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Compulsory Education is Jail for Innocent Kids

Enrico Sanna

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Recently, the Guardian reported a grim story about a pupil in an elementary public school in the city of Milan, Italy. At lunchtime, the school principal took the pupil from the cafeteria and forced her to eat her lunch in the classroom, alone and away from her mates. Why? Because she had been caught red-handed. She had brought to school a homemade sandwich instead of relying on the daily lunch served by Milan's public school system.

Anna Scavuzzo, in charge of the city's school food policy, said it's a matter of food safety. Her spokeswoman claimed to be worried by the effects of unhealthy food on children, wondering aloud, "If you permit everyone to bring their own food, how can you be sure that something won't happen?"

You can bet this has nothing to do with food safety, and everything to do with browbeating and brainwashing children into deference to authority. Authority being the state, of which teachers and school administrators are a proxy.

So what they are trying to do — and they've been at it ever since compulsory public schooling systems were created by

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states in the last two centuries — is mold children's minds while they are malleable and defenseless. In other words, compulsory "education" is a heartless institution enslaving innocent children in factories which churn out obedient servants of the state. Lobotomy is a better word to describe this.

The spokeswoman herself seems to admit it, unwittingly, when she admits, "They need to learn to sit together, to have proper, safe and organic food, and that they can't just have potato chips and chocolate. They are in school and that means community."

But sitting together, eating safe, organic food is just a fig leaf. Sitting or standing or marching like ants when they are told, and eating when and what they are told, unthinkingly obeying the orders is what compulsory "education" is all about. That's what all public school systems were created for in the first place, and that's also the reason attending classes was made compulsory. Compulsory, "free" education is a tool of the state, perhaps its most important. It's through education that the state first asserts its control and authority on a person's life. Real communities can only be created through freedom of association. Thus compulsory education is a hindrance to true, meaningful communities.

Even if we admit that compulsory "education" exists to give younger ones the tools they need to face their future life, even if we take this institution at face value, most of what is taught is useless for most people. We spend many years of our lives studying things we never need in the first place. And if it were not for the vast accreditation system that regulates access to work, we would scarcely need schools at all.

Like everything that comes from the state, compulsory "education" is against freedom of choice. There is no freedom when choices range from A to A. And there is no "right to education". Whether to educate oneself or one's children, and on what conditions, should be up to everyone to decide on their own. But there is no such freedom when the state is the master. Parents

have to surrender their children, period. Claiming that compulsory "education" is a right, the state makes a mockery of child's and parent's rights. It is mass enslavement of the weakest and most vulnerable.

Compulsory schools are nothing but the Western, secular version of Islamic madrasas, and the state is the modern despotic, all-pervading god. The state is the worst of all religions. But like all institutional religions, the state is doomed. Increasingly, there are alternatives. Home-schooling and un-schooling come to mind. And people are starting to see through the charade. Just like attendance of religious mass dwindled considerably in the last century, attendance to that secular mass which is the state school will be seen more and more inconsistent with personal freedom.