

Compulsory State Schools

In sum: “Heretics are not to be disputed with, but to be condemned unheard, and whilst they perish by fire.”

Such was the goal of the initial force behind the first compulsory state school system in the Western world, and such was the spirit that was to animate the system. No less ardent a despot was Melanchthon, Luther’s principal aid in the drive for compulsory state schools in Germany.

Melanchthon taught firmly that all sects must be put down with the sword, and that any individual who originated new religious opinions should be punished with death. This punishment must be levied against any difference, however slight, in Protestant teachings. All others than Lutherans—Catholics, Anabaptists, Servetians, Zwinglians, etc., were to be persecuted with the utmost zeal.

The Lutheran influence on the political and educational life of the West, and particularly Germany, has been enormous. He was the first advocate of compulsory schooling, and his plans were the pattern for the first German schools. Furthermore, he inculcated Lutherans with the ideals of obedience to the State and persecution of all dissenters.

(Murray N. Rothbard, *Education: Free & Compulsory*, Auburn, Alabama: The Ludwig von Mises Institute, Kindle Book, 1999, 21)