

# The Leipzig Connection: Sabotage of the US Educational System

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## Chapter 2. The Impress (excerpts)

"Wundt's second major contribution to psychology's preempting of education wasn't theoretical at all: he produced the first generation of researchers, professors, and publicists in the new psychology. This group went on to establish experimental psychology throughout Europe and the United States:

*Through these students, the Leipzig Laboratory exercised an immense influence on the development of psychology. It served as the model for the many new laboratories that were developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The many students who flocked to Leipzig, united as they were in point of view and common purpose, constituted a school of thought in psychology."*

"The list of Wundt's students is a Who's Who early European and American psychologists. In succeeding years, one could go to almost any major European or American university and study the new psychology with a professor who had received his Ph.D. directly from Wundt at Leipzig.

*Naturally Leipzig became the Mecca of students who wished to study the "new" psychology - a psychology that was no longer a branch of speculative philosophy, no longer a fragment of the science of physiology, but a novel and daring and exciting attempt to study mental processes by the experimental and quantitative methods common to a science. For the psychology of Leipzig was, in the eighties and nineties, the newest thing under the sun. It was the psychology for bold young radicals who believed that the ways of the mind could be measured and treated experimentally - and who possibly thought themselves, in their private reflections, as pioneers on the newest frontier of science..."*

"The young Americans who studied with Wundt returned to found departments of psychology throughout the United States. With the prestige attached to having studied in Germany, these men found little difficulty in securing positions of influence at major American universities. Each became successful to a marked degree; each trained scores, often hundreds, of Ph.D. students in psychology; each contributed to new associations and publications in the new field of study. Almost without exception, every one of them became involved in another field which lay open to the advance German psychology - the field of education."

"The first of Wundt's American students to turn to the United States was G. Stanley Hall. Returning from

Leipzig in 1883, he joined the faculty of Baltimore's new Johns Hopkins University, which was

being established after the model of the great German universities. Hall organized the psychology laboratory at Johns Hopkins and, in 1887, established the *American Journal of Psychology*..."

"Two years later, in 1889, when Clark University was established in Worcester, Massachusetts, Hall was chosen to be its first president. In 1892 he played a leading roll in founding the American Psychological Association. Hall became known for his intensive studies of child development (which directly fostered the child study movement in this country) and in 1904 published his masterwork, the two-volume *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, welding experimental psychology to child education."

"Hall was also instrumental in furthering the career of a man who was to have an unusually profound effect on the course of American education: [John Dewey](#). Dewey was born in Vermont, graduated from the University of

#### John Dewey

Vermont, spent a little over two years teaching high school, and enrolled as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University." He spent a year studying under Hall, and received his doctorate from Johns Hopkins in 1884. He taught for 10 years at the universities of Michigan and Minnesota and in 1886 (the same year the National Education Association was formed), while professor at Michigan, Dewey published *Psychology*, the first American textbook on the revised subject. In late 1895 he was invited to join the faculty of the Rockefeller-endowed University of Chicago as head of the departments of philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy (teaching)."

"Although today Dewey's views are in practice in the great majority of American schools, before the turn of the century they were revolutionary. The Wundtian redefinition of "education" to mean feeding experiential data to a young brain and nervous system, [rather than the teaching of mental skills](#), led to the abdication of the

traditional role of the teacher as educator. Its place was taken by the concept of the teacher as a guide in the socialization of the child, leading each youngster to *adapt* to the specific *behavior* required of him in order to *get along* in his group. Dewey called for a leveling of individual differences into a common pool of students who are the object of learning technicians devising the social order of the future."

"To Dewey, as to Wundt, [man was an animal](#), alone with his reactions and entirely dependent upon experiential data. He believed that learning occurred only through experience, that the stimulus-response mechanism was basic to learning, and that teachers were not instructors, but designers of learning experiences."

"...Dewey was able to promote the interchangeability of psychology and education."

"Yet Dewey, the "Father of American Education", was only one of the practitioners of Wundt's revised psychology who critically transformed American education and, consequently, American life.