

# Confessions of a Blindfolded Newsman



by Lee Duigon

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In the 1970s the U.S. Dept. of Education was founded, and various states set up their own departments of education or else greatly expanded the powers of those already in existence. These steps drastically altered the state of public education in America... not that it was ever all that good an idea in the first place.

I was a weekly newspaper reporter and editor in those days. Among many other duties, I covered three local school boards and had part-timers covering the rest. When a major story came along, we worked on it together.

Very serious changes were put in place back then. These happened right before my eyes; and I am ashamed to tell you that I didn't see them. They were right out there in front of me, and I might as well have been wearing a blindfold. I can only say I couldn't see the forest for the trees—lots and lots of trees, and every one of them a distraction that kept me from seeing the big picture.

I saw the state education bureaucracy gnaw away and eventually swallow the authority of the local school boards—and didn't realize what I was seeing. The local boards lost their power to make decisions for the communities that elected them and that they were supposed to represent.

I remember now a meeting of the Matawan Board of Education, in

which a nerd from the state came up from Trenton and told the local board members what the state of New Jersey would be expecting of them from now on.

One board member objected. "What is this?" he said. "It sounds like one of those old Soviet five-year plans!" The response was a coy "Tee-hee! Once you buy into the program—" don't you love that phrase?—"you'll have a clearer understanding." What I didn't realize was that he already had a very clear understanding of exactly what the state was doing! And how. But he wound up resigning, and it never occurred to me to sit down with him for an in-depth interview. I was too busy with all those little trees.

Dammit all! I was a newsman, and this was news! I had it in my power to inform the public that they were being taken for a ride. That these nabobs in Trenton were growing the government at the community's expense. That the teachers' union had the state wrapped around its little finger. And that the union would use that power to impose a Far Left turn.

So the people who paid for the schools, and sent their children there, would no longer be getting what they thought they paid their taxes for. From now on, they'd be getting whatever the unions and quasi-Marxist grey ponytail "educators" thought they ought to get. Local board members either resigned or towed the line as laid down by the state. The boards now represented Trenton, not their own communities that had elected them. The remaining board members, most of them, came to think of themselves as "educators" ruling from on high. All for the people's own good, of course.

By and by the newspaper workload became too heavy a burden for me and I resigned, too. I left in a state of ignorance, unable to see that from now on the only role of the public in public education was to shut up and pay for it.

People who don't much like us, and who want to change our way

of life, have been working on our schools for fifty years.

Pull your children out of there. That's all that's left for us to do.

I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com/> . Click the link and drop in for a visit... while it's still allowed. My articles can also be found at [www.chalcedon.edu/](http://www.chalcedon.edu/) .

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