

How the Elite Destroyed Our Industry and Left the Working Man with the Bill

By Frank , 10 August 2026

How the Elite Destroyed Our Industry and Left the Working Man with the Bill



In 1974, I found myself in the stifling, scorching heat of Gabon. As a deep-sea diver, I worked on a SHELL pipe-laying barge for COMEX Marseille. The North Sea was cold, but the Gulf of Guinea was merciless. Underwater, in the pitch-black depths, I had to monitor the position of the steel pipes on the rollers of the supporting stinger. Today, that is computerized. That was the real economy: steel, sweat, pressure, and danger. We helped build the infrastructure that kept the world turning. No PowerPoints, no "stakeholder dialogues", no carbon footprint audits. Just hard, physical labor that created value.

By Frank Dumon

In 1982, eight years later, I was in Vietnam working for Agricomatex, a subsidiary of the Belgian Farmers' Union, as a site manager during the construction of a textile

factory with a capacity of 100,000 spindles. There too, it was all about reality: the reconstruction of a completely devastated country by the hegemonic West, agriculture, logistics, the raw cycle of sowing and harvesting, of producing and transporting. It was during that period that I read [The Third Wave](#) by Alvin Toffler. His book, the sequel to [Future Shock](#) which I had devoured in Gabon, was embraced by the Western intellectual caste as the new gospel. Toffler predicted the demise of the industrial age and the birth of a glorious "information and service economy". As a result, there is not a single textile factory left in Europe worthy of the name. Our shoes, our clothes, soon our cars, our computers, our TVs, our energy supply—almost everything is made abroad. We produce sanctions (31,000 against Russia), politicians, and bureaucrats who would be better replaced by AI.

Toffler's Third Wave: We Were Supposed to Replace Factories with a Service Sector

What the Western elite failed to tell us, however, was who would pay the bill for this so-called progress. Today, more than forty years later, we look back at the devastation wrought by the Third Wave. It was not an evolution; it was a structural shift in favor of interest groups, the pillarized institutions, the pharmaceutical industry, and the financial world. A masterpiece of Orwellian doublespeak, where producers were decimated, debts were maximized, and the **non-productive managerial caste** considered itself invincible, while handing the population VAT on top as a bonus.

The Great Demolition: Deindustrialization and the Debt Spiral

The core of my reservations about Toffler at the time was as simple as it was fundamental: without a robust industry and a positive trade balance, you cannot build an all-dominating service economy without ending up in a hopeless debt spiral.

Western policymakers, blinded by neoliberal dogmas and cheap labor in Asia, decided that making things was "old-fashioned" and "dirty". We exported our blast furnaces, our textile factories, and our shipyards to the other side of the world. In return, we got a "service economy". But what is a service economy in practice? It is an economy where we advise each other, deliver each other's packages, and manage each other's money, while depending on foreign countries for every physical need—from a hammer to a computer.

You cannot heat a house with a consultancy report. You cannot build bridges with Excel sheets. And you cannot feed your population with the moral outrage of a

climate activist. You cannot build nuclear power plants with "managers". Someone who restocks shelves at Aldi is now called a Floor Manager. Everyone wants to be a manager, but there is nothing left to "manage".

The result of this madness is a Western world running on debt. The United States, the beating heart of the Western empire, imports hundreds of billions more annually than it exports. How do they pay for that? By printing dollars and accumulating debt with the rest of the world. Europe is following at a slower but equally lethal pace. Countries that were once the industrial engines of the world are seeing their trade deficits rise and their national debts explode.

The "Third Wave" turned out to be a euphemism for financial cannibalism. The industrial elite was replaced by a financial and bureaucratic elite that does not *create* wealth, but *redistributes* it—mostly to itself. The profits of globalization flowed to the shareholders of multinationals and top managers in the tech sector, while local communities, built around factories and ports, were drained and left to decay. The working man, the welder, the shipbuilder, the electrician, was told to "retrain" for a job in "care" or "customer service", while his purchasing power evaporated and his future was pawned off to Chinese and American creditors.

The Belgian Absurdistan: Six Climate Ministers for a Bankrupt Country

If you want to see what the theoretical madness of the Third Wave looks like in practice, you don't need to look at Washington or Beijing. Just look at Belgium. After successive state reforms, driven by communal blackmail and politicians' urge to create more ministerial posts and corresponding cabinet budgets, we have created a country that is the textbook example of ungovernability.

Belgium has become an institutional lasagna, a tangle of overlapping competencies where no one is responsible for the whole, but everyone can grab from the public purse. The ultimate symbol of this madness? Climate policy. In this small patch of land, where traffic jams clog the ring roads daily, where railways and De Lijn must cut costs, we have no fewer than *six ministers* dealing with climate and energy. One at the federal level, and a whole host more at the regional and community levels.

Six ministers! Six cabinets full of "policy advisors", six armies of spokespersons, six delegations flying in private jets to international climate summits to congratulate each other on drafting yet another meaningless resolution. While citizens are subjected to one energy tax after another and can no longer drive their old diesel cars into the city, these six climate popes fly around the world to tell the poorest

countries to close their coal plants.

And then there is Brussels. The Brussels-Capital Region, the so-called "Capital of Europe", is actually an economic black hole. A region that barely produces anything anymore, where unemployment is chronically high and infrastructure is literally falling apart, yet it has the most expensive administrative layer in the country. Brussels is bankrupt, but that doesn't bother the residents of the European Quarter. They live in a parallel bubble, shielded from the reality of the working Fleming or Walloon who faithfully pays their taxes every month to keep this circus running. Brussels no longer produces prosperity; it consumes the prosperity generated elsewhere in the country by real people, and spits it out in the form of directives, regulations, and subsidies for subsidized activists.

The NATO Agenda: The Military-Industrial Complex on Steroids

Toffler wrote in an era when the Cold War was still a clearly defined struggle. Communism had to be destroyed. Russia had to be divided. China was allowed to produce but otherwise had to remain backward. Africa could supply raw materials at ridiculously low prices but was not allowed to produce anything itself. But the institutions he and his contemporaries took for granted have mutated into monsters. Take NATO. An alliance that at its founding in 1949 had a purely **defensive** character: an attack on one is an attack on all, intended to deter the Soviet bloc.

Filmbestand

But anyone who has watched NATO's actions over the past half-century knows that **defensive** has become an empty slogan. Since the fall of the Wall, NATO has morphed into the military-industrial execution squad of the Western neoliberal elite. From the bombings of Serbia, the disastrous intervention in Iraq outside international law (in which NATO member states operated hand in hand), the destruction of Libya (the most prosperous country in Africa)—which led to a massive refugee flow towards Europe—to the endless, disastrous occupation of Afghanistan.

For half a century, NATO has been doing exactly the opposite of what it claims to do. It sows instability, destroys sovereign states that refuse to submit to the Washington Consensus, and creates the enemies it subsequently needs to justify its own existence.

And now, as tensions with Russia and China are ramped up to frighten the population and close ranks, this alliance demands that European member states increase their defense budgets. First it was 2% of GDP. Now 3% is openly discussed, and strategic hawks in the media and think tanks are cautiously whispering about 5%.

Do you know what 5% of GDP means? It means the end of the welfare state. It means there is no more money for decent pensions, hospital staff, road maintenance, or rebuilding our vanished industry. Every euro going to NATO is a euro disappearing straight into the pockets of shareholders of Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Rheinmetall. It is a hidden tax imposed on the European working man to guarantee the profit margins of the American arms industry.

European citizens are forced to sacrifice their own prosperity on the altar of a geopolitical conflict that is not theirs, orchestrated by an American elite that is only too happy to see Europe weaken, as long as it buys their weapons and purchases their liquefied gas (LNG) at exorbitant prices. NATO is no longer Europe's shield; it is the chain shackling Europe to the sinking ship of the American empire.

Intellectual Suicide: The Bankruptcy of Our Education System

When I compare the ambitious, highly intellectual populations of Southeast Asia, Russia, Iran, and the BRICS nations with those of the EU, I can only conclude that the gap in education and discipline is now unbridgeable. The deindustrialization of the West is not just an economic failure; it is the direct result of deliberate intellectual erosion. We have mortgaged our future to the path of least resistance.

Look at our Belgian education system. What are the most popular fields of study? The masses choose "soft" sectors: communications, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and law. Fields catering to individual experience, identity, and the service economy. What is the economic added value of these studies? They rarely create direct, physical, or measurable value. They redistribute wealth, facilitate bureaucracy, write reports upon reports, but they do not build bridges, design semiconductors, or solve energy crises.

The difficulty level of these fields stands in stark contrast to the exact sciences. They primarily require synthesis, memorization, and opinion-forming. In an era of smartphones and instant dopamine, the path of least resistance has become the most popular route. The result is a structural mismatch in the labor market that perfectly explains high youth unemployment rates. The market screams for

technicians, welders, and engineers, while universities churn out masses of unemployed communications scientists and gender studies graduates. We train young people for jobs the free market does not create, but which the government must artificially sustain through tax money.

Why doesn't this pillarized education system innovate? Because Belgian education is a pacified battlefield. The Catholic network and the official network compete in a zero-sum game for student numbers and accompanying subsidies. Innovation is expensive, disrupts peace with education unions, and yields no extra market share. The status quo is sacred. It is an over-subsidized system running on intellectual laziness and complacency. The focus has shifted from 'knowledge transfer, mathematics, and discipline' to 'well-being, identity, and learning how to learn'.

The waterfall system—where students are pushed through to higher grades to soothe dropout statistics and secure subsidies—has led to an epidemic of diploma inflation. We are more than a generation behind. Flanders, once the undisputed top performer in European PISA rankings, tumbles further down every year in math, reading, and science. Our academic and technical knowledge has eroded so much that renewing education, let alone rebuilding our physical industry, seems impossible. You cannot build nuclear power plants or advanced chip factories with a generation that can no longer do basic math and spends hours debating their own feelings.

Why do young people choose STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields so rarely? Because it is hard work. Because it requires abstract thinking and solitary discipline. And why is the supply so limited? Because there is a severe shortage of STEM teachers. Anyone who masters mathematics, physics, and chemistry goes to work in the private sector for multiples of a teacher's salary. The system sabotages itself.

Questions About Belgian Education

The diagnosis below of the Belgian, and by extension Western, education system strikes at the core of our current societal malaise.

1. Most popular fields of study: The masses choose "soft" sectors: communications, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and law. Fields catering to individual experience and the service economy.

2. Economic added value: These studies rarely create direct, physical, or measurable value. They facilitate the redistribution of wealth (via government, healthcare, media) but do not build bridges, chips, or power plants.

3. Difficulty level: The threshold for abstract, exact sciences is high and requires solitary discipline. Soft studies primarily require synthesis, opinion-forming, and rhetoric, making them more attractive to a generation accustomed to low-threshold digital stimuli.

4. Future prospects: A structural mismatch. Diploma factories in social sciences lead to saturation, gig work, and dependence on subsidized sectors.

5. Link to unemployment: High youth unemployment is the direct result of training young people for jobs the free market does not create. The market screams for technicians; universities deliver therapists.

6. Why the pillars do not innovate: Education is a pacified battlefield. The pillars compete in a zero-sum game for student numbers (and thus subsidies). Innovation is expensive, disrupts peace with education unions, and yields no extra market share. The status quo is sacred.

7. Intellectual laziness & subsidies: The system is pacified by guaranteed funding. The focus has shifted from 'knowledge transfer and discipline' to 'well-being, identity, and learning how to learn'. The waterfall system has led to an epidemic of diploma inflation.

8. Erosion (PISA): Flanders tumbles further down the **PISA rankings** every year. Our academic and technical knowledge has eroded; we are raising a generation incapable of solving complex, multi-step problems.

9. The STEM shortage: Young people avoid STEM because it is 'hard work'. Schools offer it sparingly due to a severe shortage of STEM teachers; anyone mastering math and physics works in the private sector for multiples of a teacher's salary. Vocational education is stigmatized as a failure, rather than the backbone of the economy.

The Contrast with China: The Gaokao and the National Mission

Compare this decadence with the education system in China. The *Gaokao*, the national university entrance exam, is one of the toughest intellectual ordeals in the world. Every year, nearly 12 million young people take this exam. Entire cities are shut down, traffic is diverted, and drones patrol above exam halls to prevent cheating. These young people lock themselves away for a year, not to learn to "debate identity", but to master differential equations, quantum physics, chemistry, and classical literature. They know their nation survives only through technological dominance. Education there is not an individual quest for self-fulfillment; it is a collective, national mission.

In Belgium, we stigmatize our vocational education (TSO/BSO); a child choosing technology is seen by the middle class as a failure, a reject of the waterfall system.

In China, conversely, they have a network of over 11,000 specialized vocational schools with 30 million students. This is not second-rate dumping ground, but the backbone of their high-tech economy. These schools are directly linked to industry. Students learn not just theory, but work with Virtual Reality simulators to pilot drones, operate heavy machinery, and program industrial robots. They combine centuries-old discipline with cutting-edge AI technology. In the East, they use vocational education to build the world's largest high-speed rail networks, solar parks, and space programs. In the West, our higher education produces an army of consultants telling the working man how to offset his carbon emissions.

The Working Man Pays the Bill

We no longer understand the laws of physics, economics, or cause and effect. If you spend more than you earn, you go bankrupt. If you sell your tools, you can no longer work. If you close your factories and stop teaching your youth how machines work, you can no longer pay for the service sector and all its bureaucrats.

The architects of the Third Wave—the Tofflers, the Eurocrats, NATO generals, and the Davos elite—have broken those fundamental laws. They built a virtual reality, a mirage of services, financial derivatives, and moral superiority, while blowing up the physical foundation of our civilization.

They tell us we must consume to keep the economy going, but punish us if we buy the wrong (i.e., cheap) things. They tell us to save the planet, but fly private jets to climate conferences. They tell us to arm ourselves against demographic pressures at the borders, while throwing the gates wide open to cheap labor to depress wages, and simultaneously wanting to send our sons and daughters to fight in other people's wars.

It is a masterpiece of manipulation. War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. And the Third Wave? The Third Wave was the greatest transfer of wealth, power, and sovereignty in human history, from those who *build* to those who *govern*. Industry is dismantled. Trade balances are ruined. Debts are unpayable. Schools no longer produce engineers, but activists. State reforms have saddled us with an administrative caste that only knows how to tell us what we can no longer do, while they continue undisturbed with the systematic hollowing out of our continent.

And the working man, who keeps barely 25% of his gross salary, pays the bill. For diesel at the pump. For the F-35s flying over his house. For his children's failing education. It is time we took off Toffler's glasses and faced reality again. The Third Wave is over. The water is rising. And those sitting in the towers of Brussels and

Strasbourg have no idea how to swim.

Sources

The Third Wave is a 1980 book by Alvin Toffler. It is the sequel to **Future Shock** (1970), it is followed by **Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century** in 1990.

1. Deindustrialization and Job Loss

UNIDO (2025). Industrial Statistics Factsheet: Northern America and Europe. (Confirms the structural decline in industrial employment and production in the West).

Strategic Perspectives (2023). "The great collapse of European industry is not a fatality." (Analysis of the loss of over 2.3 million industrial jobs in the EU between 2008 and 2023).

Eurostat (2024). "Long term developments in industrial production." (Data on the downward trend in core countries like Germany and France).

2. Debt Spirals and Trade Deficits

St. Louis Fed (2018). "Understanding the Roots of the U.S. Trade Deficit." (Analysis of structural imbalances in the US trade balance).

IE Business School / Allard, G. (2024). "U.S. Debt Spiral: A Looming Threat to Global Economic Stability." (On the unsustainability of the Western debt model without a physical production base).

WITA (2019/2024). "The U.S. Trade Deficit: Are We Trading Away Our Future?"

3. Belgian State Structure, Climate Policy, and Brussels Bankruptcy

OECD (2021/2023). Economic Surveys: Belgium. (OECD reports repeatedly point to the inefficiency and high costs of the Belgian institutional 'lasagna' and overlapping competencies).

Belgian Court of Audit & Regional Budgets (2023-2024). (Reports documenting structural deficits, rising debt burdens, and the looming bankruptcy of the Brussels-Capital Region).

Belgian Constitution & State Reforms. (The factual division into 1 federal government, 3 regions, and 3 communities, resulting in multiple ministers competent for climate, energy, and environment).

4. NATO, Defense Spending, and the Military-Industrial Complex

NATO (2024/2025). "Defence investment and NATO's commitment." (Documentation on pressure on European member states to structurally increase defense spending, with rhetoric moving towards 3% to 5% of GDP).

SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2024). "Trends in World

Military Expenditure" and reports on Top 100 arms-producing companies. (Confirms profit explosions and stock surges of giants like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Rheinmetall since geopolitical escalations).

NATO Historical Archives & UN Resolutions. (Factual basis of expeditionary NATO operations or operations led by NATO members outside their territory: Serbia (Allied Force, 1999), Afghanistan (ISAF, 2001-2021), Iraq (2003), and Libya (Unified Protector, 2011)).

5. Bankruptcy of Western Education, PISA, and Asian Rise

OECD (2023). PISA 2022 Results. (Documents the historic and structural decline in Flemish and European scores in math, reading, and science, in stark contrast to dominant scores from Asian countries and regions).

Agoria / STEM Monitor (2023/2024). Reports on the acute shortage of STEM profiles (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) in the Belgian labor market and the mismatch with higher education.

Department of Education and Training (Flanders). Statistics on field of study popularity, showing mass choice for humanities and social sciences at the expense of exact and technical fields.

CountryQuest / CGTN Dialogue (2023/2024). Analyses of the Chinese Gaokao system, focus on discipline, STEM, and integration of vocational education (11,000 schools, 30 million students) with high-tech industries (AI, robotics, VR simulators), contrasting with stigmatization of vocational education in the West.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/20A4oUJY3Zo>