of education and disciplinary measures were much higher thirty years ago than they are today". Another "great achievement" of our liberalizing, globalizing forces. As this writing argues, one of the ways anti-American progressive forces have been attacking the foundation of the US system is through education. It is not matter of interpretation whether or not these people are anti-American. America was founded upon "freedom and exceptionalism" and had become a global power because of that. It is a stark difference from England, France, Spain, and the early Dutch State; all of which (among others) gained prominence through occupying other countries. America has never occupied anyone. The "lowest common denominator" and "centralized government control" paradigm that social-liberal progressives have been forcing (which -as an example- flourishing and has skyrocketed during the Obama years) is the tightest possible definition to be "anti-American".

The worst of both worlds

The US education system neither has gotten into this problem overnight, nor by accident. It was foreseeable. The two main factors that contributed to the current situation are the mandatory high-school system and the Teacher's Union. These two have been acting in concert, in a circular reference way, where both of them are heavily relying on the other to continue its existence. There is a bit of a difference in union power between "right to work states" (22 of them), and "non right to

work states", but it is almost negligible because the systemic, structural problem that mandatory high school introduces cannot be circumvented. On the other hand, the stronger the unions are the more damage they do.

Mandatory High School System

There is a long list of ways to degrade a country's education and dumb the population. The liberals-paddled "just do your best" lunacy occupies a relatively high rank on the list. But nothing comes close to the effectiveness of destruction than the "mandatory high-school system".

At best case, a student uses the school system for an average of 22 years (8 elementary, 4 high, 4 bachelor, 3 masters and 3 PhD); it might vary a year or two based upon the length of the degreed stages, but the structure is the same. To draw line between the "mandatory" and "elective" parts of these 22 years is totally arbitrary. It could be drawn anywhere. It would not make sense to draw it somewhere within the first eight years, but other than that, there is no guideline. So, what is the reason to draw the line after 12 years? Why not 16? Or why not mandatory Ph.D. while we are at it? There is no difference between forcing a "does not belong there" student into high school, or forcing him to go all the way to Ph.D.! After all, he does not want either of them. In the US, high school education is mandatory ("Compulsory" as we call it) until age 16 in 23 states, age 17 in 8 states and age 18 in 19 states. As I will argue in this writing, the difference between "Compulsory until age 16, 17, or 18" is the difference how many years the system forces a "does-not-belong-there" student to unnecessarily waste time. It is 2, 3, or 4. The damage is being done at the starting gate, where we force students to attend a place they not supposed to, instead of sending them to another place where they can achieve things.

The best place for this line is obviously after eight years. After eight years of studying general disciplines, the school and the parents have sufficient data of the student's affinity to, and performance level in school. This includes the most basic element: does the student have the desire and/or maturity to continue his/her studies at all? Establishing mandatory high school system takes all these advantages away, and provides virtually no upside for students.

There is a long list of problems mandatory high school introduces; none of them could be solved because they are systemic and coming from the very structure of the high-school being mandatory. Among the identified problems, the most noteworthy ones are: it brings total lack of discipline, turns the teachers' objectives on its head, pushes the quality down by approximately 90%, makes education impossible, provides the Teacher's Union with unlimited power, prevents the schools to fire sub-standard teachers, has a serious blow-back to the first eight years, and greatly damages the next -university- stage of education; it essentially renders the entire school system to be a mindless meat-grinder where the only objective is to grind everyone through the system. Most of these issues are born from:

- 40% of the students do not belong there, they do not want to be there, no one wants them to be there ---but they must be there because this is the "law".
- Due to the fact that this 40% has no interest in learning at high-school level, the federally controlled school system is left with two choices: keep the quality high and fail 45%-60% of the students (with approximately 75% of that group never gets close to graduation at all), or lower the quality for everyone (this latter has become the "official choice")
- Due to the fact that this 40% has no interest being there, discipline is impossible
- The combined effect of the above three points is that the high-school system lost all of its credibility and the teachers lost their students' respect.

It is highly demonstrative to review the high-school system throughout the last hundred years, up

until 1994, where the education system in most Eastern European countries was structured as follows:

- After eight year elementary school the student had the following choices:
- Go to a general high-school for four years if the goal was a university diploma for a desired profession, such as doctor, attorney, programming mathematician, economist, etc. A profession that could have not been practiced with high-school diploma. Students, who performed great in elementary school but could not decide of their desired profession, also attended these schools.
- Go to a specialized high-school for four years. Students picked this category if the profession they chose could land them a job after high-school (i.e. computer technician) and also gave them the chance to study further (become a computer engineer) if they achieved good grade in high-school.

Both of the high-school forms described above, accepted/rejected students based upon three components: their elementary school performance (in "points"), a required high level written, and a verbal entry examinations. Students who decided to apply to high-school, had a choice to send their application to three high-schools. This system in itself screened the dreamers out; if you applied to three high-schools way above your performance in elementary school, you easily found yourself at the end of the entry exam period without a high-school and your only remaining choice was to go and find a job for a year.

- Go to a "trade school", if you did not study well in elementary school (could not get into high-school), or did not feel like continuing your studies at high-school level, or were very interested in a specific trade. You could go to be a plumber, an electrician, a car mechanic, etc. These schools were three year long. The entry exams were not as high level as in high schools (but was not low either).
- Go to work, because you either did not want to study further, or your "achievements" were not good enough even for a trade school.

The system described above had only positive attributes:

- Only those students were let into the system who belonged there;
- Students were going to schools they were interested in;
- Discipline was not an issue because students knew, they could be expelled;
- High-schools and their teachers evaluation was not a problem; high-schools wanted good students, they only kept good teachers (isn't it nice and simple? I advise liberals to stop reading here and try to think for a second or two. Then see what came to mind);
- It provided students with a system of positive choices. If a student did not feel like going to a high demand environment in high-school (Yes! in those days the high-school system represented "high demand"), he/she chose a trade school instead. On the one hand, this choice provided the student with positive experience, and concrete result throughout the three years; it on the other hand did not forever exclude the student from higher education. At any later point of time, he/she could go back to night school;
- Night school gave a chance to the late bloomers as well as to career changers, because adult classes were available at each level (all the way to and including Masters Degree);
- The system provided upward and downward mobility. While a student was completing

- the first year in trade school, he/she could apply to a high-school and -upon successful entry exam- could move his/her studies. It also worked the other way.
- It gave a reliable feed-back and an achievement to everyone: every single person found his/her place in the school system and in society after graduation.

The mandatory high-school system by definition creates its "product" (graduate students) based upon the lowest common denominator theory. Having a "mandatory elementary school system" automatically defines an "elective high-school system" (where the bar is kept high for students as well as teachers), while the "mandatory high-school" is "territorial": since everybody attends high-school, therefore the high-schools are serving the local area, instead of being specialized admitting students from any part of the city, state or even the country. This common denominator component of the education system is the root cause of all associated problems.

Three obvious (I mean: obvious to everyone, but the people who are running it) and uncorrectable problems are "baked into the mandatory high-school cake":

- It creates an **upward pressure** from the first eight years of elementary school. While there is a mandatory elementary school (first eight years of elementary school until age 14), the elementary school system understands that students will stay in the system until age 14; therefore, they can get out of the system with e.g. "six year" education (the student repeated two years of the eight). By using the "mandatory high-school" model, the teachers understand that the student will be in the system until age 18, which stands the teachers' approach on its head: instead of holding students back if they do not deserve to go to the next grade, the teachers now are pushing the students ahead, because they know: whether or not the teachers and the students want it, or the students deserve it, they will be there until age 18.
- It also creates a **downward pressure** from universities, businesses and military, because the "high-school diploma" lost all of its meaning. As the 1983 "Nation at Risk" study established: *".....Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation. The Department of the Navy, for example, reported to the Commission that one-quarter of its recent recruits cannot read at the ninth grade level, the minimum needed simply to understand written safety instructions. Without remedial work they cannot even begin, much less complete, the sophisticated training essential in much of the modern military..."*
- It also creates unwanted and undesirable frustration in "graduates" (let's just say: "18 year old young adults, who visited the place for 12 years"), because their "diploma" proves to hold less value than the paper it was printed on; they do not find jobs, do not find respect, income, and standing in society.

As an example, Hungary's education system (for readers who are suffering from the US Outcome Based Education System: Hungary is in Europe. Try to find it. It is good for you) switched from a hundred year worth of "mandatory four grade" (until 1945) then mandatory eight grade), to the "mandatory high-school" system in 1994. With observable result. In the high-school I graduated in 1973, final math exams included differential and integral equations; fast forward to 2009: one of the math final exam problem was: "If a pound banana cost 75 cents, how much banana can you buy for \$3.50? *I am not making this up. I have the original transcript.* This is how a hundred year old brilliant school system was destroyed in 15 years, by changing the model to this mindless, liberal, mandatory high-school system. Of course there is a long list of meaningless and mindless explanation for this (chief of which: the "we want to "do good", "we want to give education to

everyone"). This albatross in Europe was created in June 19, 1999 and it is called the "Bologna Process", signed by 25 European countries. The model turned the college system upside down, "standardized" the structure of colleges throughout Europe (as another act to seek "common denominator") and it has failed miserably. There is not a single Eastern European education expert I know who do not wish to eliminate it.

Someone will say: *"It cannot be entirely correct, because the US has had mandatory high-school since the turn of the 20th century and education level was much higher in the 50s and 60s"*. There is no contradiction whatsoever. Up until the mid 1960s (pretty much before LBJ established the "Great Society") the elementary and high-school systems were highly disciplined and regulated. The "40% does not belong there" rule was as valid as it is today, but that "40%" was going into a highly disciplined environment, whereby they could not be destructive (up until the mid 60s we surely did not actively teach students to sue their parents upon "enduring" disciplinary measures). In a good number of cases the disciplined school helped students to turn around. After the mid 1960s all hell broke loose. The list of triggering factors is long an undistinguished, but the few of them are: great society, busing students across the city under the name of desegregation, drug, national conscience problem during and after the Vietnam war, and Jimmy Carter's race regulation in religious schools (why is it that one can find Jimmy Carter's name at every single disaster the United States is facing?). Social composition change is also a contributing factor. The "America and the world in 1980" was not even close to what it is today. It would take another book (in fact it took one: I wrote it), to research and analyze all the changes, but just a tangential review:

- China, Soviet Union and all its satellite countries were closed; highly educated, low cost labor was not freely moving,
- Central America was not such a drug infested powder keg than it is today; immigration was at a tolerable level,
- Immigrants stayed in the US, the baby boomer generation was in its thirties; the US was not losing IQ as fast as it is today,
- Social communist liberal forces were not as strong as they are today.

These (and several other) factors kept the "US workforce" v.s. "immigrant workforce" (along with the number of school age children) in balance. It had a fundamental modifying factor on the "40%-50%". By the mid 1980s, the regulatory system lost the upper hand in education.

Randi Weingarten, president of American Federation of Teachers (in a abbreviation: the union) wrote an editorial in the Washington Post:

".....Imagine the outrage if, say, the Pittsburgh Steelers had to move the ball the full 10 yards for a first down during the Super Bowl while the Arizona Cardinals had to go only seven. Imagine if this scenario were sanctioned by the National Football League. Such a system would be unfair and preposterous. But there is little outrage over the uneven patchwork of academic standards for students in our 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Abundant evidence suggests that common, rigorous standards lead to more students reaching higher levels of achievement. The AFT has, since 1995, tracked each state's progress toward establishing standards that meet our characteristics of strong academic content standards. While we have documented some great improvements over the years, much more work lies ahead.

In fact, countries that consistently outperform the United States on international assessments do not have multiple sets of standards the way we do. Instead, they all have a common set of standards. So, perhaps a good place to start would be revisiting the issue of national standards. This concept is not new to AFT. As early as 1992, when the standards movement was just gathering steam, the AFT passed a resolution addressing national standards...."

Ms. Weingarten either does not know what she is talking about (which would not be unusual for her) or she is deliberately lying. In fact no Eastern European country had standardized system before the Bologna Process and they were thriving for over a hundred years. In fact, all schools were individual base ---- because all schools were elective and not mandatory. It plain and simple could have not possibly been "standardized test" because every single school (by the system) was individual. It is sad when someone in a position like Ms. Weingarten is this uninformed. And as I reported in this writing, there is no educator in those countries who would not want to get rid of this albatross. I looked up AFT's web site (www.aft.org) on January 1st, 2012 and found the following links under the heading of "AFT Resources":

- AFT Resolution on Common Core **State Standards**, May 19, 2011
- Common Core **State Standards** Initiative
- Classroom "reality check" strengthen **standards**, American Teacher, Dec.2009/Jan.2010
- Guarded optimism greets Common Core **State Standards**, American Teacher, Sep. 2010
- AFT Welcomes Release of New Common **Core Standards**
- AFT members provide feedback on the Core **State Standards** (April, 2010)
- Room for Improvement, American Teacher (Feb. 2007)
- AFT Resolution: National Education **Standards** and Assessment.
(underline and bold from me)

There was no link about teachers, teaching quality, or anything else. Why Ms. Weingarten and the union are pushing for standard tests is argued in the next chapter.

I argue that we should have a "mandatory elementary school" system where we place a focused and intense effort on educating students between 6-14 year of age under structured set of disciplines, individuality (which is the polar opposite of the "standardized" system), and high demands, but in a way where students experience a great number of achievements. Calling the loser of a one-on-one tennis match a "second best" will do the trick only in the liberal establishment's sick mind residing in la-la land. The education system must demand a lot from the kids, must grade them accordingly, and most of all, must make the students love to study, learn and thrive for achievement. The definition of "teaching" in this environment would include excluding all phones, iPods, iPads (or "iAnything") that destruct from focusing on the one and only objective of the place: study (I understand this is a novel concept nowadays). This would also include daily PE but would not include "sport achievement" based grading (it would be amusing if it was not tragic that we have no PE class, we stack the vending machines with cola and chocolate and we are complaining about obese children. Just think about that). Once we did that, there will be no problem filling the high-schools with able students and producing overall high academic achievements at the end of the high-school years. The universities, military, and in general everyone will appreciate it.

Contrary to the sick minds' opinion in our current education system, students are not happy when they are robbed from achieving goals. "Failure" and "losing" are on the opposite side of the "success" and "achievement" of the coin of life. Destroy one side of the coin, and the entire coin will be lost. This is what the liberal US education system calls today "way of teaching".

To govern education at the federal level (Department of Education) is sheer lunacy (a gift from who else, but Jimmy Carter), to force students into a one size fits all standardized test system is utter stupidity. While on the one hand the education system is preaching "students' individuality", it forces them into a standardized test on the other.

As a result, the 2010 illiteracy rate was 47% in Detroit (Source: Detroit Literacy Coalition, and CBS Detroit, May 4, 2011). After being in the top 5 in the world in 1980, by 2010 the US is ranked 28th of 41 in math, 18th of 41 in reading, 22nd of 41 in science, 29th of 41 in problem solving. Chicago's public school system graduated 55.8% of their students (Source: Catalyst Chicago).

"Every school day, more than 7,200 students fall through the cracks of America's public high schools. Three out of every 10 members of this year's graduating class, 1.3 million students in all, will fail to graduate with a diploma.According to the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center's latest analysis of high school completion, the national graduation rate stands at 68.8 percent for the class of 2007, the most recent year for which data are available. This represents a slight drop, four-tenths of a percentage point, from 69.2 percent for the previous high school class....." (Source: Education Week December 18, 2011)

By not having the mandatory/elective line drawn at age 14, the system wastes approximately 40% of the high-school population. Dropping out, or coming out with a piece of paper, unable to find a job, being discouraged and angry is not an easy proposition. At age 14, the same person could have been molded, sent to a trade school, achieved success and learned life. No, we do not do that. We stuck the same kid in high-school that was not his place, throughout his/her two to four formidable years. The liberal education system first robs kids from knowing the difference between "success" and "failure", then sends them to high-school where they do not belong (just to make sure: they really fail), then spits them out of school to life: "Here! Go and make a living!"

And the people who are running the system, the most surprised why gang life, drug, and crime are rampant between age 16-30. The question must be asked and a topic examined: why are we doing this? It has been failing for decades. Whose interest is it? And the answer is...:

The Cancer in the US Education's Body: The "Teacher's Union"

(National Education Association, United Federation of Teachers and American Federation of Teachers)

How the unions as a whole have left their purpose and usefulness behind, how they replaced the original objective of "protecting workers" to "robbing the employer blind", how they have become the home and operational territory to the George Soros, Richard Trumka and Andy Stern type gangsters, and how they have been bringing down the entire US economy (Exhibit A: General Motors) is well known and there is a library full of fact based material. The Teacher's Union is tightly in line with all these philosophies. The US education system would overnight increase its quality by 40% if we closed down all Teacher's Unions and another 30% if we closed down the Department of Education. As a bi-product, we would save hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Just to be sure we know who we are dealing with, let me share a background of these fine organizations.

The **American Federation of Teachers (AFT)** represents (with Randy Weingarten as president) 1.5 million members in more than 3,000 local affiliates nationwide. AFT is affiliated with the Richard Trumka run AFL-CIO.

To say that Richard Trumka is a thug is being polite. His character cannot be better displayed than the Washington Examiner article from the time Trumka was president of United Mine Workers (UMW), and what was reported by the "Promotion Ethics in Public Life National Legal and Policy Center" on September 7, 2010:

"..Consider a multi-state coal miners' strike organized by the UMW back in 1993. As union president, Trumka ordered more than 17,000 workers to walk off their jobs. He was determined, among other things, to ensure that nobody would find work in a mine without paying dues or agency fees to the union. [this is "democracy" US union style. L.O.] He explicitly told strikers to "kick the shit out of" employees and mine operators resisting union demands. UMW enforcers obliged him. They vandalized homes, fires shots at a mine office, and cut power to another mine, temporarily trapping 93 miners underground. Worse yet, a union goon on July 22, 1993 murdered heavy equipment operator Eddie York, a nonunion contractor, shooting him in the back of the head in his pickup truck as he drove past strikers at a Logan County, West Virginia work site; a bunch of goons then proceeded to pelt York's would-be rescuers with rocks. Rather than apologize, Trumka offered the following rationalization: "I'm saying if you strike a match and put your finger in, common sense tells you you're going to burn your finger." In other words, Eddie York had it coming. His widow, Wanda York, saw things differently. She sued the union for \$27 million, naming Trumka and other union officials as co-defendants. After a long battle, UMW lawyers quickly decided to settle out of court in June 1997 once federal prosecutors announced they would release evidence from the trial of Jerry Dale Lowe, convicted of conspiracy and weapons charges related to York's murder by a federal jury three years earlier...."

The **National Education Association** (NEA) is the largest labor union in the US, with an estimated 3.2 million members, and over \$300 million annual budget. The NEA is one of the top funders of the Democratic Party and many liberal organizations. They are also famous about objecting education reform. The NEA is represented in every state, either as a union or as a professional organization.

The **United Federation of Teachers** (UFT) is the smallest one of the three. They are New York based, representing approximately 135,000 active and 54,000 retired members. But they are members of or affiliated with just about every social-communist liberal and progressive organizations: AFT, AFL-CIO, Central Labor Council, NEA, Education International, to mention a few.

There is a brilliant book written by Steven Brill, titled *Class Warfare*, that I am using to provide a brief summary of the Teachers Unions' "value", modus operandi, and people who are running it. I am describing the "quality" of AFT and its president, Ms. Randi Weingarten using data and description I found in *Class Warfare*. As an example, he examines Harlem Success Academy I., (HSA) which is part of the Harlem Success charter schools in New York. This school happens to be in the same building with "Public School 149" (PS 149).

The genius in Mr. Brill's book is that it provides a mathematical elimination process to find the cause of the problems.

- Same neighborhood on both sides of the equation (HSA&PS149) --should be eliminated as a modifying factor.
- Students from the same background --let's eliminate it.
- Same building --let's eliminate it.

So, if all these are the same, what is causing the following observation?

"Across the hall and one floor down from where I watched Reid [a fifth grade teacher on the HSA side of the building. L.O.] coach her kids on essays, juicy words, and personal biographies -maybe fifteen-second walk- I looked in on a goateed teacher in jeans and sweatshirts sitting back in a chair in front of eighteen fourth graders. His feet parked on the desk, he bellowed: 'how many days in a week?' No answer. Half of the children had their heads down. Most of the others were chattering away, except for two boys who were wrestling on the floor. The teacher asked again, louder. Still no answer. Then louder still, all the while rocking almost to the point of falling over backward in the chair. Then, 'Okay, let's move on to something else'".

One does not need to be a rocket scientist or a brain surgeon to develop this train of thought: same neighborhood, same background for the students, same building, but two systems; it has got to be the system.

So what is the "system" difference?

HARLEM SUCCESS CHARTER SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Harlem Success side teachers:

- Have a one page long contract
- Can be fired at will
- Responsibilities and scope of activities are not defined, other than, they must assist the school to achieve its goals.
- Salary is 5%-10% higher than their unionized equivalents on the PS side
- Start to work at 7:45am and finish between 4:30pm-5pm
- Must be available by cell phone for parent consultations throughout the evening
- Are reimbursed for a car service to home if they stayed late working with students
- Were absent an average of 1.1 days in 2009-2010
- The school begins in August
- The per-student cost was \$18,378 in 2009-2010
- Standard matching pension contribution: \$193 (one hundred ninety-three) per student
- All fringe benefits (pension, health insurance, etc.): \$1,341/student

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Public School side teachers:

- Have a contract 167 (one hundred sixty-seven) page long. It is about job protection and what teachers can or cannot be asked to do.
- Start to work at 8:30am and finish at 3:25pm
- Are not obligated to receive phone calls from students and parents at home
- Receive 13 paid or personal days (average 8 days taken in 2009-2010)
- The school begins after Labor Day
- The per-student cost was \$19,358 in 2009-2010
- Pension plan paid by the city: on: \$2,605 (two thousand six hundred and five) per student
- All fringe benefits (pension, health insurance, etc.): \$5,316/student

...As a result In 2009-2010 School Year

On the Public School side:

29% of the students were doing English language art at or above grade level, and 34% were grade level proficient in math.

On the Harlem Success side (which is again: the other side of the wall):

86% of the students were doing English language art at or above grade level, and 94% were grade level proficient in math.

As a result of most schools belong to the sphere of Public School System, the International Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reported, that American children are:

- 15th in reading literacy
- 25th in math

- 17th in science

We are not only behind China, South Korea and Japan, but the USA is behind Estonia, Poland, Norway, New Zealand, Canada and the Netherlands. All these "achievements" coming at the cost of the United States is spending 50% more per student than other developed nations).

So where is this Teachers Union power coming from? It is coming from a simple data:

- In 1960, 35% of private sector workers were union members
- By 2000, it had fallen to 7%
- At the same time, union membership in public-sector jobs was 35%
- In 1960, teachers represented 3% of union workers
- By 1980, it had become 15%
- By 2009 it was 25%

The Teacher's Union had become a driving force behind this model. As in every other side of life, the union's stranglehold caused people thriving for excellence in chose another profession. The 2010 McKinsey Consulting firm study reported that only 23% of new teachers are coming from the top third of their graduating class. In the meantime, South Korea, Singapore and Finland recruited close to 100% from the top one third of their classes.

And what do we really expect? In 1994, Rep. George Miller (7th Congressional District in San Francisco), a **lifelong democrat**, circulated a draft of an amendment: states receiving federal education aid must certify their teachers' qualification for the subject they teach. (you really cannot go more common sense; I mean this is miles below the "my goat understood this one" qualification). First it received great support.... until the Teacher's Union got wind of it. They had organized a blitz across the country to the tune that the House switch board was shut down because of overload of phone calls. The vote on Mr. Miller's amendment was 434-1 against.

This brings up a side issue. Think about how corrupt, how idiotic, and spineless our elected "representatives" are to make this happen. There is a set of vectors pointing to all kinds of directions between "corrupt", "idiot", and "spineless"; corrupt not to vote for something that serves the students' interest, corrupt and spineless for fearing the Union, corrupt for regarding his/her next election higher than representing true value and interest this can go on for several pages. In one of my previous writings, I observed: *"...The only question is this: can we change approximately 75% of all elected people in Washington DC from the existing roster of "politicians" (which is a polite code for cheats, crooks, slime balls and morons) to independent minded honest people who actually represent what they believe in.*

The system should work like this: "a" congressional district votes for a person based upon what the person believes in. Then this person –while a congressman-, will vote on that belief. If the electorate changes in the district, they probably will vote for another congressman.

Instead of this, the system works (it actually does not "work", it "exists") like this: the "congressman-wanna-be" tries to figure out what his/her district "wants to hear" to get elected. Then when elected, the same person gets busy figuring out what the party chiefs in his/her party want to hear, mixed with "how far can I go in accommodating my party boss without damaging myself for reelection". This is not "representative system, this is a "system of cons". I think President Truman said: "Washington replaced the swamp and malaria with politics"? This is what we need to change first and foremost..." These people obviously will not change the US education system so long as it is not in their personal interest.

Mr. Brill also describes a situation in a middle school in Queens, N.Y., where Anthony Lombardi became the principal in 1996. Mr. Lombardi wanted to modify the system to the tune of teachers' school hours being extended a bit in the morning for children who arrive earlier for tutoring or special

classes. The union immediately started a firestorm. American Federation of Teachers president, Randi Weingarten showed up (Now this is the person who would worth a book or two. When one looks at Andy Stern, Richard Trumka and Randi Weingarten, one starts to wonder: how do you guys in the unions have the instinct to find these birds? In the zoo? Is there a special skill, or your morality has stooped so low that these characters will do it too?). Long story short, when Mr. Lombardi did not budge, anonymous complaints started to show up accusing him of sexual harassment and financial malfeasance. When these did not work, the union circulated a letter to all Queens teachers saying that Lombardi had not learned the lesson "taught to Al D'Amato" -a Senator who criticized the union- "that an attack on our union was an attack on all teachers". Now let's stop and think for a moment. Let us all remember that Mr. Lombardi wanted a better school for his students, while the "Teacher's Union" -led by Weingarten- worked against the students' interest. Should it be time to jail a list of people or at least should we fire them from any position that is within a three mile radius from education, or this is just me?

It is also telling that N.Y. City and Randi Weingarten could not agree on the new contract between October, 2003 and February, 2005. On February 25, 2005 Weingarten sent a letter to the union members stating: "prolonged, high-stakes fight....They want nothing less than total control over our members' working lives. Hiring. Firing. Assignment...." It is difficult for someone with a few gray cells left working to see what part of the "you should not have bad teachers in class" statement Randi Weingarten does not get. But she clearly does not.

What Randi Weingarten knows is how to threaten people and ruthlessly undermine their work. Mr. Brill reports how Weingarten sought to destroy Eva Moskowitz's (Council Chair, N.Y. Upper East Side). In 2003 Ms. Moskowitz ran a meeting that zeroed in on a list of UFT (United Federation of Teachers) lunacy, such as why the UFT needs two person to change a certain light bulb. Obviously for Weingarten -not having negotiated contract- the hearing did not come at the best of times, and was lobbying to stop it; but she could not. According to Ms. Moskowitz, two weeks before the event, Weingarten took her aside and said: "We will destroy you politically in New York. You will be over". While Weingarten denies she has ever said that, the history behind her just too long and too dirty to give credence to her statement. Be that as it may, two years later (in 2005), UFT paid phone banks, radio advertisings, leaflet campaign, lied about Ms. Moskowitz to support Scott Stringer, her opponent.

In 2005, Rep. George Miller, senior democrat on the House Education and Labor Committee, cosponsored (with Ted Kennedy) the TEACH (Teacher Excellence for All Children). In a nutshell, the Bill was to amend the No Child Left Behind Act with a function of giving merit pay to the best teachers. On August 15, 2005 the Congress Daily (Capitol Hill Newsletter) reported that "the nation's two largest Teacher's Unions have weighed in heavily against House Education and Labor Chairman George Miller's plan to include performance pay for teachers in his upcoming No Child Left Behind reauthorization".

From 1989 through 2010, the NEA (National Education Association) and the AFT gave \$60.7 million to candidates for federal office. 95% of it going to Democrats. In 2008 alone, \$3.5 million was split among nearly all House Democrats and \$575,000 was split among nearly all Senate Democrats. [Data Ref: Steven Brill / Class Warfare and own research].

Does this read like:

1. A power grabbing multi-billion dollar sham geared to keep the Teacher's Union (UFT, AFT, NEA) fat, happy and in control, or
2. A chapter out of a book discussing the Cosa Nostra, or

3. An organization that worries about students, that regards the students as the organization's "client", the cornerstone of the nation's advancement?

Decide for yourself.

The mindless, self-centered Teacher's Union was given huge power, they fired Michelle Rhee, one of the very few good and successful superintendents in Washington DC. The Obama government cancelled the first and only program that worked in Washington DC giving real support to students:

"...The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, the first federal initiative to spend taxpayer dollars on private school tuition, was created by a Republican-led Congress in 2004 to help students from low-income families. Congress has cut off federal funding after the 2009-10 school year unless lawmakers vote to reauthorize it..... Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in a statement that the Obama administration does not want to pull participating students out of the program but does not support its continuation...." (Washington Post)

Education's Stolen Turkey

According to a Bedouin legend, an old Bedouin bought a turkey. He stuffed it with food, raised and kept the turkey around the tent; he knew that one day he and his family will have a feast. Then, one day the turkey was stolen. The old Bedouin went to his sons saying: "a terrible thing happened, someone stole the turkey". His sons were laughing at him. Father, it's only a turkey! A short while after, someone stole one of the tribe's horse.but, having enough horses, it did not look to be a terrible problem. Then two camels were stolen, but the tribe voted: "we are not going to start a war over two camels". Each time the old Bedouin told the tribe: "go and get my turkey back". Not much after that, the old Bedouin and his sons went to the nearby village to sell their wares. By the time they arrived back, the tribe members were killed, women raped, and the village burned to the ground. The old Bedouin, standing there, turned to his sons: "When we did not go after my turkey, I knew we lost everything".

The list of societal components based upon the "it's only a turkey" philosophy includes education, immigration, legal system, political life, economy, to name a few. Fewer and fewer people see in the turkey how -down the road- we can lose everything.

We recognize the need for structure and discipline in the military, police, firefighters, first responders; we understand the reason why millions of well educated men and women have no First Amendment Right (I yet to hear a colonel going on TV saying: "My general is an idiot"). We further understand that Asian cultures with their discipline based work ethic, have been cleaning the Western school systems' clock (those who disagree with this statement are hereby advised: go to a Ph.D. hooding ceremony at any American university and count the "Asian" and "American" names being announced. It is approximately 25:1 respectively).

It has never computed with me that knowing all these undisputable facts, ACLU and their ilk sue anyone on spot, who does not let eight year old Jimmy come to school in a pants that hangs around little Jimmy's knees. ACLU and other social-communist organizations also sue the same school if they did not send little Jimmy home when Jimmy came to school in a T-shirt with the American flag on it around Fourth of July. Comparing these (and long list of other) empiric facts with the activity of ACLU (Teacher's Union, Paul Krugman...), it is safe to conclude that these organizations and people are out there to destroy the very fabric of America.

I also argued the fact that no one has ever gone to church (synagogue, masque....) in dirty clothing, in a tight tank top that leaves 90 percent of the body to be seen; no one has ever yelled, laughed aloud, wrestled on the floor or used obscene language in a church. The question is why? Because of the built in respect. Respect for the institution. It means that the concept of "respect" is recognized and known element of the behavior model. We know it, we practice it. This example with the church proves that kids could be trained to show respect, they know what respect is, they recognize the place where respect must be shown and they practice it. So, if that is true, then two questions are begged to be asked: if the kids can easily recognize the place where respect must be shown, then isn't it a systemic problem (developed by the liberal anything-goes society) that "school" is not on their list?, and how is it that we train kids from first grade that the place (school) where they spend most of their time for twelve years, where they must gain the foundation of their entire life, is a place where "anything goes"? Isn't it contradictory, counterproductive, anti-children and anti-society, or is it just me?

I have been arguing for close to two decades that the line of stolen turkeys starts in elementary school, where we let kids come in any outfit they desire, have "First Amendment Right" where we let nine year old girls paint their nails (I already hear a "what's wrong with that??" question), and in general, we converted the entire school system to be a cross between a social club, a sport arena and a beauty pageant. A school system where we by not teaching them the difference between "winning" and "losing", we deprive them to experience and feel "achievement" (and later we are surprised they have no "shining city on the hill" mentality, essentially becoming a Joe Klein type socialist moron); we do not teach them how to respect other people, but we teach them that they are entitled to do and have everything. We also teach them to "stand up" to their parents, and how to sue them if they feel like it. In my humble opinion, several of the building blocks of a decent human being is someone who lives up to the given words, who wants respect and gives one, who is trustworthy who stands up for what he/she believes in, and stands up for others. It is a sick liberal fantasy that "well, he does not respect anyone, does not like to work, has no morals, you cannot trust him but in a "big picture" he is a good person". No, he is not. Whether he is not a good person, because he just does not want to be one (a fraction of the population) or is not a good person, because no one has ever thought him to be one, in fact everyone around him thought him not to be one, is another conversation. But he is not. To bring rain on people's parade who have developed and been running this mess: "No matter what are your concerns and reasons, and why do you think I am wrong; 47% of Detroit is functionally illiterate. So, unless there is another organization, outfit or agency who is receiving my tax dollars to teach my kids, all of you involved in the education system should leave before you do more damage.

Summary

I have spent a very long time reading, doing research, and thinking; trying to search for the "bottom line". By doing it, I came across James Russel Lowell's definition of "Not failure, but low aim is the crime". Based upon his definition, I believe I can support my argument and conclusion that the increasingly liberal US system is a criminal enterprise in raising children from age five to be young adults. It has also become clear that the "liberal" and "criminal" components of the statement are in direct correlation with each other. I listed a substantial number of ingredients, but education is number one. The system (thanks to the Weingartens of the world) is geared to create a vastly uneducated (white, black, Latino, Asian, etc) generation first, then try to "reform them" later either by "midnight basket ball" programs, or by jailing them. **Would it be easier not to create them in the first place?**

So why don't we do something?

Because where would such a move leave the Teacher's Union? Where would Randi Weingarten,

Karen Lewis, and others find another well paying job? This is the cork of the problem. That the union would be eliminated and Weingarten, Lewis and their cronies would be out of job. If schools will hire high performance teachers only, and they pay great salary for achievements, why would anyone need the union? The unions have been trying to get into Honda, Toyota, Sam's Corp., and other large, vastly successful companies, but they have been thrown out every single time they tried. Not the management threw them out; the workers did. Weingarten knows this. And now we arrived to the foundation of why the union, Weingarten, and her union buddies keep the entire US education system hostage. And why Lewis -beside her union's huge failure- has the face to "demand" higher wages. The mandatory elementary school system is in diametrical opposite to Weingarten, Lewis, and the union's interest. Should we eliminate the mandatory high-school system, the following would happen practically overnight:

- "regional" high-schools would become "specialized" high-schools, accepting students from any city or state, provided the student fulfills the schools entry criteria;
- high-school populations would drop by 40%-50%;
- classes would become much smaller, teachers (one of the two tandem bikers) would pay much closer attention;
- high-schools would fire all substandard teachers to maintain a quality education level;
- trade schools would thrive;
- upon eliminating the Department of Education and giving block grants to states, the entire education system would become competitive;
- taking the education back to state level (the Jimmy "the peanut farmer" Carter took away), the state system would have the power to decide between a mandatory elementary and high-school systems. It would not take long to figure out which system is more productive;

Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in his brilliant book *My Grandfather's Son*: *"....I thought economically disadvantaged students should be chief beneficiaries of preferential admissions policies at colleges and law schools, since they were the ones who had suffered most from past discrimination and so deserved the greatest amount of help..."* I respectfully disagree. The problem is systemic; the void of power exists in the fact that 40% of high-school students do not belong to high-school, rendering disciplinary measures impossible. Machiavelli said "If there is a void in power, it will be filled" and this power void in the first 12 years of education was filled by the Teacher's Union. They have become a great part of the problem, but not the fundamental problem. They just filled the void and took advantage of it. If there was mandatory eight year education, the union's power would be diminished. The system would create a great number of highly educated students, therefore "the greatest amount of help" would be completely unnecessary. We would not need "No child left behind", "school evaluations", "teacher evaluations", "national student assessment scores", "National Assessment of Education Progress" test, and other paralyzed, dead-on-arrival attempts to patch up a badly leaking bucket. The bucket must be changed.

In my belief, where all the help, discipline and assistance should be present and applied is between age 5-14. We do not teach kids to love books, study, read, write, form a well founded opinion, and communicate about what they read, heard or saw. We do not teach them how to excel, compete and win. We push them through a mindless meat grinder, called the "public education system" empowered by (in a more precise definition: destroyed, trashed, nullified, by) the Teachers Union. This creates the above referenced generation of young people, half of them cannot read and write, and bingo: here is your "high-school diploma", go find a job. It does not work. We should provide all possible assistance to students up until age 14, help them build their potential, then assist them find the right school system (high, trade, hands-on, or otherwise) where they can achieve their objective. We also must provide education to late bloomers. Should we do that, we would not need

to spend billions on crime prevention "midnight basket ball", and on other stupidities trying to reform the already screwed up young adults, and trying to patch up a broken system. And you know what? This would require fewer high-schools, teachers and funding. Facilities, personnel, everything and everybody are available as it is. The system must be changed. But this system would not need Randi Weingarten and her union cronies. And this is why it will probably never happen.

And again, we can safely conclude that "all the current system wants is to do good" (well; looking at the Teacher's Union with Weingarten running it, I am not sure that the "entire" system wants to do good) to these young people.

- We do not want to fail them until high-school, because it would hurt their feelings ---- while we are totally confused why suicide rate has gone up at universities (the first place where the students face an up until then unknown terminology: "demand");
- We do not want to discipline them ---- so we took our school system and created a cross between a sport club, a social gathering, a beauty pageant, and a fashion show.
- In the name of "want to do good" we devised policies that holds every non-English speaking students back from achieving anything as long as possible....while we are mighty surprised why "national cohesion" and "patriotism" are falling like a rock and anti-American sentiment is on the rise within our country. Let me spend more time on this topic, because if this will not show the utter stupidity mixed with anti-American roots of the entire system in general, and the Weingarten-run union in particular, nothing ever will. I have strong legs to stand on in this issue, because I am an emigrant, and my company brought more than 180 consultants (with their families) on H-1B work visa to the US between 1996-2000. When you (legally or illegally) relocate to a new country, the most painful part of the exercise is to lose your "social net" that you developed from the day you were born. Family, friends, doctor, dentist, car mechanic, butcher, hairdresser, etc. People you know for a long time, you trust them you have history with them. The faster you are able to develop a new net in your new home country, the faster you will "feel at home" again. Obviously (I mean "obviously to everyone with the rare exception of Randi Weingarten and her cronies), language is the most important communication tool and platform to regain your social net, and with that regain your "feel at home" again. This thesis really belong to the "a blind drunk monkey in her sleep would understand this" category. Living in Dallas, having some network in the Hungarian community, I know people living in the US for thirty years not having more than 200 word vocabulary. Do you know why? Because they stayed within the Hungarian community; it was "easier" to communicate. Any (I mean: any) attempt to lengthen the road for a non-English speaking student to learn English is a criminal activity which should be punished by years worth of jail sentence. I think any and all morons and criminals who participated (and still are participating) at any level in this enterprise ("let us bring i.e. Spanish speaking teachers to the class rooms") should be immediately fired and jailed. This statement encompasses everyone all the way to several consecutive Secretaries of Education. Once again, just to make it clear: larger than 50% of the American high-school age people either do not graduate, or graduate while being functionally illiterate. We are talking about millions and millions of people here. Are we still having problem to understand where the high drug, gang and crime-rates are coming from?
- We established this moronic mandatory high-school system ---- and we do not understand why did we have to lower the quality by 50% in order not to record 45%-55% failure rate in high-schools.

September 16, 2012

At the same time we are mighty surprised why the US education system is falling like a rock while several other countries better theirs.

Just a thought.