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# *We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution*

## How It Teaches the Federal Curriculum

### A Textbook Review by Allen Quist

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This review recognizes the existence of a Federal Curriculum that is making a significant impact on education policy in our land. For a detailed description of this Federal Curriculum, see the author's book *Fed Ed: The New Federal Curriculum and How It's Enforced* (©2002, available from *EdWatch.org* or *Amazon.com*). This book describes and documents the nature and content of the Federal Curriculum and also details the methods used to force the curriculum on all the schools in our nation.

The reality of the new Federal Curriculum is becoming increasingly apparent to those who are part of America's system of education. In August of 2002, for example, the author received a promotional brochure for the "U.S. News and World Report -- Classroom Program" which, according to the brochure, meets "all the curriculum standards" for teaching social studies. This brochure quotes extensively from the national *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* thereby clarifying that it is the national (federal) social studies standards (curriculum) that are being met by the program. Those who subscribe to this U.S. News program are even promised a matrix outlining which of the national curriculum standards are met by particular articles in the *U.S. News and World Report* magazines.

This paper is a review of another of the many applications of the new Federal Curriculum, namely, the widely used civics textbook titled *We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution*. As will be demonstrated, the new Federal Curriculum is aggressively taught in this high-school level textbook.

We begin with some basic facts about the book. *We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution* is published by the Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA, 91302-1467, 818-591-9321, <http://www.civiced.org>. The copyright date is 1995; seventh printing is dated 2000, 283 pages. The book lists for \$12.00. (\$10.00 for quantities of ten or more.) This book is very likely the least expensive civics textbook available.

The bottom of the title page states (emphasis added):

a project of the **Center for Civic Education**

Funded by the **U.S. Department of Education** by act of Congress  
Established in 1987 under **the Commission of the Bicentennial of  
the United States Constitution**

The text of *We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution* states, "The development of this text was originally funded and cosponsored by the Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution." The pre-

sent edition of the textbook, however, was authorized and funded in 1994 by the education appropriations bill known as HR6. The text was reauthorized and funded by an act of Congress in 2002 in HR1, also known as "No Child Left Behind."

HR1 (No Child Left Behind) states:

#### **Sec 2344. *We The People Program***

(a) THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION.--

(1) EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES.-- The Center for Civic Education --

(A) shall use funds made available under grants or contracts under section 2343(a)(1)-- . . .

(iii) to provide a course of instruction on the basic principles of our Nation's constitutional democracy and the history of the Constitution of the United States including the Bill of Rights . . .

Before looking at the content of this textbook, it should be noted that several important questions are involved in its publishing. Why, for example, should the federal government be involved in subsidizing the publishing of a high-school textbook? Other textbooks aren't subsidized; why should this one be?

Second, if the federal government is to subsidize a textbook, why shouldn't it give various companies or organizations the opportunity to bid on the project? Why should federal law specify that one and only one organization is authorized, at taxpayer expense, to publish this text?

And third, we notice that one NGO (non-governmental organization) is authorized and funded to write this textbook, but we also notice that Congress has not established a review process. How will Congress know if the Center for Civic Education (CCE) has written an acceptable textbook? In the United States there is an old adage about not buying a pig in a poke. With this book, at minimum, the Congress has done just that.

#### **Philosophy of the Textbook**

*We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution* is quite explicit in clarifying its overall approach and philosophy. The preface ends with these words:

Each generation, in its own way, has sought to live up to the promise of the nation's founding, to realize for the future the perfection of the past. It will eventually be your quest, too, as the rising generation of American citizens. You, too, will strive, in the words of Langston Hughes, to "let America be America again / The land that never has been yet."

In other words, the authors of the text see the fulfillment of American ideals as being a work in process, not a final destination. The textbook takes an evolutionary perspective that the United States is continually improving in its realization of basic principles. This improvement is seen as being largely the result of activist Supreme Court decisions and the expansion of federal governmental authority.

Substantial changes clearly have taken place in American government over the past 200 plus years. The question is -- how will these changes be interpreted by the textbook? Will the text view the evolutionary changes as a greater realization of our nation's self-evident principles of national sovereignty, natural law and unalienable rights? Or will the book advocate the radical position that our foundational principles may have been correct 200 years ago for the people of that time, but then was then, and now is now; and these principles, therefore, are now up for grabs?

The answer to this question begins to be clarified when we observe that, in addition to its evolutionary perspective, the textbook also follows a postmodernist worldview. The text, for example, consistently treats our foundational principles as "ideas," not as truths. The textbook states:

This unit provides an overview of some important philosophical **ideas** and historic events that influenced the writing of our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The first and second lessons in this unit introduce you to some basic **ideas** of the natural rights **philosophy** and **theories** of government. These **ideas** were of great importance in the development of our government. The remaining lessons in this unit examine in greater detail the historical background of these **ideas**. [Emphasis added, p. 1.]

There is nothing wrong with describing our foundational principles as ideas, of course. They are ideas. The question is, are these foundational principles **only** ideas, or are they something more? How does our Declaration of Independence, itself, describe its foundational principles? It does so, not with the language of "ideas," but with the language of "self-evident" "truths," and "unalienable rights," instead. Calling these principles "**truths**" goes way beyond just calling them "**ideas**." In direct contrast to the Declaration, the only time *We The People, The Citizen And The Constitution* uses the word "truth," is in the Declaration of Independence itself (printed in the Appendix) and when referring to a woman by the name of "Sojourner Truth" (1797-1883).

In the last chapter, the textbook further clarifies what it means by the "ideas" of our foundational principles. The textbook says:

As fundamental and lasting as its guarantees have been [past tense], the U.S. Bill of Rights is a document of the eighteenth century, reflecting the issues and concerns of the age in which it was written. . . . Other national guarantees of rights also reflect the cultures that created them. Many of these cultures have values and priorities different from our own. In many Asian countries, for example, the rights of the individuals are secondary to the interests of the whole community. Islamic countries take their code of laws from the teachings of the Koran, the book of sacred writings accepted by Muslims as revelations to the prophet Mohammad by God. [p. 207]

In other words, the text views our Bill of Rights as a creation of our culture while other forms of government have foundational principles that are creations of their cultures. No form of national government is better, none is worse; all cultures and their creations are equal. This is the position of multiculturalism (one of the seven major themes of the new Federal Curriculum).

Multiculturalism defines truth, not in absolute terms, but in relative terms. That is, multiculturalism views our foundational principles as being belief statements of a particular culture at a particular time. According to multiculturalism, the principles of national sovereignty, natural law and the natural rights of life, liberty and property may have been useful for the culture that embraced them 200 years ago, but that does not mean these principles are appropriate for us today. Multiculturalism is the opposite of the "self-evident" "truths and "unalienable rights" which formed the foundation of our nation.

Multiculturalism is an application of the philosophy known as "postmodernism" or "constructivism" (all truth is a social construct). The national *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* are emphatic in promoting the postmodernist view that what passes for truth are really social "constructs."

It is especially significant to observe that while this textbook consistently presents our nation's foundational principles as only ideas, multiculturalism, in contrast, is never presented as being a mere idea or philosophy. Multiculturalism is always presented as being true. The textbook mirrors the paradox of postmodernism, which says that all truths are social constructs except this one.

As a consequence of the multiculturalism philosophy, our nation's foundational principles cease to be "self-evident" "unalienable" "truths." Even though the textbook uses these important words, the text means something totally different by them than what our nation's founders meant. The foundational principles have become the mere opinion of one particular culture at one point in time.

**This distinction comprises the primary paradigm shift between traditional education and the new (and radical) system of education.** People who do not recognize this paradigm shift, including many lawmakers, are easily misled into believing the national standards (Federal Curriculum) are something they are not.

At the same time, however, everyone has some position regarding the question of what is true. Compare, for example, the way this textbook treats human rights, as defined by our Declaration of Independence, to the man-

ner in which it describes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When describing the latter document, the textbook says:

The social, economic, and **solidarity rights** included in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in many national guarantees of rights adopted since, are what are sometimes called **positive rights**. . . . positive rights . . . describe certain benefits that citizens should have. These rights express the objectives worthy of any just society. [Textbook's emphasis, p. 208.]

Notice the attitude the textbook takes toward the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The U.N.'s Declaration is not viewed as being merely one culture's ideas at one point in time. Not at all. The U.N.'s Declaration is described as being "worthy" of "any just society." It is described in terms that are absolute and universal, not in terms relative to culture.

The text never points out, of course, that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights takes the same form as the statements of rights in the constitutions of all communist countries. The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights ends with the words: "These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations." **That is, the U.N. polices must come first; individual human rights come second.**

Consistent with its multiculturalism worldview, *We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution* takes a dim view of teaching factual information. The text says:

The primary purpose of this textbook is not to fill your head with a lot of facts about American history and government. Knowledge of the facts is important but only in so far as it deepens your understanding of the American constitutional system and its development. [p. X]

That is, the proper "understanding of the American constitutional system" (as defined by the multiculturalism ideology of the textbook) is the filter that determines which facts will be taught and which facts will be ignored. The textbook does not believe in liberal arts (which intends to present all the information so that students can make up their own minds.) This text is about indoctrination, not liberation of the mind.

The textbook says that it will present only those facts that promote the student's proper "understanding of the American constitutional system." What is meant by that terminology? The *National Standards for Civics and Government*, also written by the CCE, explains by saying:

The goal of education in civics and government is. . . acquisition of a body of knowledge and of intellectual and participatory skills. Effective and responsible participation also is furthered by the development of **certain dispositions or traits of character** that enhance the individual's capacity to participate in the political process and **contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and improvement of society**. [Emphasis added, p. 1.]

In other words, whatever will "contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and improvement of society" makes up the real Federal Curriculum

(as defined by the CCE, of course). Notice especially the words "improvement of society." The new Federal Curriculum intends to change society (and government), not just teach about government.

### Content of the Textbook

As noted above, the textbook says that it intends to teach the proper "understanding of the American constitutional system." That statement is the filter which determines which facts are presented and which are omitted. We will allow the textbook to explain this operating principle for us by observing how it answers the following four specific questions:

1. What is *We The People's* overall view of the Bill of Rights?
2. What is *We The People's* view of each of the First Ten Amendments which make up the Bill of Rights?
3. What is *We The People's* view of national sovereignty?
4. What is *We The People's* view of foundational principles?

These four questions pretty well cover the waterfront in determining what is meant by "understanding of the American constitutional system." We now turn to the first question.

1. What is *We The People's* view of the Bill of Rights?

In addition to its overall postmodernist philosophy, *We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution* expresses its attitude toward the Bill of Rights this way:

The reaction of most people to the Bill of Rights was **lukewarm at best**. Its passage had **little effect on the average person**. . . .The Anti-Federalists, who had based much of their opposition to the Constitution on the lack of a bill of rights, **were unhappy with its passage**. They thought it **spoiled their chances** to rewrite the Constitution. They said the amendments were "**good for nothing**." "I believe," said Senator William Grayson of Virginia, "as many others do, **they will do more harm than good**." At the same time, **Federalists were angry** with Madison for pushing the Bill of Rights through Congress. **At best, they considered it of little importance**. Even Madison, **tired of all the disagreement and dissent**, had come to think of the **whole experience as a "nauseous project."** [Emphasis added, p. 100.]

As can be seen from this statement, the textbook's view of the Bill of Rights, as it was written and adopted, is decidedly negative.

2. What is *We The People's* attitude toward the first ten Amendments which make up the Bill of Rights?

Units 1 through 4 of the textbook describe the historical development of our system of government up to the present time. Unit 5 then describes our government as it

exists today. Unit 5 is titled “What Rights Does the Bill of Rights Protect?” (Notice the present tense of the verb.) As the title states, this unit describes the basic human rights which are protected by our Constitution today. The following table describes which of our basic rights are supposedly protected by the Constitution today, as well as the number of pages devoted to each fundamental human right:

**“What Rights does the Bill of Rights Protect?”**

*Number of pages Unit 5 devotes to each Amendment:*

First Amendment.....	16
Second Amendment.....	0
Third Amendment .....	1
Amendments Four through Eight .....	17
Ninth Amendment .....	0
Tenth Amendment .....	0

Notice that in this unit called: “What Rights Does the Bill of Rights Protect?” (present tense), the Second, the Ninth and the Tenth Amendments are never mentioned. Look at the contrast. There are 16 pages of text devoted to the First Amendment, but not one word on the Second. Similarly, there is not one word on the Ninth and Tenth Amendments. These three amendments are viewed as being either nonexistent or unimportant for our day. They are out of sight and out of mind.

The Second Amendment (right to bear arms) was mentioned in the historical development section of the text, but there it was included only under the heading of controversial issues, and the emphasis, when dealing with the Second Amendment, was on gun control, not the right to bear arms. In addition, the Second Amendment was defined as being the right of states to have a militia, not as a personal right to own and bear arms.

What, then, is this textbook’s attitude toward the Second Amendment? The text’s attitude is that the right to bear arms is of historical interest only; that it has always been controversial; that there is a need for more gun control; that the Second Amendment has never included the right of private citizens to own guns; and that there is no right to bear arms today. That is, this textbook teaches that there is no genuine right to bear arms. This radical political position plays an important part in the new Federal Curriculum.

The Ninth and Tenth Amendments are also excluded from this Unit. The Ninth and Tenth Amendments describe the doctrine of “reserved rights.” That is, the Ninth Amendment states that individual rights not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved, or retained, by the people; and the Tenth says that rights not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution are retained by the states or the people, respectively.

In the historical development section of the book, the Ninth Amendment is described in passing, but the Tenth Amendment is never mentioned anywhere in the text of this book. It has been censored out.

Historically, textbooks in American government have differentiated between the “delegated powers,” those given to the federal government, and the “reserved powers,” those powers that remain with the states and the people. This textbook uses the term “delegated powers,” but it never uses the counterpart term “reserved powers.” In this textbook there are no rights reserved to the states or to the people. All the rights reside with the federal government.

In addition, how can a textbook teach the meaning of constitutional government without teaching the Ninth and Tenth Amendments? It cannot be done. And how can a text teach the doctrine of limited government under our Constitution without teaching the Ninth and Tenth Amendments? It cannot be done. How can a text teach what Federalism is without teaching the Tenth Amendment? Again, it cannot be done. According to this textbook, all 50 states and all our citizens are at the mercy of the federal government.

3. What is *We The People’s* view of National Sovereignty?

*We The People: The Citizen And The Constitution* asks this question: “What were the main ideas and arguments of the Declaration?” It then answers the question with the following list (p. 45):

1. *Natural law*
2. *Social contract theory*
3. *The purpose of government*
4. *Tyranny of the King of England*
5. *State sovereignty*

Is this list an adequate answer to the question, “What were the main ideas and arguments of the Declaration?” The Declaration of Independence itself begins by saying:

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God entitle them, . . .

That is, the Declaration of Independence begins with a declaration of national sovereignty. In fact, the Declaration of Independence could be called the “Declaration of National Sovereignty.” The meaning is the same. The text of this book, however, never mentions national sovereignty. Not even once. Not even in passing. Not even as a matter of historical interest. National sovereignty is out of sight and out of mind. Why is that? The reason is the text promotes a political agenda and worldview that is hostile to national sovereignty.

What is that agenda? Chapter 37 of the textbook has the title, “How May Citizenship Change in the Nation’s Third Century?” The chapter begins with the heading called, “Purpose of Lesson,” which reads as follows:

This lesson looks to the future. You focus on some major developments taking place in our society that are likely to affect the very nature of citizenship during your lifetime. When you complete this lesson, you should be able to explain how the increased diversity of our society . . . and closer international relationships are likely to affect your life as a citizen. You should be able to describe how diversity has challenged our civic culture, . . . and how our nation’s greater interdependence with the rest of the world is changing the pattern of civic loyalties. [p. 200]

The chapter also states:

Although national citizenship is likely to remain fundamentally important in the future, the issues confronting American citizens are increasingly **international**. Issues of economic competition, the environment, and the movement of peoples around the world require an awareness of political associations that are larger in scope than the nation-state. [Textbook’s emphasis, p. 202.]

What are these “political associations that are larger in scope than the nation-state?” The textbook further explains by saying:

The achievements of modern technology are turning the world into a **global village**. [Textbook’s emphasis, p. 202.]

The chapter then ends with the following question:

What advantages might be offered by world citizenship? What disadvantages? Do you think that world citizenship will be possible in our lifetime? [p. 203]

“Global village” and “world citizenship” mean one-world government. This text wishes to eliminate national sovereignty and replace it with one-world government. That is the agenda of the book. It is really quite explicit.

**The text is not really a “study” of American government at all. This text is all about producing a radical transformation of American government so that we willingly give up our national sovereignty (and freedom) and succumb to a one world-government (of tyranny) instead. That is the bottom line. That is the theme of this book. One-world government is also the unifying theme and purpose of the new Federal Curriculum.**

This book is *not* intended to be educational as we have traditionally defined education in our nation. The book is really propaganda. It is social engineering, not education. It is decidedly anti-American and anti-freedom. It is designed to indoctrinate our citizens into being willing to give away our national sovereignty and freedom and to accept the establishment of a one-world government, instead.

This is how some of the indoctrination proceeds. The text says:

The achievements of modern technology are turning the world into a **global village**. [Textbook’s emphasis, p. 202.]

The teacher’s guide tells the instructors to be sure the students know what the “global village” is. What is the global village? The term never appears in the glossary. What is the global village? The text never defines the term directly. It does define the term indirectly, however. This is what the book says (pp. 202-203):

National concerns have become international.

Environmental concerns also transcend national boundaries.

The culture we live in is becoming **cosmopolitan**, that is, belonging to the whole world. [Textbook’s emphasis.]

. . . the issues confronting American citizens are increasingly **international**. [Textbook’s emphasis.]

What is the global village? Keep in mind that this is a textbook in government. What happens when we fill in the blanks? The message is as follows:

- Just as “national concerns have become international,” so also government should become international.
- Just as environmental concerns “transcend national boundaries,” so also government should transcend national boundaries.
- Just as culture is “belonging to the whole world,” so also government should belong to the whole world.
- Just as “the issues confronting American citizens are increasingly international,” so also government needs to become international.

The “global village,” in other words, is one-world government.

4. What is *We The People*’s view of fundamental principles?

We will now consider how the textbook ends. The last chapter of the book is called: “What is Meant by Returning to Fundamental Principles?” (p. 213) Notice that the chapter is **not** called “Returning to Fundamental Principles.” Instead, the chapter is called, “**What is Meant by Returning to Fundamental Principles?**” [Emphasis added.]

We know what our founding fathers meant by “fundamental principles.” Our founding fathers referred to such principles as being “self-evident” “truths” and as “unalienable rights.” Is this what *We The People* means by “fundamental principles”? Not at all. “Returning to fundamental principles” is defined by the text as follows:

It is doubtful that these Founders had in mind an uncritical acceptance of the “wisdom of the past.” In revisiting these principles, each generation must examine and evaluate them anew. Indeed, it is probable that the Founders would be somewhat surprised at the reverence in which they and their writings have been held by subsequent generations of Americans.

The Founders, themselves, were vigorous critics of the wisdom they inherited and the principles in which they believed. They were articulate, opinionated individuals who loved to examine ideas, to analyze, argue and debate them. They expected no less of future generations. They would expect no less of you. [p. 214]

As we observed earlier, in the multicultural (post-modernist) worldview of this text, there are no “self-evident” “truths” which serve as the basis for our nation. There are no “unalienable rights.” In this textbook, all our basic principles are to be “examined anew.” **Indeed, our “fundamental principles” are defined by this text as being a “revisiting” of the fundamental principles upon which our nation was founded.** Everything is now up for grabs. We can observe what the founders of our nation believed, but then was then, and now is now. Every fundamental principle is subject to question. Our nation’s fundamental principles are turned on their heads. Every fundamental principle can now be sacrificed for the new fundamental principle of one-world government.

All the while, the CCE, by force of federal law, at taxpayer expense, defines for all of us what real truth is. The goal of education is now the “improvement of society” as defined by the CCE. Education has become social engineering to indoctrinate our children into supporting one-world government. Any and all other educational objectives must be sacrificed on the altar of this utopian dream.

**For a thorough explanation of the entire Federal Curriculum, see:**  
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